

Breaking Traditions and Building Fellowship

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of reading godly books to grow spiritually and the need to break away from spiritual laziness. It highlights the significance of developing a habit of reading and growing in fellowship with others, while addressing the dangers of being stuck in traditional practices that hinder true Christian growth and unity. The speaker challenges believers to prioritize spiritual growth, genuine fellowship, and radical commitment to following Jesus.

Scripture: Proverbs 18:15, Hebrews 10:24, Mark 7:8, Ephesians 2:14, Matthew 18:15, Colossians 3:13

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Commitment to Fellowship"

Description

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Transcript

It's a book that can be read in one day, I mean in 2-3 hours. But I find that most believers don't have a habit of reading and that is one of the main reasons they don't grow spiritually. They are so lazy, they are like babies who always want to be spoon-fed, spoon-fed, spoon-fed.

They never think of chewing some food themselves. They want milk, milk, milk. And they wonder why are we so defeated in our life, why are we so defeated in our home, why are we getting angry after 10 years of listening to the message.

I'll tell you, because of spiritual laziness and it won't change in the next 20 years, it will be just the same even if you come to CFC. One of the things that helped me the most in my life was reading books written by godly people whom I never met, some of them had died, great men of God through the centuries. And if you develop that habit, I can tell you, if you don't already have it, if you develop that habit, you will grow more in the next one year than you've grown in your entire Christian life till today.

But I still don't know how many of you will take my advice, because most people are too lazy. They are very eager to study for their profession. If there's some advancement in their profession, they read up the latest books and work hard, because that brings money.

This will only bring spirituality. And for them, since money is more important than spirituality, that's what they get. The Bible says, seek and you will find.

That's a law. You seek for money, you'll get money. You seek for knowledge, you'll get knowledge.

You seek for spirituality, you'll get spirituality. It's not that we don't need money or we don't need knowledge. But remember the first four words in the Bible, in the beginning, God.

If you make that the law in your life, that in everything God will be first, I'm not saying that he has to occupy 24 hours of our day. You may sleep for seven or eight hours. I sleep for about six.

But okay, then you have to work for about eight, nine, maybe ten hours. You need to eat and shower and be with your family. I still believe all of us can easily have at least half an hour to one hour every day.

If you watch less television and all the rubbish that goes on there, and if you prove to God, if you prove to God that your word is more important to me than television, you'll find a radical change in your life. And the reason I suggested reading that book, that little booklet, which takes so little time to read, and which I suggested that you pass on to every Christian that you know from some other church, so that people recognize what is the difference between a congregation and a club and a church. Now you can sit in CFC for 20 years and never be part of the church.

If you read that book, you'll understand it. That's why I asked you to read it. Is it possible that you're sitting here for many years and you're still not part of the church, of the true church as God sees it? And if you read that, you'll understand.

But in a nutshell, what is said in that book is about the two arms of the cross. That the vertical arm refers to our relationship with God, and the horizontal arm of the cross relates to our relationship with each other. And if you don't have both, then you're a congregation or a club.

You know, a lot of people who sit in big churches have no connection with each other. Maybe they like to listen to good messages and have a relationship with God. Then there's only one arm of the cross.

And there are other churches where they don't care much about their vertical relationship, but have good relationship with each other, help each other in a good way. That's a club. But a true church is one where people, first of all, have a passionate devotion to Jesus Christ so that in the final day when we stand before him, he will not have to say to us, I never knew you.

See, the word know is a husband-wife relationship word. Adam knew his wife. And it's Christ knowing the church, Christ knowing you, means it's such an intimate relationship.

You know, the Bible says a man must leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. That means, that's what all of you who got married did. You had a great, when you got married, from the very first day you had a passionate desire to be united to your wife, even physically.

Do you have such a passionate desire from the day you were born again to be united to Jesus Christ? If not, there's something wrong with your conversion. I think you should know that. I know for many years, I used to ask Christ to come into my heart, nothing happened.

And I could have sat here in those days in a CFC church, saying I have accepted the Lord. I think the first time I did it was when I was 13. I said, Lord, come into my heart.

There was no change. I was still interested in the movies and a lot of worldly music and things like that. So I kept on doing it.

I don't know how many times I asked Christ to come into my heart, but one day it became real. And I don't think that has happened to many of you. When it became real, so what happens to a baby when it comes out of a womb, when it's really full-term birth? You know, there are babies that are born at six months.

And one mark of a baby born at six months is it'll never cry. It'll never cry for milk. It's quite happy to just lie down there.

It's alive, but it's as good as dead. And if you leave it like that, it'll die. So they put such babies in an incubator and they warm it up and feed it in various ways because it can't suck milk.

And I think a lot of people are like that. They were born prematurely. Born prematurely means they didn't repent properly.

Without a proper repentance, they just accepted the Lord. That means they didn't see how serious and dangerous their condition was. That they were headed for hell.

They didn't see that. They thought of Christianity as just a nice little religion to belong to. It wasn't something life and death business.

Sin was not as serious as cancer. I don't know even today how many of you can honestly say, I believe that anger is worse than cancer. Can you honestly say that to God? I can.

I can honestly say to God, lusting after a woman is worse than cancer to me. I would be more disturbed if I lusted and got angry than if the doctor said, you're in the fourth stage of cancer. Okay, fourth stage of cancer, so what? I'm with the Lord.

But I don't think, I'll tell you honestly, I'm not criticizing you. I'm just trying to wake you up. I don't think most of you see that.

And I have to tell you because I'm a servant of the Lord and the Bible says that I have to give an account to God in the final day. Not to you. I have to give an account to God about what I preached to people.

Whether I told them the truth or whether I tried to be popular or whether I said things to tickle their ears and make them happy and end result is in eternity. The Lord says to many people who sat listening to me, I didn't know you. Now, if that happens in spite of my warning them, then I'm not responsible.

But if I did not warn them, for example, I did not warn them that anger is more serious than cancer. If I didn't tell them that, you won't hear it in any other church. Then I'm responsible to God.

The Lord will ask me, why didn't you tell them that anger is more worse than cancer, that lusting after women is worse than cancer, that love of money is like something that will take you away from God. Using money, keeping money under your feet as your servant is a very good thing. It's like you have a servant woman working in your house.

Very good. You have two servant women working in your house. A lot of work can be done.

You have three servant women, that's like a rich man. But if that servant woman takes over the house and tells you, the master and mistress, what to do. Have you ever seen a house like that, where the servant determines and the master and the mistress humbly obey the servant? I've never seen it.

But I've seen it among Christians. Where money is the master, instead of being the slave. I'm not saying we don't need money.

Have the servant, have three servants, have ten servants. Earn as much as you like, but keep money as a servant. Otherwise, you cannot serve God.

You cannot even love God. Jesus said that. You cannot love God and love money.

So these are things which you don't hear in other places. So the reason I asked you at the beginning whether you read that book is just to see how seriously you take the exhortations in the church. Because a small thing like that, if you don't take seriously, I don't know whether you take the more important things seriously at all.

And then, what's going to be your feet? I want to ask all of you, if Jesus were to come tonight, how many of you would be able to hear the Lord say to you, this is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased, the way he lived on earth. Or this is my beloved daughter, with whom I am well pleased in the way he lived or she lived from the time, not the time they were converted, from the time they came to CFC at least. Happy with the way they lived and happy with the way they responded to the message.

You have to answer that to God. God is my witness that I live every day, every single day of my life, judging myself, repenting. I have to repent.

I'll tell you why, only for one reason. I am not yet 100% like Jesus Christ. I am discovering things in my life which I did not even know last year.

So, spiritual progress is where every year at least, you discover some new area of unchrist-likeness in your life. Not the old ones, new areas. Like when you go from 1st standard to 2nd standard, you learn something new.

Not the same old things you learned in 1st standard. You go to 3rd standard, you learn something new. I want to ask you whether since the years you came to CFC, have you been discovering something new every year in your life of unchrist-likeness that you are cleansing away.

Just like you want your children to progress from each class to the next and to get good marks. And not just to get 40%, but to get 80%, 90%. Are you as eager in the Christian life? Otherwise, it's not really going to be very great.

The day when you stand before the Lord, there are going to be a lot of disappointments and a lot of surprises. I believe there will be many surprises. People whom you didn't think much about, maybe you despised some people here in CFC, and you may find that they were very faithful in their private lives.

They were seeking the Lord privately, and they sought fellowship with others during the week whenever they got time, and they came to help in the church in any practical way. Whereas you just came along for Sunday meeting, went away, not bothered about anything else. Only eager to see one thing, is my name on the commitment list to break bread.

Do you know that a lot of people in the commitment list will not be in the Kingdom of God? I believe that with all my heart. They will never enter Heaven, because they are not eager to have their name in the Book of Life. They are eager to have their name in CFC's commitment list.

I'm telling you some plain truths, because it's very, very important. You don't want to go to a doctor who doesn't tell you the truth about yourself. One area, I told you, it's not just in our thoughts.

One of the areas where our life will be refined more and more, is our speech. If we are really walking with the Lord, Jesus said, learn from me. Matthew 11, 29.

Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart. What have I got to learn from Jesus? Not how to sing, not how to preach. Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart.

Now Jesus was not, you would think Jesus was not gentle and humble when he took a whip and chased out those making money in the name of religion. There's a difference when a man is representing God, as Jesus was at that time, or a preacher in the pulpit. He doesn't have to be gentle and humble.

Gentle and humble is in our life. But if you want to see Jesus' gentleness and humility, you see that in his washing people's feet, and in his compassion towards lepers. Lepers were outside the city.

They were not allowed to come to the city, and Jesus used to go. Imagine if the lepers were outside Bangalore, he'd go all the way outside Bangalore to meet them. That's part of his passion, to bless poor people.

But gentleness and humility is a good way for all of you who are not preachers to ask yourself, is your speech becoming more gentle and humble? I believe that a Christian's life is known by his speech. I believe that. It says in James chapter 1, I'll tell you why I say that.

In James chapter 1, it says in verse 26. James 1 verse 26. Let me paraphrase it.

If a man thinks, or a woman, that he's a spiritually minded Christian, I think many of you think like that. But you cannot control your tongue. You're deceiving yourself, and your Christianity is worth zero.

There is one verse in the Bible that tells us, your Christianity is worth zero, you cannot control your tongue. The way you use your tongue, in ordinary conversation, is a test of your Christianity. How many marks do you get? Zero? Or twenty? We should get a hundred.

We should be getting more and more every year. We should be progressing towards a hundred. But if we are at the same level, I find some people are going down.

They're getting minus ten, minus twenty. Very, very important. These are things that we constantly teach in the church.

Judge yourself, and see. In these areas where God speaks to us, through his word, then this matter of fellowship, see, we have, through the years, from the beginning, fought against Christian tradition, which is not in the Bible. We're not saying they're evil.

There's a difference between sin and tradition. If you hate somebody, kill somebody, these things are sin. But for many Christians, tradition is very important.

That's why some people never leave their churches. Because there are certain traditions. And even if they leave their churches, when it comes to marriage, they say, we must go to that church with its traditions and its rituals.

So, you know that Jesus was not only against sin, but he was against tradition. Very important to understand that. We preached a lot against sin in this church.

Let me show you what Jesus said in Mark chapter 7. See, one of the traditions that the Pharisees had was that before you eat, you must wash your hands. Now, all of us wash our hands before we eat, but this was more than that. It was a ritual where you washed your hand right up to the elbows, as a religious ritual.

So in Mark chapter 7, the Pharisees came from Jerusalem and they saw some of Jesus' disciples, Mark 7 verse 2, eating their bread with hands that were not washed. Now, if you eat food without washing your hands, that's not a sin. If your hands are dirty, you'll get sick.

But many times our stomach has got so much acids and all, you may not get sick. Many times we eat without washing hands, we don't get sick. Why? These Pharisees were not concerned about health.

No, it was a ritual. The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash the hands observing the traditions of the elders, verse 3. Which means a ritual washing, like the surgeons wash their hands before they're going to an operation theatre to get rid of all the germs. See, the Pharisees were more concerned about germs getting out from their body than sin getting out of their heart.

They were not concerned about sin in their heart or their speech. They said, get rid of all the germs from your hands. And we can also be like that.

They were very careful about that and when they come from the marketplace, verse 4, they don't eat unless they cleanse themselves. And the word there is baptize themselves. The word baptize means immerse.

So they had some type of ritual where they had to immerse their hands in water and wash. And there are many other things, it says in verse 4, which they received in order to observe like the washing of cups, pitchers and copper pots. We wash all our vessels.

But this is a ritual, very, very important. And then the Pharisees and scribes asked Jesus, why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders but eat their bread with impure hands? Jesus himself wasn't following those rituals. It's not that Jesus was unclean, but he wasn't following the tradition.

And look what Jesus said. He didn't tell his disciples, yeah, that's a good idea, you guys should wash your hands. He didn't say that.

He rebuked the Pharisees and said, Isaiah prophesied about hypocrites like you. They honor me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me. That means their religion is all on the outside, not in their heart.

And in vain, and vain means emptiness, they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men. And it's a very important thing to see here, that when you hold on to the tradition of men, verse 8, you actually end up neglecting the commandment of God. And he went on to say so much about tradition, just see this.

You are experts, verse 9, at setting aside the commandment of God to keep your tradition. For example, Moses said, honor your father and mother, or he who speaks evil of father or mother shall be put to death.

But you say, if a man says to his father or his mother, the money I could have given to help you, I have given to the church, to God.

You don't allow him to give any money to his parents? You know, if you don't help your needy parents, you know that's a sin? I don't know how many of you realize that. Yeah. If your parents have taken care of you from the time you were a baby, and you don't take care of them yourself, or you don't allow your marriage partner to take care of his or her parents, something's seriously wrong with your Christianity.

I'll tell you that. I don't care which church you sit in. And the Lord will quote that verse, in the day of judgment, the Lord will quote this verse to you.

He'll say, did you read it? And you don't, look at this verse, you don't permit him, verse 12, to do anything for his father or mother? Whereas Jesus was hanging on the cross, and there hanging on the cross, he wanted to help his mother, to find a place where she could stay. He had four younger brothers, but he didn't hand her over to them, he handed over to John, who was a disciple. He had more value for a fellow disciple than his own relatives.

Jesus showed that to us, even on the cross, that he had more confidence in his disciples than in his own blood brothers and sisters. But he says, you don't help your father and mother, means you're cancelling the word of God, because of your tradition. And you do many things like that.

So see the steps you go. First of all, verse 8, you neglect God's commandment. Verse 9, you set aside God's commandment.

And finally, verse 13, you completely cancel God's word. It's a progressive going downwards way. I was trying to show you, the tradition was why the Pharisees got upset with Jesus.

They didn't kill Jesus, because he washed people's feet. They didn't kill Jesus, because he said, you must not lust after women. They killed Jesus, because he stood against their traditions.

And one of the things from the beginning, in order to emphasize in our church, breaking with tradition. Many of us, when we started CFC, came from different, different churches. And one of the traditions people have in churches was, you don't eat meat or fish.

Some people eat fish. You don't eat meat on a Friday, because they believe Jesus was crucified on a Friday. First of all, Jesus was not crucified on a Friday.

He was crucified on a Thursday, because you cannot have three days and three nights in the grave, if you are crucified on Friday. Simple calculation will teach you that. And Jesus said, Jesus would be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, which is in paradise in the heart of the earth, before coming back into his body on the Sunday.

But anyway, they believe it's Friday that Jesus died, so they don't eat meat on Friday. So, in our church, CFC, in the beginning, one of the first things we did was have a chicken biryani on a Friday, so that everybody could break free from that tradition. Now, if it's a matter of taste, for example, some people have grown up never eating beef, because of their religion.

We don't force people to eat. We're not a restaurant saying, you must eat this food. No.

We're not crazy like that. If you don't want to eat some food, some people don't like to eat any type of meat at all. They just eat vegetables.

Fine. We're not converting people to non-vegetarians. We're trying to break people from tradition.

And one of the other traditions we broke with was that Christmas, December 25th, is the birthday of Jesus Christ. I mean, I don't see that in the Bible. So, I don't find any celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.

I'll tell you why. Because we are supposed to celebrate his birth and death every day. We celebrate our birthdays once a year.

But for me, the birth of Jesus Christ is something real every day. His death is real every day. Because his birth and death is what brought me into a relationship with him.

And so it's something very precious to me every day, not once a year. That's the reason. It's not that we don't care to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

I say, these guys do it once a day. I want to do it every year. And they do it with all types of Christmas trees and all types of other things.

You know that it's a Babylonian financial celebration. Go down Commercial Street, you'll see. Not only the Christians are celebrating it.

It's a time to make money. No different from what Commercial Street is like on Diwali Day or Christmas Day. It's just another ritual.

Now the reason I say that is, I mean the reason why I don't believe Christ was born in December is very simple. It says the shepherds were out in the fields when Jesus was born. And it's very well known that it's so cold in Israel in December that no shepherd is out in the field after October.

So it's impossible. And so I believe he was born sometime in September because that's how he completed 33 and a half years by the time he died in March the next year. After 33 and a half years.

Anyway, that's besides the point. But the traditions like this, traditions during wedding time, I once told somebody, if you make a list of all the Christian traditions in churches and give it to me, I'll break every one of them. Some people are scared.

Just to show, Jesus broke every tradition. For example, Sabbath. You were not supposed to do any work on the Sabbath.

Have you read in the New Testament how the Pharisees got upset with him for healing somebody on the Sabbath? And have you wondered why so many people got healed on the Sabbath day only? Why not on other days? I have a feeling that Jesus would see a sick person and say to him, come to the synagogue on the Sabbath day. I'll heal you then. Just to irritate all the Pharisees.

The pool of Bethesda. You read in John chapter 5. Hundreds of people were lying sick there every day. Jesus saw it, saw it, saw it.

He waited for the Sabbath day to go there and heal people. Why? He could have gone all the other six days and said, we don't want to cause offense to anybody. Let's not cause offense to anybody.

If people are disturbed on the Sabbath day, the Lord could have said, I'll go there on another day. There are six days, why should I go on the Sabbath day? I'll go on other days to heal the sick. That is the logic of many Christians today who are men pleasers.

Jesus could have done that. He deliberately went on the Sabbath day to irritate the Pharisees and to expose the hollow traditions. That's why I said, if you make a list of all the traditions Christians practice, I'll break every one of them just to irritate people, to show that this godless thing that you fellows pursue.

I'm not asking you to do it. You may not have my calling, but that is my calling. Jesus, everybody doesn't have to take the whip to chase the poor people, to chase the rich people out of the church, the people who make money.

But that is the ministry of some people. My point is that Jesus was so radical and his disciples were radical too. And that's why with 11 people he changed the face of the earth in these 2,000 years.

Imagine, 11 people changed from some small unknown country called Israel influenced the whole world for 2,000 years. How did they do that? They were radical. They were not at all interested in pleasing men.

They were willing to break with every tradition of any religion. They were filled with the Holy Spirit. They were willing to lay down their lives.

They didn't care for anything on this earth. They were not interested in making money. They were interested in spreading the gospel.

You get 11 people like that even today. I tell you we can influence a major part of the place we live in. But today we have a lot of Christians who are laid back and their only interest is going to church.

My dear brothers and sisters, let's seek to follow Jesus Christ radically. And one of the things Jesus did radically was I don't know how much fellowship the Pharisees had with each other. They were more interested in their religion, going to synagogue on the Sabbath day, saying the tithe exactly and so many things like that.

But in relationships with one another, there wasn't much of it. There were Pharisees and Sadducees sitting in the meeting and they would all have a conflict with each other all the time. There were different groups there.

See, the Pharisees and Sadducees both sat in the same synagogue but they just could not hit it off with each other. They hit each other but they didn't hit it off with each other. They didn't fellowship with each other.

So, it's possible like that to be in a church to have prejudice against certain people, maybe another community or someone not so educated as I am or something like that and then you don't fellowship with them. You're like the Pharisees and Sadducees. We must break down all these barriers.

That's the other thing that Jesus did. He not only destroyed the traditions, He read in Ephesians chapter 2 that He broke down the barriers which disturbed fellowship between Jews and non-Jews. Ephesians chapter 2 it says He broke down dividing walls in verse 14.

Jesus is our peace. He made two groups into one breaking down the barrier of the dividing wall and verse 16 reconciled them both in one body. Do you know there are barriers between human beings? Barriers of

community? I mean, there's language which can be a problem but if you're really serious you will seek to fellowship with people even if you have limited language.

I never lived in Tamil Nadu all my life but when the churches started in Tamil Nadu I tried to speak to them in Tamil with broken grammar and all types of mistakes but I was so desperate to fellowship with people and communicate with them that I would gradually speak and through my mistakes I learned to speak a little Tamil. And I was eager to do that because I wanted fellowship. And they forgave me all the mistakes I made in my grammar.

You don't need good grammar to have fellowship. Did you know that? You need a heart that loves people. That's all.

But I find there are people from Tamil speaking families in our church young people who never fellowship with the brothers from Tamil Nadu. Why is that? If you're like that you've trained your children not to fellowship with people who are poorer than them or less educated. There's something wrong.

Dear brothers and sisters we need to break down these barriers. I realize that language, we can't learn all the languages there are in India but we must be willing to break down some barriers, barriers of education level or somebody is not as cultured as you are or somebody doesn't say sorry or thank you. So what? I meet a lot of people who never say sorry or thank you.

That's fine. That doesn't disturb me. I'm not asking people to be cultured in order to have fellowship with me.

And many other things like that. And one reason why we have a picnic on a Sunday which is almost a great evil in the eyes of other churches is because we value fellowship more than just a message. What do we know? What do most people go on Sunday to a church for? To listen to a message.

You can listen to a message every day of the year now if you go to YouTube and you can go to YouTube and listen to better messages than you hear in most churches. So if you're only interested in going to church to a church meeting on Sunday is to listen to a message I tell you you don't have to go to church. You can sit at home.

You've got an internet connection. You can listen to the message of your choice or the message you need to hear on a Sunday. But what we cannot get on the internet is fellowship.

There's no way no technology will ever bring that. And now the question is when we come together on Sunday so we want to have fellowship and that's why I say I'd like to have more picnics because then it gives more time for people to have fellowship with each other which is very very important where we take time to that's one thing I was thankful that here we have a place in the old building we couldn't even have a place to sit after the meeting. Everybody had to rush off.

That's made no difference to some people even though I have a bigger place and we have lunch served every Sunday, there are still people who rush off who never sit on a Sunday to fellowship with others. Why is that? The food is not good enough. Oh dear! You mean one meal in a week you can't fast for fellowship? I wonder how serious a Christian you are.

I don't believe you're a serious Christian. Oh the children can't eat this food. Bring some food for them from home.

Is that so difficult? Our meeting is only at 10 o'clock. How long does it take to prepare a few sandwiches or biscuits for your children? What all silly excuses people make. I have to go home.

Rubbish! Speak the truth and say I'm not interested in fellowship. Say the truth. That's why I don't stay to meet with people.

You're going to hear the truth if you come here. That's for sure and I don't care who you are. Even if you've been sitting here 30 years, if you're like that, that's what you are and you better realize it now rather than hear the Lord tell you that in the day of judgment.

It's better to hear it now from me than to hear it from Jesus Christ in the final day. Value fellowship. Value fellowship.

You know when we make the commitment list, I keep asking how the brothers who make it, I say do you see this person really eager to have fellowship? Why should you have people on the commitment list who don't stay back after Sunday for the meeting? I say knock their names off the commitment list. They come only for breaking a bread? These are things we should take seriously. There's absolutely no excuse.

I've come to meetings when I'm sick. When I have fever. I've gone to meetings.

I've been healed in the meeting. You honor God, he'll honor you. I'll tell you that.

He really will. And teach your children that also. The children of course are very eager to be here to play games and things like that.

Fellowship is very, very important. So if you come to a picnic only to play games and you're not interested in fellowship, again something's wrong. There's nothing wrong in playing games, but fellowship is the purpose of our coming together.

Please remember this, not just today, but all the time. And fellowship cannot come if you don't talk to people. We are all so busy.

Most people have to go to work so early, come back so late. Almost 12 hours of the day is gone for many people. Just going and commuting to work and coming back and traveling.

That Sunday is really the only day that most people have. And Saturday as well for some. We must take time to build fellowship.

Otherwise, that's why I asked you, have you read that book, The Congregation, The Club and The Church? Otherwise we are not a church. If you read that you'll understand. Fellowship is very, very important.

That horizontal arm of the cross. Otherwise you're just a vertical pole. I have fellowship with Jesus.

Wonderful. That's not a cross. That's a vertical pole.

What about the horizontal part? Fellowship with one another. It's like people say, I make sure that my conscience is clear with God. What about your conscience clear with each other? Have you forgiven everybody? Have you asked forgiveness from everybody? Those are the important aspects of the horizontal.

So I just wanted to emphasize that. I know you guys are eager to go and play the game so I'll stop. No, I'm only joking.

I really believe that you're eager to hear the word of God. I only pray that you really seek two things I mentioned today. Read at least one book in a month.

I would read more than that but at least read one new book. Some of our books are so small. Read one book in a month and they're so cheap.

It can really change your life. Develop that habit. There are books by other godly men that you could read, Tozer and people like that.

The other thing is seek to build fellowship. It's never possible. Even on a one-on-one basis not just on Sunday.

If somebody's living near you try and meet at least once a month and have some fellowship. Not a meeting. Just to get to know one another.

And make sure that you're forgiving everybody always. I live in a state where I have nothing in my heart against anybody. I can say that before God.

I love the people who took me to court and made me go to the Supreme Court for 10 years of my life. I love them. I don't wish any evil for them.

I wish the best for them. And all the other people who have spoken evil against me and done harm I can say before God I love them. Not only forgive them.

I love them. And I want the best for them. My conscience is 100% clear every single day that Jesus can come anytime.

I don't owe anybody even one rupee. I don't make anybody work for me without paying for it. Because I want to be always ready for the coming of Christ.

If you're a serious Christian like that your life will grow with leaps and bounds and your fellowship with others will also increase. And to tell you honestly I only want a fellowship with people who are serious Christians. I don't want a fellowship with people who are just half-hearted because they're not interested.

I'm willing to help them to come up if they want to. But if they're not serious about following the Lord I say, go and find some other church. Why are you wasting time here? Anyway, I hope we'll have more fellowship with one another today and in the coming days.

And that's the purpose of our organizing a picnic in case you did not know why we're having a picnic on a Sunday. Breaking with tradition and building fellowship. God bless you.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we pray that you'll help us to value the things that you value and to really seek to build, to never to build walls that you have broken down. And if there are walls, to break them down and pursue peace with all.

Thank you for this day. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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