

# Body Life And Not Individual Life

by Zac Poonen

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*This sermon emphasizes the shift from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant, highlighting the importance of fellowship and the need to crucify the old selfish nature daily. It stresses the significance of accepting both the cleansing power of Christ's blood for sins and the crucifixion of the old man for victory in life and relationships. The message underscores the necessity of self-examination, judging oneself, and building true fellowship based on humility, honoring others, and unity in the body of Christ.*

**Duration:** 30:20

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 11:28, Galatians 5:24, Matthew 18:20, 1 Corinthians 12:24, 1 Corinthians 11:31, Ephesians 2:15, 1 John 1:7, Amos 5:24

**Topics:** "New Covenant", "Self-Examination and Fellowship"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Okay, another aspect of the New Covenant compared to the Old Covenant is the Old Covenant was an individual life before God. You didn't need anybody else. It was Moses, he'd walk with God, it doesn't matter if Aaron is a golden calf.

Moses is unaffected. He's in touch with God and all the Old Testament prophets were like that. They were lonely men.

Elijah, Elisha, I mean in Elijah's time the Lord says there are 7,000 men who have not bowed the knee to Baal, but Elijah had fellowship with none of them. He didn't even know the existence of those people. But yet he was the greatest prophet of his time.

John the Baptist, he was the greatest prophet of his time. He had fellowship with nobody. And the mark of these men was it was not possible for them to have fellowship.

Even the 12 disciples of Jesus, they walked with him for three and a half years, and at the end of it their discussion at the Last Supper is, okay, Jesus is going to die, who's going to be the next leader? They were

all centered around themselves. Who's going to be the next leader after Jesus dies? Can you imagine that? That they'd walked with Jesus for three and a half years and they're still thinking of who's going to be the leader. It was all centered around oneself.

Self was the center and there was nothing they could do about it because it's only when Jesus died that man's old man was crucified with him. Just like the blood of Jesus took care of man's sin, the crucifixion of the old man took care of man's selfish nature. And if we don't accept the blood of Christ as cleansing for my sin, my sin remains unforgiven.

And if I don't accept my old man being crucified with Christ, I'll remain defeated in my life. And just like I need a revelation from God that my sin was dealt with through the blood of Christ, I never saw it. None of us saw Christ dying on the cross or shedding his blood, but by faith we believe that he shed his blood for my sin, and we have the absolute assurance that all our sins are forgiven.

I mean, we, I think there are many of us who are absolutely convinced that there's not one single sin, not even the most horrible sin that you've committed in the past, which hangs over your head. It's cleansed in the blood of Christ. We equally need revelation on the fact that our old man, Romans 6, was crucified with Christ.

Without that revelation, we will never be able to put it off, that that nature which we inherited from Adam, that old man that wanted to sin, has been put to death. And I, if I accept it, now what if I don't accept it? Well, what if you don't accept the fact that Christ's blood was shed on the cross? Your sins are not forgiven, even though it was shed on the cross. And what if you don't accept the fact that your old man was crucified with Christ? You don't get victory, even though it was crucified with Christ.

You're not accepting it. It's not going to change anything that happened on the cross. You don't accept that his blood was shed for your sins, so what? It says it was for the propitiation of the sins of the whole world, 1 John chapter 2. So it is when we recognize these things, the reality becomes true in us.

So because of this old man in us and in the other person, in the old covenant they just could not fellowship with each other. It was impossible, because it says in Ephesians in chapter 2 that in this flesh there is an enmity. You've got to recognize this, an enmity which builds a wall between you and the one you claim to love the most.

It may be your wife, it may be your husband. There is an enmity in your flesh to that person's flesh. I mean an illustration of this is when if you take somebody else's skin and graft it onto your skin, your skin is going to reject it.

You take somebody else's, some part of his body, there are transplant, you know, people take somebody's kidneys and different things and put it on there. You have to give them some medicine that fights this rejection. There's a rejection of somebody else's part being put into my body.

This is an illustration of how it says in Ephesians 2 that there's an enmity in the flesh, verse 15. There's an enmity in the flesh and Jesus abolished it on the cross. And this enmity, verse 14, is what builds a big barrier of a dividing wall.

And you can say you love somebody very much, like your wife or your husband, but there's an enmity in your flesh towards your husband, towards your wife. That's why you clash and that's why sometimes you don't talk to each other. Who built this dividing wall? Not the devil.

You built it yourself because of this enmity. You've got to recognize it. It's there.

And Jesus dealt with it. He broke down that dividing wall. He destroyed that enmity.

And if you accept it, fellowship will still not be built if the other person does not deal with the enmity in his flesh. But if two people both deal with the enmity in their flesh and then a dividing wall will never be built, not even for a second, then they'll have fellowship. That was just not possible in the Old Testament, not because they were inferior to us, but because Jesus had not crucified the old man yet.

Just like the Old Testament people, they had no assurance that they were justified before God because the blood of Jesus was not shed. It was in the future. For us it is in the past.

We don't have to live like the Old Testament saints wondering, are my sins forgiven? We are absolutely sure that our sins are forgiven. But most Christians, I'd say more than 90% of believers I've met, they believe with all their heart the blood of Jesus has cleansed them, but they're not so sure that the old man was crucified. And that's why they have problem in relationships with others.

There's a wall, an invisible wall. There's a lot of courtesy and they know psychology and all that, but it does not, psychology does not break down the dividing wall between husband and wife or between two brothers. We have to go beyond psychology.

It's all a deception to think that psychology will build relationships between people. It's the cross. It's only if two people are willing to die on the cross that fellowship is built.

There's absolutely no other way. The rest is just friendship. Most Christian husbands and wives have friendship.

Some Christian husband's wife don't even have that. But true fellowship goes way beyond this. There is zero barriers of dividing walls.

There's zero enmity. Not because they they've got rid of it, but they keep that flesh on the cross. God does not eliminate our flesh when we are born again.

In the Old Testament, let me give you an example. In the time of Jeremiah, as far as I know if I understand the timing of the time in which the different prophets lived, there were some other prophets who lived in Jeremiah's time. Even there was a prophet that's called Huldah.

And one or two of the other prophets who prophesied against Babylon lived at that time. But they couldn't have fellowship. They lived in different parts of the country and prophesied.

God could not put them together because they'd be clashing with each other. That would be a terrible testimony if the two prophets were fighting with each other. So God kept them in different places.

It was not possible. The closest that you come to fellowship is when Haggai and Zechariah and I believe they worked. One was a very old man, Zechariah was a young man, and they probably did it one after the other.

Even they, I don't believe they've worked together. It was not possible, even though they prophesied one after the other. So this is the difference.

In the entire Old Testament, not a single person could have fellowship with another. But the moment Jesus comes, he sends out his disciples two by two. Right in the beginning, this is the introduction of the new covenant fellowship.

You have to learn to work with another person. He did not send them out one by one. That is Old Testament.

Jesus was in heaven. He sent all those prophets, from Noah, Moses, everybody, all the way down to Malachi, one by one. But the moment he came from heaven to earth, he started sending them out two by two, introducing the new covenant.

Have you understood this? That fellowship is one of the marks of new covenant life. If you're not able to build fellowship with another, you have not understood the new covenant. Now, it is, as I said, it requires cooperation from both sides.

But if two people say we have understood the new covenant, that they can't have fellowship with one another, something's fundamentally wrong. If two, if a husband and wife sit here in this church calling themselves new covenant Christian fellowship members, and they can't fellowship with each other, something is wrong. It's just hypocrisy.

It's hypocrisy to say of new covenant fellowship, and there's no fellowship in the home between two people. Where will it be between more than that? So we have to fight for this. We say, Lord, I want to enter into this life of the new covenant, which is not this individual holy life of a Moses who gets alone with God, or Isaiah, or a John the Baptist alone in the wilderness, but people coming together.

In the Acts of the Apostles, we read 120 people waited for the coming of the Holy Spirit, and they were baptized in the Holy Spirit. And I picture it like this, that it's like a hundred and twenty pieces of iron suddenly thrown into the furnace of the Holy Spirit, and comes out as one piece. That's how God wants us to be in the church.

It's not that we are not different in different views and all that, but there's an inward unity. It's not just theoretical. It must be practical, and the only way we can accomplish it is by taking up the cross every single day and putting that flesh in us to death.

That which is accomplished on the cross, we must apply to ourselves every day, just like the blood of Christ. You need the blood of Christ every single day of your life to cleanse you from even the slightest thought of sin. You cannot afford to live one single day without the blood of Christ.

You need to acknowledge your sin, and even if you are not aware of conscious sin, there's unconscious sin in us every single day. That's why I believe that we need to pray for forgiveness of sin every single day. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins this day.

What we have done, I believe both are related to a daily affair, and I can live perhaps a whole day without consciously sinning. That's possible, but not unconsciously. Unconsciously, we'll be sinning till the day Jesus comes, and that's why we need to ask God to cleanse us.

We walk in the light. Walking in the light means I'm free from conscious sin. 1 John 1:7, it says the blood of Jesus will cleanse me.

From what? I'm already free from conscious sin. I'm walking in the light. It cleanses me from the unconscious sin which prevents me from coming before God.

So I walk in the light, free from conscious sin, but the blood of Jesus still needs to cleanse me. In the same way, I need to take that which is accomplished on the cross and make it a reality in my life. Those who belong to Christ, Galatians 5 24.

Crucify the flesh. They have crucified. It's a permanent attitude they have towards the flesh.

The flesh, with its affections and lusts, as far as I'm concerned, is crucified, and I live in that position every single day, Galatians 5 24. And if the other person also lives in that position every day, we'll have glorious fellowship, every single husband and wife, because the cause of all conflict is the flesh of Adam that comes forth from us where I want to sit on the throne, where self is not crucified, Christ is not on the throne. If Christ is on the throne in that person's life and self is crucified, and Christ is on the throne in my life and self is crucified, how can we ever not have fellowship? This Christ within me can't have fellowship with Christ and the other person.

It is always self. And you see that in husband-wife relationships where they say they love one another, they do so many things for each other, but self is still on the throne. They sacrifice so many things for each other, they say they love one another, but self is on the throne.

And when there's a conflict, each person thinks, ah, the problem is actually with the other person. My self is on the cross, but the other person's self is not on the cross. And that attitude itself shows that I haven't understood the way of the cross.

In the way of the cross, I'm not here to judge the other person. No. In every area I may think I have done what is right, but I still acknowledge that in my flesh dwells nothing good.

And there could be something, a smell of sin that comes forth from me. It's like body odor. You know, a person can be stinking and he himself doesn't smell it, but other people smell it.

Body odor is like that. And particularly when you get older, you get older, your breath begins to smell and you can't do anything about it. But you don't smell it yourself, the other person does.

It's something like that, the odor of self. We don't see it. We think I'm right.

What did I do wrong there? I never hurt anything. I never said anything. And why is there conflict? You think, ah, it must be with my wife.

It must be with your husband. Wrong. It's with you.

And that's why the Bible says we must judge ourselves. That's the only way to build fellowship. If we can't build fellowship, we're in the old covenant.

And if you can't build fellowship even with your own wife, where in the world are you going to build fellowship with other brothers in the church? You may say, well, I have wonderful fellowship with brothers. That's because you see them 10% of the time. The test is whether you can see fellowship with your wife, who you see 100% of the time.

There's a lot of deception when you talk about fellowship in the church. True fellowship is a 24-hour thing. Nothing can disturb my fellowship with another person if I die on the cross and the other person dies on the cross.

And if a conflict arises, I will not say the problem is with him. I will do what it says in 1 Corinthians in chapter 11. This is very interesting.

1 Corinthians 11 is talking about the breaking of bread. And many people don't realize this. Breaking of bread is a symbol of fellowship.

That here, just, okay, forget about a whole crowd. This brother and I are breaking bread. Think of two brothers breaking bread together, drinking the cup, just two.

He breaks bread and I break and I take part. What am I saying? I'm saying, Lord Jesus, I want to enter into this brokenness there was in you when you went to the cross. I want it.

And he says he breaks bread with me and he wants it. But we can't have fellowship with each other. Something is wrong.

And I can say the problem is with him and he can say the problem is with me. It's like a husband and wife. If they break bread together, why can't they fellowship? The solution is, 1 Corinthians 11, it says here, verse 28, let a man examine himself, not the other person, and thus eat the bread.

Am I willing to be broken? I'm not interested in finding out whether he's willing to be broken. That's none of my business. I have to examine myself, period, and then eat the bread and drink the cup.

And if we, verse 31, if we judge ourselves rightly, the wonderful thing is one day when Christ comes again, there will be no judgment for us. I thank God that God opened my blind eyes to see this truth more than 40 years ago. For 16 years of my born-again Christian life, I never knew it.

I sat thinking the problem is with everybody else. I hope you don't have to waste many more years like that. If you judge yourself rightly, in the day of judgment, when you stand before the Lord, he will say to you, I have nothing to judge you in.

You're perfect. Well done. Do you want to hear that? Do you want to hear that from the Lord? I'm so desperate to hear that.

I remember the other day when I was meditating on the words of the Father to Jesus at his baptism. This is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased. I said, Father, can you say that about me? This is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased.

This is my beloved daughter in whom I'm well pleased. Not what the world thinks about me or the church thinks about me. That's garbage.

The opinion of all the churches, what they think about Zak Poonen is fit for the trash. Father in heaven, can you say this is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased? Long for that and say, Lord, I'm going to judge myself in every area which displeases you. That's all.

People don't see 99% of my life. What's the use of their approving the 1% they can see? Worth nothing. Don't ever be happy that people who see 1% of your life think you're a wonderful saint.

You've got to be fooling yourself. A lot of Christians are like that, unfortunately. Even your wife may think you're a very spiritual person.

Tell me, what does your wife know about your thought life? Anything? Does your wife know whether you love money? Of course she does not. She can live 50 years with you and you can conceal the love of money by appearing to be very generous on the outside. And yet the love of money may not have gone from you.

It may be deep down inside. You may be seeking your own in the things that you plan for your life and your career. You can be seeking your own, not the glory of God.

But yet you can give the impression of a very wholehearted Christian. And even in the ministry of the Word, you can give the impression, I'm burdened for the body of Christ and reaching this, that, and the other. God sees through it all.

There's that element of seeking honor. It'll all go if I say, Lord, I'm going to put my flesh on the cross. I'm going to judge myself.

There's tremendous power when even two or three people come together in this type of relationship and the devil is determined to stop it. See what Jesus said in Matthew chapter 18. One of the most misquoted verses in the words of Jesus, Matthew 18 20, where two or three have gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them.

See, the correct translation is, are gathered together, not have gathered. Where two or three are gathered together by the Holy Spirit. Not just you and you and I say we come together in the name of Jesus.

That's how a lot of every church in the world, every cult in the world says, we've gathered in the name of Jesus. Lord Jesus, you are here. There am I in the midst.

He's not. I'm sure in the church of Laodicea where Jesus said, I'm standing at the door knocking. He was on the outside.

Inside they were saying, Lord, you're here. You have two or three are gathered in your name. It's when the Holy Spirit can bring two or three people together because they have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts and the Holy Spirit's brought them together.

There the Lord is present in the midst. And that is two or three people who are judging themselves. Two or three people who have accepted their old man crucified with Christ.

Two or three people who have taken up the cross every day and coming together and meeting together. The Lord is in their midst. And what will happen when the Lord is in their midst? Here are a couple of things that happen.

One, verse 19, whatever they ask will be done for them. Amazing. When two or three people come together like this in unity, whatever they ask, it'll be done.

And secondly, they will have, verse 18, they'll have power to bind satanic activities in their home and in the church and wherever God places them. I want that power. I want the power to be able to bind satanic activities in my home when it affects my children or affects my work or my relationships at home.

I want the power to drive out satanic forces from the home where I live and from the church where God gives me responsibility. And I believe that's possible if two or three. That's why it's not possible with one.

Nobody could do it in the Old Testament. That's why God did not allow any Old Testament prophet to confront Satan. Not even one.

You read through the Bible from Genesis onwards, Satan comes in Genesis chapter 3, fooling Adam and Eve. The next time he really comes in is in Matthew chapter 4, he's confronting Jesus. Satan doesn't come in the Old Testament.

God does not allow us to be tested beyond our ability. He did not allow Satan to come to any Old Testament prophet. Jesus came and he overcame Satan and now he allows us to confront Satan, overcome him in our home and in the church.

That's possible only as a body. You can see why Satan is so much against building the body of Christ. And in this body of Christ we got to meditate a lot on 1 Corinthians and chapter 12, where different people have different gifts and the eye is not, the ear is not jealous of the eye, the hand, the foot is not jealous of the hand, and recognizes that that person has a gift I don't have.

I'm willing to cooperate and support. Nobody's in competition. Nobody's trying to get up and show that I'm a better preacher than that person.

Anybody who's got the slightest thought like that, I can say to him he has not understood the ABC of the body of Jesus Christ. Which part of the body is trying to show that I'm better than the other part? For example, I sign my checks with my right hand and supposing the left hand is very jealous of that, but the right hand is doing all the signing of checks, and one day the right hand gets injured and is in a sling, and the left hand says, ah, now is my opportunity to prove that I'm somebody, and he signs the check and the bank says, we can't recognize your signature. What is this? Whose signature is this? But that's not how the left hand behaves.

When the left hand sees the right hand is injured, it does everything possible to get that right hand going as soon as possible. Do you see a church like that? Where we do everything possible to promote that brother who's got a greater gift than me, and I want to stay in the background. Even Jonathan could do that in the Old Testament to David.

Why not we in the New Covenant? Where I'm not thinking of my gift or thinking that I'm superior to that person. See how I can bless people. Boy, if you think like that, my brother, you're a hindrance to the body of Christ.

You're a cancer in the body of Christ, and a lot of very gifted people who are cancers in the body of Christ because they're promoting themselves. They're always thinking, oh, how gifted I am, how well I can sing, how well I can preach, or how well I can do this. They are the biggest hindrance in the body of Christ, because in the body of Christ things work in very different ways, exactly like the human body.

And it says in 1 Corinthians and chapter 12 that God—see verse 23, sorry, verse 24 in the middle— God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member that lacked gift, so that there's no division in the body. Meditate on those two verses. How does God ensure that there's no division in the body of Christ? Division in the church is one of the biggest problems all over the world.

How do you ensure there's no division? I don't mean external division, which is visible to everybody. Inwardly, where you have a division, it's by giving more abundant honor to the member that lacks gift. Why does it say that a husband must honor his wife, recognizing she's a weaker vessel, must live in an understanding way, recognizing that she's a weaker vessel? In other words, he should not be showing off to his wife all the time how capable he is, and how smart he is, and how spiritual he is.

That's not the way to build relationship with your wife, not at all. You don't want your wife to be impressed with your spirituality. You want to build fellowship with your wife.

Many people who hear these things don't practice it. God gives more abundant honor to the member which lacks, so that—Lord, why do you do that? So that there's no division in the body. I want to ask you, how much are we doing to give more abundant honor to those who lack? You see how college graduates will always mingle with college graduates of the same level, and they won't stoop down to mingle with that guy who's never been to college.

He can't speak at my level. He can't fellowship at my level. Where in the world is the body of Christ going to be built here? Impossible.

Not in a hundred years. We can talk about spiritual things with people at our own intellectual level and think we are building something absolute nonsense. You'll be building a bunch of scribes who can analyze this verse, and the other verse, and the other verse.

The church is built with simple people whose hearts are right, not whose heads are clever, and I believe that is a real danger even here, because you've got a lot of clever people here, and you can have fellowship with clever people, and you think you're building the body. Great, wonderful thoughts from this verse, and that verse, and the other verse, and the other verse. It's not building the body.

It's just stimulating your intelligence, and the intelligence of the other person. Fellowship is something far deeper when we learn to give more abundant honor to the member that lacked. When we love little children, when we want to speak to little children.

If you only want to speak to grown-ups, you're like a Pharisee. Jesus loved little children. He loved to speak to little children, not the Pharisees.

The Pharisees only wanted to talk to people of their same level, and you see that. You know, sometimes we think it's always by fellowship with very spiritual people we become spiritual. That's not true.

It's partially true, but we can become spiritual by fellowship with members that lack gift, because God has given that person honor, and he can bless me in some way, and I've seen that through years. I'm not preaching theory. So many people in our churches in India are uneducated.

As I've said before, some of them can't even read and write. To me, they are just the same as the PhDs in our fellowship, because it's the taking up to the cross and putting the flesh to death that brings fellowship. So, brothers and sisters, we've spent seven weeks with 14 different sessions on Old Covenant, New Covenant.

I hope you don't think that you've understood it all. If you come before God and say, Lord, I'm just beginning to see some things that I need to see more clearly, and show me the things which are beyond all that we heard in these days. As I said, these are only starters.

God bless you all.

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