

Brokenness Essential to Build the Church

by Zac Poonen

The church must be built on a revelation of Christ and submission to authority in order to be a living, vibrant church.

Duration: 1:41:21

Scripture: Matthew 16:18, Matthew 23:2

Topics: "Church Building", "Spiritual Authority"

Description

This sermon focuses on Matthew 16 being the first mention of the word 'church' in the Bible, where Jesus declares He will build His church on the rock of Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. It emphasizes the importance of having a revelation from God about Jesus to successfully build a church. Additionally, it highlights the two commendable qualities Jesus acknowledged in the Pharisees despite their flaws: their correct doctrines and their respect for authority. The sermon also delves into the significance of Jesus' submission to the Father's will, showcasing the necessity of brokenness and surrender even in Jesus' life to exercise authority in the church.

Transcript

Matthew 16 is the very first time in the Bible when the word church comes. It's the first time Jesus used it himself and he said, On this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades, or the powers of spiritual darkness, will not overpower it. That rock is what Simon Peter confessed in verse 16.

When Simon Peter said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God, Jesus replied to him and said, Blessed are you, Simon, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you. It was a revelation that he got about Jesus Christ as the Son of God. And on that revealed Christ, which is the rock, Jesus said, I will build my church.

So, what I see there is, we need to see Jesus clearly if we want to build a church. And I believe that the main reason why so many people who try to build a church never succeed is because they haven't got a revelation from God about Jesus. They've heard about Jesus and all they've heard about Jesus is what the rest of the world has heard about Jesus.

His external sufferings and how he died for their sins. It's true that the vast majority of Christians only know an external Christ. And it's good for all of us to check up our own life and see whether we know anything more about Jesus than a worldly person who reads the Gospels knows.

There are a lot of Hindus in India who have a lot of respect for Christ. Mahatma Gandhi was one of the famous Hindu men, leaders in India. He used to read the Sermon on the Mount almost every day and seek to practice it.

But he never built a church. He cared for the poor, lived very simply, had a tremendous respect for Jesus Christ, more than a lot of Christians. But it was the external Christ, you know, the one who put his arms around lepers, cared for the sick, died for the sins the world suffered without opening his mouth.

And that is a Christ you can see without any revelation. You don't need revelation to see that Christ. You just read the Gospels like you read a history book.

I mean, if you read a history book about any person, biography, you know all about that person, his external life. And if all you know about Jesus is his external life, it's not by revelation when Peter, when Jesus asked him, Who do you say I am? And he said, You're the Christ, the Son of the living God. Remember, that was a time when all of Israel rejected him.

They said, He's not the Messiah. He can't be. Because their understanding of the Messiah was one who would come and deliver them from the Romans.

But Peter, he was not a great scholar. The Pharisees were greater scholars than him. But he got revelation.

And that teaches us that it's not those who study the Bible the most who become, who understand Christ really. And I believe that a reason why so many Christians live defeated lives or they're not able to really integrate with the building of a local church is because they have not got a revelation of Christ. So they're not on the rock.

So we need to understand what this rock is. You know, the Roman Catholic Church says Peter is the rock. That's not true because the word he used for Peter was Petros.

And the way you're for rock is Petra, which is a huge, mighty rock. And Petros is a small little stone. So what he was saying is you're a small little stone, Peter.

But on this mighty rock, which you just spoke about, a revelation from heaven of Christ on that rock, I will build my church. And when it's built on that rock, all the forces of hell will not be able to overpower it. We see so many churches overpowered by the forces of hell, completely destroyed or, you know, some churches just fold up.

That's one way of destruction. And the worst way of destruction is where it doesn't fold up and just continues on in a dead state. Maybe 10,000 people, but completely dead.

That's worse than the church folding up. I'd say if life has gone out of a church, the best it folds up instead of bringing more dishonor to the Lord's name. But a church with a huge structure and so many people, but doesn't have the life of Christ throbbing and setting it on fire, that's more dead than any other church.

The gates of hell have prevailed against it. So, when we try to come together as a little fellowship in a home and try to, you say, why in the world there are so many churches already? Why do we need to start a new one? It must be because we stand for something which is different and distinct. And if you don't see that difference and distinction, you will always be a problem in the church.

You may think you're very wholehearted, but you're a constant nuisance in the church because you haven't seen the whole purpose and distinction of the true church of Jesus Christ. So, we need to see what is the rock on which this church is built. It is the revealed Christ, the Christ revealed by the Holy Spirit.

And when we look at that, we'll see some things which we've probably not seen before. And then he told him about authority. See, when you are building this church on the rock, we have spiritual authority.

The Lord told Peter, I'll give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven. Whatever you lose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

Now, the Lord didn't say that to everybody. He said that to Peter. Because God gave Peter a position of leadership in the church.

He said, I'm giving you the keys of the kingdom. I'm not giving it to everybody in the church. I'm giving it to you.

The keys are a picture of authority. And you have authority to bind things on earth and loose things on earth. Now, a lot of Christians, that's another thing they don't like.

They don't like authority. They'd like to have it themselves. But they don't like to be under anybody's authority.

And they become the agents of Satan. Because the first sin in the world was when the highest angel didn't want to be under authority. His name was Lucifer, as far as we know.

We don't know his exact name. But we read in Isaiah 14 that he said, I'm not going to be subject to anyone. I'm going to ascend.

I'm going to be above everybody else. That was the origin of sin. A lot of people, you know, when we tell people to turn from sin, a lot of people, understanding of repentance is, I give up smoking, I give up drinking, I give up dancing, I give up gambling, and I've given up sin.

No. If you haven't given up the lust to have authority and never be under anyone's authority, you haven't given up sin really. You've given up certain externals.

Because the first sin, you go back to the root of sin in the universe, it was a created being saying, I will not be under anyone's authority. And I have seen through the years that it's people with that spirit who come into the church, who try to destroy the church. But, I mean, I've seen that in India.

That there were people who came into our fellowship in the early days, they wanted to be elders. And I've taught for years that the number one qualification to be an elder in a church is you don't desire to be an elder. If you desire to be elder, you're unfit for leadership completely.

And that eliminates a lot of people because a lot of people look for position and authority. And because I had known the Lord for some time, I could discern these people straight away. And I'd made sure that they would never be anywhere near authority in the church.

They'd be put on the back seat and I would tell them to their face, I don't even think some of you, I don't even think you're converted. And they would get offended and they would leave. And I say, praise the

Lord, you left.

The nuisance has left. Because, you know, when we are building the church, we've got to be very careful that everybody's got the same spirit. If people don't have the same spirit and somebody else is coming in to create disturbance and confusion, my advice to such people is leave.

Because we're trying to put bricks on one on top of the other and you're pulling them down. I said, if you can't build, don't destroy. So, we've had examples like that and I see that even with Jesus.

So, when Jesus gave Peter this, the keys and said, I give you authority. He gave it to some of the other apostles too. He gave Paul authority.

In fact, we read in 1 Corinthians chapter 5 that Paul had such authority. He wasn't an elder in Corinth, but he was an apostle and he told the elders in Corinth, there's a guy in your church who's living in sin. And with the authority the Lord has given me, I'm handing over that person to Satan.

Imagine the authority an apostle has, to long distance, 500 miles away or a thousand miles away, to hand somebody over to Satan, so that his flesh will be destroyed, so that he repents. I mean, not to destroy him as a person, give him some sickness or some problem in his life, so that he repents. And later on that guy did repent, you read in 2 Corinthians too.

But I see there what tremendous authority the Lord gave to Paul and God backed it up. We read in another place where somebody tried to hinder Paul's preaching in Acts 13. He said, you're going to be blind for a season.

And the guy became blind immediately. So I find in scripture that in the building of the church, the Lord gives authority to some people. He said, as soon as he said, I'll build my church.

Jesus is the one who builds the church, but he communicates that authority. The keys are always a picture of authority in the Bible to some people. And they have the authority to bind things, and they get bound, and to lose things, they get loosed.

Now, of course, it's very rare to find people who can handle that type of authority, because a lot of people, when they get authority, become very proud. And then God takes away that authority. And that's why it's very rare to find people who exercise authority.

Very rare. I mean, I myself have found very, very few people in my life who have real spiritual authority and don't get puffed up with it. Most of them get puffed up, and then they fall into the hands of the devil themselves.

But I found hundreds of people who don't want to be under authority. There are many like that. Now, in Jesus' ministry also, you find a lot of people who are offended with Jesus himself.

I mean, leave alone with those whom he appointed, sorry, but with Jesus himself. See, when Jesus sent his disciples out, let me show you one more example in Luke chapter 10. Luke's gospel chapter 10.

He said, he appointed 70 others, two by two. These were people whom the Lord sent out with authority. And he told them, whenever you enter a city, verse 10, if they do not receive you, I'm sending you out with authority, and they don't accept your authority.

Go out into the streets of that city and say, even the dust of your city, which clings to our feet, we wipe off and protest against you. But be sure, the kingdom of God has come nearer to the city. And I say to you, verse 12, it will be more tolerable in that day, in the final day of judgment, for Sodom than for that city.

Can you imagine what a terrible thing it is to reject the authority of God, when God chooses to exercise it through a human being like Peter. It will be more tolerable, not immediately, immediately look as everything is okay. But in the day of judgment, those who have rejected someone sent by God, Jesus said, people in Sodom will have an easier time in the day of judgment than such people.

You know, I don't know whether you've read these verses and see, but through the years, I mean, we've been planning churches for 37 years now in many places. And I have seen these words fulfilled exactly. I've seen how it has gone in the long term, not in the short term, but in the long term, with people who reject what God is trying to say, who reject the authority of God when it's manifested through a human being.

It's very difficult because the spirit of the world is, who do you think you are? I'm equal to you. Well, the thing is, in the church, as far as acceptance before God is concerned, we are all equal. Man and woman are equal before God in acceptance because we are accepted in Christ.

And the senior most apostle and elder brother is equal to the person who's converted today. As far as acceptance before God is concerned, no difference. From the least to the greatest, the Bible says, all can know him as father.

The youngest baby can call him dad. The most mature believer calls him dad. And both are going to have equal access to God.

As far as access to God is concerned, a little child and a grown up person is equal. In a home, if your child is born again, he may be only 10 years old, and you're a father, he has equal access to God as you. You don't have better access to God than your 10-year-old son, if he's born again.

But yet, in your home, you as a father have got authority. That doesn't change. I mean, your son can't say, hey, listen, you're nobody.

I've got equal access to God like you, so who said you're an authority over me? That would be rebellion against God-appointed authority in a home. And even the heathen know that a father is an authority in a home. But I found that man accepts authority everywhere, except in the church.

All fathers and mothers will exercise their authority at home over their children, saying, hey, I'm your authority at home. You may be accepted by God, but at home I'm your authority. They accept authority of the traffic police on the roads.

If a traffic police pulls them up, they stop. They don't say, hey, who are you? I'm as much a citizen of this country as you are. I couldn't care less for you.

Nobody does that. They meekly, quietly pull up to the side of the road, because an authority has told them to pull up. They submit to the authority of the government in paying taxes and anything, because they're always afraid of punishment.

A child is afraid of punishment, and that's why he submits to authority. You submit to the authority of the traffic police because you're afraid of punishment. You submit to the authority of the government in paying taxes, because you could be punished if you don't.

But in the church, we have no such fear. I've seen this in so many places. They don't respect authority because they say, who do you think you are? Words that they would never say to a secular authority.

They'd never turn to a traffic policeman and say, who do you think you are? But in the church, to a spiritual authority, which is ten times more important than secular authority, they have a spirit of rebellion. Sometimes it's manifested in words, and sometimes it's manifested in an attitude. And those are the agents of Satan in every church, because Satan is the one who infects people.

It's an infection, worse infection than any other sickness. Infects people with a spirit of rebellion. So, I mention this because when it says, you know, I will build my church, and the powers of hell will not be able to overcome it.

We say, well, what are the powers of hell? What is the power of Satan? I try to, you know, like we meditate on the characteristics of God. God is holy. God is loving.

And in the church, there must be purity, there must be love. But in the Trinity, there's also submission. Jesus is equal to the Father.

Lucifer, the head of the angels, was definitely not equal to the Father. He was a created being, and he wanted to rebel against authority, but Jesus, who was equal to the Father, he had no need to submit to the Father, because all eternity he was equal. He voluntarily submitted, came to the earth.

And remember this. You know, it's very important for building the church, because we say the church is the body of Christ. We all say that.

Church is the body of Christ. Okay? He has given us a pattern in the first body of Christ. Why is the church called the body of Christ? In the Old Testament, there was no such title.

In the Old Testament, Israel was called the bride of Jehovah, the people of God. They were even called kingdoms and priests, the kingdom of priests in Exodus. These are titles given to us also, kings and priests, family of God.

Israel was called the household of God. Church is called the household of God. But there was one title never given to Israel.

Israel was never called the body of Jehovah. Church is called the body of Christ. There's a reason, because Christ came in a body.

And like I was saying the other day, Jesus Christ was not born in a palace. He was born in a cow shed. The first body of Christ was born in a very despised, small, out-of-the-way place.

And I've seen through the years, that whenever Jesus builds his body today, it's not in the big cathedrals and huge church buildings, it's in some corner, some out-of-the-way little house, where the body of Christ begins. But many people don't have discernment to know that. Like all the people living around that cow shed in Bethlehem, they never realized that the body of Christ is next door in that cow shed.

The shepherds knew it. Some wise men in the east heard about it. God reveals it.

You don't have to be poor, you don't have to be rich. The shepherds were very poor. The wise men were kings.

So, that shows us that the body of Christ can be revealed to poor people like shepherds. It can be revealed to rich people who are as rich as kings. There's no distinction in God's eyes between the poor and the rich.

Some people think that you have an advantage because you're poor, or you have an advantage because you're rich. You don't have any advantage. Education, wealth, gives you no advantage.

But a hunger for God. Those wise men from the east, they had a hunger for God, and that's why God revealed it to them. And the shepherds who had a hunger for God, they were not great scholars.

But the Pharisees in Jerusalem, they never knew about the birth of the body of Christ. And even today, the great people who know the Bible and all that, very often don't know where the body of Christ is being formed in a city. So, the body of Christ is a very significant title.

And when we see, how did that body of Christ come to that cow shed? How did Jesus come in an earthly body? He voluntarily chose. It's very important to understand this. The first step was not going to the cross.

The first step was not even being a carpenter. The first step was not even submitting to Joseph and Mary. Those are all subsequent steps.

What is the first step? The first step was, like it says in Philippians 2.5, Though he was equal with the Father from all eternity, he did not cling on to that. He did the opposite of what Lucifer did. He submitted to an authority who was equal to him.

That is the spirit that builds the church. And that's what I mean, that many people have not seen the revealed Christ. See what I'm telling you just now about Jesus Christ.

I think many of you have probably never seen it in your whole life. You've seen that he cared for the lepers and he preached the sermon on the mount and he healed the sick and cleansed the lepers and died on the cross and rose again and all that. This is all the external Christ.

But the inward Christ is, very few people see it. And I'll tell you why. It's very important to understand this.

In my life, I know from my own life, as long as I was satisfied with a good external testimony, I saw only the external Christ. If you're satisfied with your external testimony, you will only see the external Christ. But when a day comes in your life when you really long for an inner walk with God in secret, that day the Holy Spirit will begin to reveal to you the inner Christ which Mahatma Gandhi and so many other people have never seen and which the vast majority of believers have never seen.

A lot of believers pride themselves on the fact that we're pretty good Christians. Pretty good Christians where? On the outside. But not on the inside.

See, I often like to point out the fact that with all the bad things there were in the Pharisees, a lot of bad things in the Pharisees, they were hypocrites, they were proud. The Bible says they were hypocrites, they

were proud, they loved money, they despised the poor, they took advantage of poor widows, etc. But do you know that there were two good qualities in the Pharisees? And Jesus himself gave a certificate about two good qualities in the Pharisees.

It's important to see that. First is Matthew 23, verses 2 and 3. Matthew 23, verses 2 and 3. Jesus says, The scribes and Pharisees have seated themselves in the seat of Moses. And everything that they tell you to do, do.

That means their doctrines are all correct. Jesus will never tell you everything that the Hindus tell you to do, do, everything that the Buddhists tell you to do, do, or everything that the Roman Catholics tell you to do, do. He will not even say everything that the Pentecostals tell you to do, do.

When Jesus says, or everything that the Jehovah's Witnesses tell you to do, do. When Jesus says about a group of people, they, everything they tell you to do, do. He wouldn't say that about the Sadducees.

The Sadducees were people who didn't believe in angels and didn't believe in the resurrection. So, Jesus would not give that certificate to the Sadducees because their doctrines were wrong. But he gave a certificate to the Pharisees saying, everything, not 90%, all, all that they tell you to do, do.

In other words, their doctrines were absolutely correct. Only thing, they didn't obey those doctrines themselves. What they taught was correct.

So, that's one good thing about the Pharisees. The second good thing about the Pharisees is in Matthew 23 and verse 25. He says to the Pharisees in the middle of that verse, you clean the outside of the cup.

Inside is dirty. So, what is the certificate there? Your external life is very clean. There's no dirt in your external life.

You don't drink or smoke or gamble or commit adultery or do the horrible sins that other people commit. I mean, you got a lot of sins in your thoughts. You got a lot of pride in your attitudes and you pretend a lot inwardly and you got grudges and unforgiving spirit in your heart.

Inside is all filthy. I'm not talking about that, but your external life, boy, it's really clean. Everybody admires you for a good external life.

So, what are the two good qualities of the Pharisees? One, their doctrines were perfect. Second, their external life was very clean. Now, we got to apply this to ourselves.

If your doctrines are all correct and your external life is very clean that people admire it, you could be the biggest Pharisee in town. But did you ever think of that? A lot of Christians think, because my doctrines are correct and my external life and testimony before men is good, I must be a pretty good Christian. Rubbish, you're just a good Pharisee.

Many people haven't seen that. And the devil doesn't want us to see it. The devil wants us to think we're very good Christians when we're very good Pharisees.

And he wants us to live in that self-deception all our life till we wake up one day and stand before the Lord and the Lord says, you were just a Pharisee all your life because you had only two good things in your life. Your doctrines were all correct and your external life was very good before men. You had a good testimony before men.

But in your inner life, you had grudges, bitterness, you were backbiting at home, you were fighting with your husband and wife at home and you gossip about all the people in the church at home and you speak evil and this, that and the other. You were just, inside of your cup was as filthy as any rotten sinner in the world. I don't want to hear that when Christ comes back.

It's the inner life that matters. That's what I mean. And the reason why we never see the inner Christ is because we are not interested in cleaning up our own inner life.

And the Lord says, why should I reveal the inner Christ to you when you're only interested in external testimony? It's a great warning. I want to say to all of you, my brothers and sisters, if you are only interested in having a good testimony before men, the Holy Spirit will never reveal the inner Christ to you. I'm telling you from my own experience of 16 years after being born again, I never saw the inner Christ.

I had a very good testimony, I'll prove you. I was absolutely right in all my doctrines, but I never knew I was a Pharisee. I'm so thankful that God jolted me out of that deception and made me seek Him with fasting and prayer and said, Lord, deliver me from this.

I don't want to get a surprise in the day of judgment and discover that I was just fooling myself all my life. And I decided that day, that's way back in 1975, 38 years ago, I said, Lord, I never again want to live for the testimony of others, to find any satisfaction that other people think I'm okay, because it counts for nothing. I don't want to find a satisfaction in the fact that my doctrines are all correct.

What do you think about my inner life? Have I got anything of the spirit of Lucifer, rebelling against authority, questioning authority? As I said, as far as I know, I have never rebelled against the authority of my parents at home when I was small. As far as I know, I have never rebelled against secular authority. I've always paid my taxes, I've obeyed traffic laws and government rules.

I say, Lord, I want to have the same spirit when I come to the church. I don't want to be like these godless people who claim to be Christians, but respect authority everywhere except in the church, who want to exercise authority in their own home over their children, but will never submit themselves to authority in the church. Remember what Jesus said, Peter, you've got a revelation.

You're blessed. You've seen me in a revelation from the Father. On this revealed Christ, I will build my church, and I'm going to give you authority in this church.

And whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven. He's connected it with building the church. So, I find that whenever God, you see, when he establishes a home, God is the one who establishes a home.

He gets people married. Before that, they were single. They didn't have a home.

All of you, before you got married, you were single. But the moment you got married, I don't know whether you realize that, the moment you got married, God established your home. Immediately, he established authority.

He said, the husband is the head of the wife. That's authority. That's not a man's choice.

That's God's choice. And if a woman does not submit to her husband, she's rebelling not against her husband. She's rebelling against God.

Because God is the one who established that authority. And when children are born into that home, it says, children obey your parents. That's the first commandment with promise.

Immediately they come under authority as soon as they are born. Wherever God establishes anything, the first thing he establishes is authority. As I told you, the moment he established your home, as soon as your wedding ceremony was over, he established an authority.

The husband is the head of the wife. As soon as a baby is born, he has established authority over that child saying, Hey, you are under your parents. As soon as he establishes society, we read in Romans 13, do you know that even heathen rulers are servants of God? Have you ever read that verse? Romans 13 it says here, verse 1, let every Christian, every person, be in subjection to the governing authorities.

This is a verse that all of us need to understand. There is no authority except from God. And every authority which exists is established by God.

Romans 13.1 is a verse that most Christians don't even know. That there is no authority except from God. And every authority is established by God.

And if a person resists authority, whether in the government or in a church, he is resisting God's law. And he will receive judgment upon himself. In one way or the other.

Because these rulers are placed by God to conduct things so that people don't go into bad behavior. So, he says in the middle of verse 3, do you want to live without any fear of authority? Then do what is good. Submit to them.

For this authority, verse 4, is a servant of God. To you for good. And verse 6, this is why you pay taxes.

Because rulers are servants of God. Who believed that the income tax department is a servant of God? I don't think many people believe that. Or a prime minister is a servant of God.

And you know, when Paul wrote this to the Romans, Do you know who was the ruler in Rome? A wicked emperor called Nero. Who finally chopped off Paul's head. And Paul is telling them, it doesn't matter if the ruler is a wicked man.

God has appointed him. Recognize the sovereignty of God there. When I see all these Christians in America nowadays, having big disputes over whether this man should be president or that man should be president.

All these arguments, Christians bringing Christianity into all this. It's all rubbish. Absolute rubbish.

I mean, both of them are not born again. So, whom are you supporting? You are supporting one non-born again person against another non-born again person just because you have a preference for one over the other. I say, but this man is making laws which are against God's word.

Do you think emperor Nero established laws which are according to God's word? No. Most Christians I find have no understanding of scriptures teaching on authority. And that is one of the big reasons why they do not grow spiritually.

In our younger days, God uses authority to break us. And we cannot build a church if we are not broken people. The Lord had to break Moses over 40 years because he was such a strong leader at the age of

40.

And God said, you are unfit to lead my people. Only broken people can lead my people. And he took him to the wilderness and broke him for 40 years.

Till Moses said, Lord, I am totally unfit. Then he said, now you are fit. Because now you have no desire to be a leader.

Now you have, that's what I say, the number one condition for leadership is you have no desire to be a leader. I don't mean with a false humility to say, no, no, no, I don't want to be a leader. But you are absolutely convinced deep in your heart that you are totally unfit.

Moses was convinced about that at the age of 80. At the age of 40, he felt, I am pretty capable. And the Lord told him, you think you are capable, but you can't be a leader in my kingdom.

And the same way with Jacob. God, you know, Jacob was, God had a great purpose for Jacob. He was going to be the, one of the founding fathers of Israel.

And through his seed would come the Messiah. But God couldn't do that before he broke him. And he took him for 20 years and put him in his father-in-law's house.

It's very interesting that God broke both Moses and Jacob through a difficult father-in-law. And God uses amazing means to break people. And after 20 years in Laban's house, one day, Jacob was still not broken.

Then one day God dislocated his hip and he had to walk with a cane. He was relatively speaking a young man because those days people lived up to 175 and 200. So even if he was 60 years old, he was a young man.

But he had to walk with a stick. Imagine if you are a 20-year-old young man walking with a stick. And people say, what happened? God dislocated my hip.

And the Lord told Jacob, now you become Israel. Because you are broken. And I see that through the years that God can never use an unbroken man.

And I've seen in our work in India, so many unbroken people come to the church. I say, you're fit to clean the toilets. You're not fit to lead the church, sorry.

You can spend your life cleaning the toilets or sweeping the floor or laying the mats. But leadership, not in a million years. You've got to be broken.

You know the Bible, so what? The devil knows the Bible better than you. I won't make him a leader in the church. Bible knowledge is not the thing.

It's brokenness. The devil is not broken. That's the problem.

And God uses authority over us to break us. The interesting thing is, when you think of the body of Christ, Jesus is the body of Christ. I told you he was born in a stable, in a cow shed.

But also think of how that body of Christ grew for 30 years. What was he experiencing in 30 years? Tell me. What was he experiencing when he was 10 years old, the body of Christ? See, I'm trying to show you

the inner life of Christ, which some of you may have never thought of, never seen.

Because maybe some of you were not too keen on an inner life. Maybe you've never judged yourself from inner wrong attitudes. And wrong attitudes towards your husband or your father or your spiritual authority or secular authority or anywhere.

You've had pretty high thoughts about yourself, which is one indication of an unbroken man. You think you're very important. A broken man never thinks he's important.

He never wants to show off. It's insecure babies who want to show off. Showing off is a mark of kindergarten.

Not of mature people. Godly men never want to show off anything. But the more you're a baby, the more insecure you are.

You always want to show off that you're somebody. And it's very easy to identify such people because they're insecure. They always want to take some prominent position.

You know, I've seen in some Pentecostal churches, some women will get up and prophesy or speak in tongues. There's nothing worthwhile they're about to say, but they just want a little prominence. And they get up and insecure, unbroken.

It never happens in our church because we quench it straight away and make them sit down. And they get offended, they get offended. But brokenness is very important and God uses it.

What happened to Jesus when he was ten years old? I'll tell you what happened. Do you think Joseph and Mary always were perfect in the way they treated Jesus? No. The best father on earth.

I mean, I tried to be a good father, but I made so many mistakes as a father in the way I disciplined and brought up my children. Nobody's perfect. Joseph and Mary were under the old covenant.

They were not even in the new covenant. They were definitely not perfect. They must have made so many mistakes.

Maybe shown some partiality to some of Jesus' younger brothers. And asked him to do something when he was very keen on doing something else. I mean, you see now, your children are, how they resent parents telling them to do something.

Because they want to do something else. Maybe they want to go and play. Or they want to do something else and you tell them to do this and they say no.

Or mom, wait. But I don't believe Jesus ever said to his mom, wait, I'll come later. Or to his dad, I can't do that now.

He had a will. Jesus was made like us and he had a will. He had no sin.

But he had a will. You know, in Gethsemane he had to deny that will, not my will. And I believe throughout his, this is the inner Jesus, throughout his earthly life, he denied that will.

To do what pleased his father. His father told him, submit to Joseph and Mary. If it's difficult, fine, submit.

That broke him. Even Jesus needed to be broken. Not of sin.

But that human self will. What is happening in Gethsemane? Gethsemane was the last picture of a will that was being broken. And without that brokenness, Jesus himself could not exercise the authority that he was supposed to exercise in a church.

So there's something precious about, I want to read to you Isaiah 53. Here's part of how he was broken. Isaiah 53 verse 7. He was oppressed and he was afflicted.

And he did not open his mouth. Isaiah 53 verse 7. Like a lamb led to the slaughter, like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, he did not open his mouth. Twice it says.

It's a very difficult thing for us as human beings to keep our mouth shut. You know that very well, as well as I do. That when you are being treated unjustly, to keep your mouth shut is very, very difficult.

When you think people are not treating you right, keep your mouth shut. When he was oppressed and afflicted, he didn't open his mouth. When he was being sheared, it's like when somebody tears your reputation to pieces or takes your rights from you.

He didn't open his mouth. This is the Christ we need to see if we want to build a church. And when God allows you to go through such circumstances, it may be in your home, it may be in your place where your dad is very unreasonable.

I mean, if you had a very reasonable father, you're lucky. But I found people who had very unreasonable, unconverted fathers, who turn out better Christians than those who had very good, considerate fathers. Because if you've had a very good, spiritual, considerate father, I mean, you've probably never had much chance to be broken, but if you had a very unreasonable, hard, maybe a drunkard of a father, boy, you'd have had a lot of chance to be broken.

But you may not have been broken because you didn't react against it properly. Or it could be in your place of work. You have a very difficult boss, and all you do is come home and speak evil about him.

You never allowed yourself to be broken. You never saw God there. You never saw God in that circumstance because you had no interest in an inner life.

Maybe your only interest was to have a good testimony before men externally, like the Pharisees. But if you had desired an inner life, Jesus would have shown you, this is the place where I want to break you. Break your pride and your stubbornness and make you an Israel, a mighty man of God or a mighty woman of God.

Maybe you lost the opportunity. I've seen some young people come to our church, CFC, Bangalore. Very zealous, a lot of knowledge of the Bible.

But in the years they are there, young people, you know, in the late teens, 19, you know, the time when most young people think they know the most and they know nothing, and they know the least is somewhere between the ages of 16 and 30. That's the time when they know the least, but they think they know the most. And I've seen young people at that age come to CFC and had wonderful opportunities to submit to the elders and to be broken, but it doesn't happen.

They just increase in knowledge. They get puffed up. They think, I know everything.

I understand everything. I'm sharp. I'm clever.

I understand the doctrine. But I can see clearly, God will never use these people. And I've told some of them also, you got a lot of money because your dad is rich.

But I don't have much hope for you because you spent six years here and God never succeeded in breaking you. You miss some of the wonderful opportunities in your life to be broken so that one day God could use you. Jesus was broken at home for 30 years before God the Father said, I am well pleased with you.

Now I'll anoint you with the Holy Spirit. And in three and a half years, he did the greatest ministry that any human being ever did because he had spent 30 years being broken. It's not just knowledge of scriptures.

Jesus knew the scriptures at the age of 12. If knowledge of the scriptures is enough to make us lead God's work, Jesus was already at 12. And God said, no, you know the scriptures, but that's not enough.

You need to be broken in the next 18 years. And if you're broken at the age of 30, I'll give you the most fantastic ministry that anybody's ever seen. I've seen this in my life with different people, younger people who have submitted to authority and been broken, and I've seen the fantastic way in which God has used them.

And I've seen other people who have just gloried in their Bible knowledge and they come to the church and they listen to a lot of my tapes and CDs and say, I know this, I know this, I've heard Brother Zach, I've heard hundreds of his sermons, I know everything. And I see nothing happens in their life. God doesn't bear witness to their life because all they have is knowledge.

It says here in verse 10, the Lord was pleased to crush him. Wow! The Father was pleased to crush Jesus? What in the world did he do wrong? Nothing. But as a human being, he had to be crushed.

And it was not on the cross. He was crushed for 30 years at home. Not only by his parents.

You know, I've seen, for example, if there's one good boy in a class, say, take a class, first grade class or second grade class, one really good boy and a lot of other pretty evil boys, they'll all gang up against him, try to provoke him, and when they find that he doesn't get angry, they try their best to make him angry. And they'll think they've succeeded if they've made this boy lose his temper once. People are evil like that.

I mean, you've probably seen it. I've seen it myself. And I can imagine, the Bible says Jesus had four younger brothers and two younger sisters, and they were not living in a rich house where everybody had their own bedrooms.

They were in the poor carpenter's house. They probably all slept on the floor in the same room. Because I've seen such homes in the villages in India.

And so, Jesus didn't have a private room to retreat into when the temperature got hot in the house. He was irritated by his brothers and sisters who would gang up against him. Because it says in John chapter 7, his brothers just did not believe him.

I mean, they didn't believe what their mother said, this is the son of God. No, rubbish. They did not believe him.

It says in John chapter 7. Imagine having Jesus living in your house and living such a perfect life, never getting irritated, never getting angry, always obedient, always obedient to mommy and daddy. It irritates, you know, an obedient, perfect child irritates other imperfect people. I often use the example when Jesus was playing some game outside in whatever was the equivalent of cricket those days with a bat and a ball, and his turn came to bat.

And at that moment, his mother said, Jesus, come here, I want you to do some work for me. I've never seen a child whose turn came to bat and who drops the bat and obeys his mother. Never.

Everyone would say, mommy, just wait five minutes, which means about 45 minutes, then I'll come. But Jesus would have dropped his bat and said, fellas, mommy's calling me, I've got to go home. And all the boys would have teased him.

Oh, you're mama's boy, eh? Come on, be a man. He wouldn't care for their ridicules, and he just decided to obey. It pleased the father to crush him.

It really crushes a boy, I'll tell you. A ten-year-old boy who wants to bat when it's time to bat, and he has to drop that and miss the opportunity completely and go home to go and draw some water from the well for his mother. It really crushes him.

If you don't believe it, try it on one of your children, see, it'll really crush him. And Jesus obeyed. A lot of us think he was anointed with the Holy Spirit.

He was anointed with the Holy Spirit after he was broken. Moses was given authority after he was broken. Not when he was 40.

When he was 80. Jacob became Israel when he was broken. Peter was broken through his denying the Lord.

That really broke him. When he had failed. Till then he thought he was the leader of the disciples.

But after he had denied the Lord three times, he said, I'm not fit to be an apostle. I'll go back to fishing. That's what you read in John 21.

He says, fellas, I'm no longer an apostle. I've finished with that. I'm a total failure.

I denied the Lord three times. I'm going to go back to fishing. But the Lord had not given up on him.

The Lord said, it's only now, Peter, that you're ready. But you've got one more area to be broken. You've already been broken as an apostle.

You thought you were a great guy as an apostle, but you realized you denied me. But there's one area you still think you're pretty good. And that's fishing.

I have to break you there also. So you'll struggle all night tonight, and you'll catch not a single fish. And you realize you're a pretty useless fisherman as well.

And he wondered that night, how is it I, such an expert fisherman, can't catch any fish? God's trying to break you, brother. And God broke him. You know, God breaks us in our strong points.

I don't know what your strong point is. But that's the very point at which God wants to break you. And I'll tell you this.

If he does not succeed in breaking you there, you will all your life be a useless child of God. You may get to heaven. I'm not questioning that.

But you'll get to heaven with a regret that will last for all eternity. You don't believe me? Some people say, how can that be? I believe it. Supposing you stand before the Lord, and you see your entire life's work burnt up as wood, hay and straw.

Would you have a regret? Even if you're saved? I think I'll have a lot of regret. If I say, Lord, all my life, you mean I was just deceived? You mean all my life I spent doing something which is not going to last forever? And I thought I was a wonderful Christian? The Lord will say, yes, you thought you were a wonderful Christian. You never allowed me to break you.

You were so stubborn. I tried so many methods to break you, but you just were so stubborn and resented it, that I finally gave up on you. And said, go your way.

I really believe that there are some people whom God has just put on the shelf, and said, I can do no more with you. Because every time I try to break you, you rebel against it. I fear that.

I remember in my younger days, the Lord, I left the Navy with great hopes that I would serve God with a man who I respected as the most godly man I ever met in India. This is way back in 1966. He was a man who really encouraged me.

And I was just 26 years old. I quit my job and I said, boy, I was not interested in money. I had plenty of money in the Navy.

I chucked all that and gave it all away for God's work. I said, I want to serve God. And I thought, here this brother who I respect the most is so happy to let me work with him.

And I felt it was a great honor. But I found a lot of his co-workers, he himself was about 36 years older than me, and his co-workers were all 20, 25 years older than me, and they had been with him for many years. And they were very jealous when they found this man of God promoting me like a Timothy, and giving me opportunities to minister because he had seen some gift in me.

And I was the object of a lot of jealousy on the part of his senior co-workers because they saw him promoting me. And I said, well, my... And finally they succeeded in putting some wrong ideas into the mind of the leader and I was told I must never preach again in their churches. Can you imagine how shattered I was? I thought, boy, I don't want to go and join one of these dead Baptist or Pentecostal churches or go to Bible school or something like that.

These were New Testament churches I wanted to be a part of. Because I had seen something about New Testament those days and I didn't want to go and join some denominational church. I finished with all that.

And I was so shattered, I said, Lord, what am I going to do? And I had just been married, we had a little baby, we didn't have much money, we had very little. I didn't even have money to rent a house. And along with all that came this disappointment.

I said, Lord, I don't know what I'm going to do. I was very discouraged. And I saw that God was shattering me.

But we were staying in a town, my wife and I, where the only church which I felt like joining was this particular church which is under the leadership of this man. I didn't want to go from there and join some other church because they rejected me. And the Lord told me, sit here.

So I sat at the back of that church, the same church where I took special meetings once. The same church, I sat at the back for about three and a half years without opening my mouth. And the Lord said, keep your mouth shut and sit here.

And submit to the elder brother here, even if you don't respect him or value him. I did that. And those are the years God broke me thoroughly, pleased the Lord to crush me.

I did not know what the Lord had in mind for me. I had no idea. But that's what the Lord told me to do right then, I sat there.

Every Sunday, I would go and sit there. Every Wednesday of the prayer meeting, I would sit there right at the back. Never opened my mouth.

And a lot of people misunderstood. You know, that can be the worst part. Where people say, hey, what, Brother Zach? I wouldn't give any reply.

And they would think, oh, maybe there's something in his life. Maybe others see he has backslidden or maybe there's some secret sin. That's why he's not being allowed to preach.

When people misunderstand you, for you to keep quiet and not defend yourself can be the worst type of breaking. I tell you, now when I look back, that's where the Lord accomplished a work in me, where the opinion of men I got completely freed from. I say, Lord, what does it matter what people think? You know, I didn't really do anything wrong.

But people were jealous of me. And it says about Joseph that his brothers were jealous of him. And their jealousy made them sell him as a slave in Egypt.

And I had read those passages. And I was experiencing something similar. I mean, Cain was so jealous of Abel that he killed him.

I mean, the Bible is full of jealousy. Right from Cain killing Abel, at least they didn't kill me. In my case, it was more like Joseph, where they pushed me down to some place.

And what did Joseph do? He just continued to be faithful to God as a slave. And then there he was falsely accused by a woman and put into a jail. There he was faithful in the jail and said, God, fine, if you want me in a jail, I'll be in a jail.

That's how God prepared Joseph to be the second ruler of Egypt. Because he broke him over a period of 30 years, from the age of 17 to 30. That's the period when Joseph was broken.

That's the period when Jesus was broken. Or you take the example of David, young David, anointed by God, a man after God's own heart. Do you know he was writing psalms when he was a young man? Inspired by God to write scripture.

Yet there was a ruler sitting there called Saul, who was jealous of him. And God told David, just submit to authority. Don't fight.

I know I've anointed you. I know you're a man after my own heart, but you need to be broken. You're not fit to be king until you're broken.

The anointing did not fit David to be king. He was anointed when he was maybe around 19 or 20. He killed Goliath, but he was not fit to be king until he was broken.

You know, you can be fit enough to kill Goliath, but still not fit to be king until you're broken. So God had to take him, hiding in the caves, running for his life, and sometimes he has to pretend to be mad to save his life. What all humiliating experiences.

But he would never take revenge. He would never take revenge. Once Saul was at his mercy and all his friends said, kill him and be the king.

He said, no, I will not do it. He was broken. God tested him to see whether he would take revenge, whether he would.

You know, sometimes we can take revenge against somebody who has treated us badly by telling stories about him. Or when you hear some story about him to join up and say, yeah, that's right. Because he treated you badly.

And you're really upset about that. And God tests you in all those circumstances. He tests you in those circumstances to see whether you trust him or whether you'll defend yourself.

David never defended himself. And one day, God got rid of Saul. At the age of 30, David became king.

And he was the greatest king Israel ever had. So, I see that in all these examples, whether it's Joseph or David or Jesus or Paul, Peter, I find that God wants to give authority to people and in the church as well, but not if they are not broken. And I've seen many cases now that I myself have had experience with many people that I've worked with over the last more than 35 years.

I see some people are really broken. And God really backs them up and gives them tremendous authority. And there are others who sit in the church for years.

In our church, in CFC. They sit there, sit there. And I feel sorry for them.

Because they have such potential. They know the Bible so well. They've heard me for so many years that they know all the doctrines.

But they have not been broken in their inner life. And so, I can never give them any responsibility. I say, you can sit in the back seat, clean the floor, clean the toilets, and listen to other people half your age who can teach you something.

Because some of these people are 50 years old now, been in the church 30 years in CFC. They're not broken. I've seen it happen.

Judas Iscariot sat for three and a half years with Jesus. He was not broken. And that can happen in a church.

I've seen a number of people like that. But we make sure that such people are never given responsibility. We don't kick them out.

Because it's not our business. Some of them get offended and drop out. That's another thing.

But some just stick around there and sit around there because it's a nice church to belong to. But they sit in the back seat and nobody respects them. Because everybody can see.

They're not spiritual. They're just nominal members of the church. And they sit there.

They come for the conferences. They sit there. I feel sorry for them.

Because one day when they stand before the Lord, they will discover what they lost. The Queen of Sheba traveled such a great distance to listen to the wisdom of Solomon. And here God brought something right to their doorsteps.

And they did not accept what God wanted them to have because of their stubborn desire to be somebody. Whereas God wants to reduce us to nobodies before he can do something with us. It's a principle.

God has to reduce us to zero before he can use us. That's the meaning of the Old Testament circumcision. Circumcision was a cutting off of the flesh and throwing it off.

And the New Testament equivalent of it is I have zero confidence in my flesh. Anything I am according to the flesh. Some people think that, well I've been in the church so many years.

I say seniority is alright in government service. Not in the church. In the church, it's humility and brokenness that gives a man honor and position.

Fear of the Lord. Not seniority. There's no such thing as seniority in the church.

It's brokenness. So, when the Lord said to Peter I'm going to build my church and I'm going to give you the keys of authority. He wasn't ready for it.

And you'll see that in Matthew 16. Let me go further in Matthew 16. See, our subject is, what we are thinking of is building the church the way God wants it to be built.

Because that's what you all are trying to do. I'm trying to explain to you some fundamental principles from God's word. And what we've seen through many years in India.

And the type of people you will have in your own church who sit here for 20 years perhaps and are never broken. And will just be like a millstone around your neck. You got to bear with them.

Because they never understand the truth. You know, like there's a verse which says always learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Paul says about, maybe I should show you that verse first before.

See 2nd Timothy 3, let me show you that verse. It's a very serious warning. 2nd Timothy 3, verse 7. Please remember this verse all your life.

All your life. 2nd Timothy 3, 7. Remember. Always learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

It says about Herod in Mark 6 that he liked to listen to John the Baptist. And John the Baptist must have preached some wonderful sermons. Herod liked to listen to him.

A lot of people like to listen to Zechiel on the internet. And they can have so much information but the knowledge of the truth comes through brokenness. Not through admiration of John the Baptist or any other man of God.

If we are broken then we can build a church. So coming back to Matthew 16. You are a little rock, you're a little stone Peter but this revelation you got about me from God what Christ really is I will build my church on that.

We all need personal revelation on the inner life of Christ. And Peter, I'll give you authority to bind. You need authority in the church just like you can't run a government without authority, you can't run a home without authority.

If you allow your little children to take over your home and say, Dad, you're nobody here your home will be ruined and your children will be ruined. Why do you parents you know why do you parents discipline your children to obey you? I hope it's not because of the lust you have that you want a lot of obedient servants in your home. I discipline my children because the Bible says if you don't discipline them they'll go to hell.

I didn't like it. I never liked disciplining my children but I knew that there's a rebellion in the heart of every child that they've got from the devil and I have to break that as a father if I want them to grow up to be disciples of Jesus Christ. And I did that.

I was very strict with my children. And I see that the result of it today and all four of them are following the Lord and all four of them chose God-fearing wives which is another big proof that they had understood values. And I see them now bringing up their children teaching them Scripture when their children are two years old.

I say, Wow! That's great. That's the way I wanted it. But it came through very strict discipline at home.

A lot of love. A lot of affection. It's not all discipline.

God shows us a lot of love but along with all that love where I see indiscipline I say, well there are two things I said I'll never allow in this house. One is disobedience or disrespect to parents and the other is telling lies. I'll never allow.

If you tell me a lie you're really going to get it from me. I don't care if you broke the most expensive thing in this house. I don't value things.

You just come and tell me I won't even punish you. It's not important. I don't value a single material thing in my house.

But don't ever tell me a lie. I punish my children very severely for telling lies. They were just like any other children.

I would never allow them to fight with each other. Argue with each other, yes. It's normal.

But I say, if you ever raise your hand to hit another child you're going to learn a lesson from me. I'll never allow that. But you have arguments and all that and it's okay.

And I see the end result of that that all four of them are such good friends of each other and you know what they all every single one of them say to me Dad, you're our hero. I say, with all the spankings you got I'm your hero? You see, if we can bring up our children they say to me, the way you brought us up we'd be happy. So I see that if we exercise authority in a proper way I see the same in the church.

I have disciplined people very strongly in our church. And I see that they love me just like the children. Because they see that I don't hate them.

I love them. I mean, I make so many sacrifices for them. They know that.

But I want the best for them. And I say to the people in our church you're like my children. I'll tell you what's good for you.

If you get hurt, it's just too bad. When you grow up, you'll understand. Children, when they're small don't understand why the parents are disciplining them.

And the more of a baby you are spiritually the more you don't understand authority in a church or discipline at all. But a mature person recognizes it. I mean, you didn't recognize when your parents disciplined you when you were a kid.

But now that you're a father or mother you see how important discipline is with your own children. It's like that. The more we are babies the more we don't understand discipline or brokenness it's all theory to us.

But the more we grow up, we say hey, this is God's way. It's God's way in society. Why are there jails, for example? If there were no jails can you imagine what any country in the world would be like? Can you imagine what Brisbane would be like if there were no jails? And if there was no police system? You wouldn't be able to live here.

You'd want to get out of here as soon as possible. It's discipline that makes a place fit to live in. Whether it's a city or a home or a church.

But I often ask people why is it you're willing to accept discipline in a city? Punishment in a city. People being jailed for two or three years you say that's necessary. Or discipline at home.

Why don't you see the same thing in a church? The church is supposed to be the highest. More important than city, more important than home is the church. It's the work of the devil who's blinded people to see that the church is meant to be a family in which there's authority.

So, when the Lord gave this authority to Peter he went on. Now you see something very interesting. First Peter got revelation and then the Lord said I'm going to give authority and now see what happens.

Then Jesus said in Matthew 16, 21 I have to go to Jerusalem and suffer and be killed and Peter called him aside and said no Lord. See, this is what often happens with unbroken people. You give them a little bit of authority or encourage them a little bit they suddenly begin to think that we are very important.

You know, Peter begins to think yeah, that's it. I've got the keys now. These other fellows are all junior to me.

And as soon as pride goes to your head you know, somebody gives you a little appreciation or encouragement and you get puffed up. Immediately the devil's knocked you down. And imagine.

Have you read this? I've never seen it anywhere else in the Gospels. Somebody rebuking Jesus Christ. Rebuking another human being I can understand.

But it says in verse 22 he rebuked Jesus Christ. Wow! What arrogance to think that he can rebuke the greatest authority on earth. That's what happens to some people.

They think they can stand against their parents and they think they can stand against authority in the church. They even begin to rebuke spiritual authority. Saying, who do you think you are? Peter was like that.

And the Lord turned around to Peter and said Get behind me Satan. Why did he call him Satan? Because all rebellion against authority is satanic. And I believe Jesus if he were to look at a lot of people in Christian churches today, in many churches he would call them Satan.

Do you think it's possible that Jesus would turn around to some of you sitting here and call you Satan? Do you think he wouldn't do that? Do you think he loves you more than he loved Peter? He loved Peter so much that he wanted him to see Peter, your spirit is satanic. It is a spirit of rebellion against authority. And you can never exercise those keys I'm giving you till you learn another important truth.

He said, I'll tell you why you are satanic Peter. Verse 23. You're a stumbling block to me.

You're not a help. I'm trying to put bricks to build the church, you're pulling it down. Because, and here's the reason, it's a very, very important verse.

Your mind is set on your own interests, not God's interests. If there's one qualification that will hinder you all your life from building the church, is if your mind is set on your own interests and not God's interests. And there are lots of people sitting like that in many churches today.

They're not thinking of God's interests, they're thinking of their own interests. How will this affect me? What will people think about my name? I say, forget it. Pray hallowed be God's name, forget your name.

Don't seek your own interests, because the moment you seek your own interests, you're a stumbling block to God. So, that is a very fundamental principle in building the church. If you want to build a church, you have to have zero interest in yourself and your own interests.

You have to die to that and say, Lord, I want my mind to be entirely set on God's interests. And then in verse 24 he said, If anyone wants to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. And there you understand, in a nutshell, what the cross is.

The cross is to die to seeking my own interests and to seek God's interests. I want to say to all of you sitting here, anyone, you may be converted yesterday, but if you are willing to die to your own interests and seek God's interests, you can build a church. But you may have been converted 50 years ago, but if you seek your own interests, you will forever be a stumbling block to Christ, you'll be a satanic voice in the church, and you'll be a hindrance to God's work.

God may be very patient with you, allow you to live for a long time, but one day when you stand before God, I don't know what your fate will be. And so, let me just turn to Philippians 2 and show you something there. You know, Paul was trying to look at co-workers he needed to build a church in Philippi.

And Philippians 2, it says in verse 19, Paul tells the Philippians, I hope to send Timothy to you shortly, so that you can be encouraged. And why am I sending Timothy? I've got a lot of co-workers, but why Timothy? Because, Philippians 2, verse 20, I don't have anyone else among my co-workers who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare, because even though these other guys are my co-workers, they are all seeking their own. They were like Peter was in Matthew 16.

Peter didn't remain like that. After he was broken and filled with the Holy Spirit, he became a completely different person. But in the Matthew 16 point, he was seeking his own.

And Paul says, a lot of my co-workers are like that. They are born again, they are baptized in the Holy Spirit, they speak in tongues, they do all that, but they are seeking their own. And because they are seeking their own, Paul says, I cannot send them to Philippi, because they will just cause more confusion there.

They've got a lot of Bible knowledge, because they've heard Paul preach so many times, and they've acquired so much information, but they are not broken. Their self-interest is very strong. They are thinking of themselves and their name and their position, and their honor, always.

They are not willing to die. The Bible says we've got to reckon ourselves to be dead. And I have often meditated on how people are in a graveyard.

I think of people lying under the gravestones, completely dead. They are not concerned about their name. They are not concerned about their own interests.

They are not concerned what people say about them, good or bad. They are dead. And I realize that that's what it means to take up the cross.

I have to die like that to the opinions of men, to my own honor, to seeking my own, and then God will be able to use me to do His work. And Paul says, Timothy is the only one who has learned it. Paul himself was like that.

He says in verse 5, Jesus was like that. Jesus came from heaven, He didn't seek His own interest. Paul was like that, in the same spirit.

He could say, follow me as I follow Christ. Timothy was like that, but there were not many people, even in those days. Imagine, among his own co-workers.

I've often thought about that. I say, Lord, if I were living in the first century, and the Apostle Paul gave me the honor of being one of his co-workers, that itself would be a great honor for Paul to select me to be on his team. But in spite of being on his team, would Paul say, well, I can't trust Zach because he's seeking his own.

I can trust Timothy. I say, Lord, would that be true about me? Would I glory in the fact that I'm on Paul's team? But Paul sees through me. He's very kind to me.

He doesn't tell me, but he sees through me and he says, I can't trust him to send him to Philippi because he seeks his own. His name, his interest, and all those things. He'll be a stumbling block.

I say, Lord, I want to be like Timothy. I want to be like Timothy where God himself can give a certificate about me that there's a man who doesn't seek a single thing for himself. He only wants Jesus Christ to be

glorified, a church to be built.

And it doesn't matter whatever people think about him. He's never going to be offended. See, getting offended is one of the ways by which God shows us that we're not broken.

I've often said in Bangalore in our church that to overcome getting offended is a kindergarten lesson. It's like I tell children, learning addition, 2 plus 2, 2 plus 3, that's not a 10th grade lesson. That's a kindergarten lesson.

It's one of the first things you learn in mathematics. How much is 2 plus 2? How much is 2 plus 3? We hold up 2 fingers and 3 fingers. Can you count them, my son? 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Getting offended, overcoming getting offended, is exactly in the same category.

So when I see people have been believers for 5 or 10 years and they still get offended, I say, you're in there. You've been in. You're now 15 years old and you're still sitting in the kindergarten? You shouldn't be in the kindergarten when you're 15 years old.

What have you been doing for 10 years in school? You haven't even learned addition. I see a lot of people like that. Not only now, in the first century, Paul told the Corinthians, you're babies.

You haven't grown up. In Hebrews chapter 5, he tells those people, the time has come when you should have been teachers in the class. Instead of being teachers in the class, you're still sitting in the kindergarten trying to learn.

They were offended. Jesus once said in Matthew chapter 11, Blessed are those who are not offended. I like that.

The King James version especially makes it very clear. Blessed are those who don't get offended. With what I say, Matthew 11, verse 6. Blessed are those who don't get offended.

In the margin of my Bible, it says offended. In the NASB, it says, keeps from stumbling over me. But the King James version says, Blessed are those who are not offended with me.

Let me give you an example of Matthew, in John chapter 6, of some people. John chapter 6 is a great chapter. Shall I tell you why? It's the one chapter that begins with a great multitude in verse 2, and ends with 11 people at the end of the chapter.

So I tell people, if you've got a great multitude in your church, and you want to reduce them to 11, preach John chapter 6. It will reduce the multitude to 11, and the 11 will be wholehearted. I do it all the time. My job is to reduce the number of people in my church.

It could be anything that reduces it. In this case, it was Jesus saying, You've got to eat my flesh and drink my blood. And it says here, many of them, when they heard this, John 6, verse 60, they said, this is a difficult statement.

And then it says here, many withdrew. He said in verse 61, Does this cause you to get offended? Are you offended by what I said? Many of them, it says here, verse 66, not the Jews, but many who were disciples, left him. Jews leaving him, Pharisees leaving him, we see it all the time.

But disciples leaving Jesus? It's amazing. Many. It started with a great multitude.

Finally, he looks at the 12 and says, What about you? You want to go away also? And Peter says, No. I know you call me Satan, but those are the words of eternal life. What a man, to be called Satan, and to say, Lord, those words are for my salvation.

I'm not offended. I know you call me Satan, you call me a stumbling block, but those are words of eternal life for me. He didn't get offended.

And that's what made him the man he became. You read of another instance where Jesus said about Judas Iscariot, Why are you troubling this woman? She's done a good thing pouring that ointment at my feet, and you're worried about selling it and giving it to the poor. It says in Matthew 26, As soon as Judas Iscariot heard those words, he got offended.

And he went immediately to the... You read it sometime, Matthew 26. Went immediately to the chief priest and says, What will you give me? I'll betray him to you. Fed up with this chap trying to insult me publicly.

When I said, Give the money to the poor, he said, You don't have to give it to the poor. Is that such a big rebuke? The difference between Peter and Judas Iscariot was this. Peter could take correction even when he's called Satan, a stumbling block.

Judas Iscariot could not take a small word of correction. He got offended. And in the church today, there are Peters, there are Judas Iscariots.

And the interesting thing is Judas Iscariot stayed with Jesus right up to the last day. And there can be some people who sit in the church for 30-40 years till the very end. But they will always be like Judas Iscariot.

But Jesus would never give them a position. I've seen people like that, who are offended. But they still sit in the church because they don't find a better place to go.

But they never change. And I want to urge you, my dear brothers and sisters, don't be like that. Let God break you.

He broke me through elders who did not understand me. And the Lord told me to keep my mouth shut. Never to speak against them.

I didn't speak against them. There are different ways in which God breaks people. Many different ways.

I know in some of the churches that are started in the US now, one of my sons, two of my sons have started churches there. And I remember in Sandeep's church, which is in San Francisco area, he's just been about a year old and number of people started coming because they were gripped by what he was preaching about overcoming sin and godly life. And then an issue came up in his church.

Very small issue. So trivial. Small.

He said, in this church, we obey scripture hundred percent. New Testament especially. Not partially.

And so he said, if a sister comes to this church and does not veil her head, she can come. She can come for the next hundred years. But she will not be allowed to pray or share.

And immediately, you know in America they don't do those things, American women. They stop coming. I said, Sandeep, I'm proud of you.

You have to reduce the church and get rid of people who don't respect God's word. Otherwise you ruin the church from day one. You have to get people to obey everything in the New Testament.

Whether it's offensive or not offensive, that's not the point. What the worldly people think is not important. What is God's word saying? But at the same time, he said, you can come here forever but these are the rules in our church that we don't allow a person to pray or prophesy.

And that was the issue there. In some other church, like in Santosh's church, he's got another church in Colorado. He said, we want to make sure that you're really born again and really committed to this church before we make you a member.

So we want you to come for six months during which period we're going to evaluate you to see whether you're just one of those drifters who are coming along here for some other reason. And if we see, it's not only Santosh, there's another elder, if we observe you and see that you're really committed and you're not just like other churches, just become a member from being namesake member. And some people got offended and left.

I said, praise the Lord, I'm proud of you. Let these people go. It says here in John 6, multitudes left Jesus.

But he said, blessed are those who don't get offended and who remain. And the end result I see in both these churches is they've got some solid people who are totally committed. And I sit there and listen to some of them sharing the word and I'm just blessed hearing it.

Because those who have allowed God to break them, I mean, they may have thought this is very unreasonable, but I thought it was unreasonable, you know, 40 years ago when I was told to keep my mouth shut and sit. But unreasonable or not, you know, your children may think something is unreasonable, but they're still told to listen to their parents. All of us parents are not perfect.

You have not done everything perfectly with your children. I have not done perfectly with my children. No parent is perfect.

But the Bible says, God says, still obey your parents. Whether they're unreasonable or reasonable, obey them. That's what breaks the children.

I mean, to obey a perfect parent is easy. That's why some people say, I obey God. Well, that's easy, brother, because he's perfect.

But what when God asks you to obey an imperfect father or mother? Supposing your children say, I'll obey a perfect God. You're imperfect. Why should I obey you? God uses imperfect fathers and mothers to break children.

And God uses an imperfect emperor Nero to break people. And God uses imperfect elders. Every elder that I know in my life is imperfect, including me.

So there is no perfect elder, just like there's no perfect father. The only one perfect is God. So if I say, I only listen to God, you may end up never being broken in your whole life.

That's one of the most important requirements to build a church. You'll have an imperfect husband. God will use him to break you.

You'll have an imperfect father, mother. God will use him to break you. You'll have an imperfect elder.

And God uses so many methods. You think Moses' father-in-law was such a godly man? Not at all. But God used him to break Moses and prepare him for a ministry.

Jacob's father-in-law Laban was not a good man. But God used him to break Jacob so that Jacob could become a great man. God used an evil king Saul to break David.

God used ten jealous evil brothers to break Joseph. And one evil woman, probably for his wife, to break... So the instruments God uses to break us are not necessarily perfect. Very imperfect.

But I get broken. I get humbled. I get crushed.

And one day the Lord says, I'm pleased with you. I'll anoint you with my Spirit. And then begins a ministry to which there is no end.

I wish that for all of you. I wish all of you will have a fantastic ministry where rivers of living water will flow out from your life. Do you remember how in the Old Testament the rock had to be smitten before the rivers flowed? And if you avoid the smiting of the rock, the river will never flow.

The water is in there. But God told Moses, hit that rock. Jesus had to be smitten before the Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost.

And if you refuse to be smitten, I want to tell you, the rivers will never flow. And that will be the greatest tragedy that can happen in your life. If you had an opportunity in some business to earn ten million dollars and by some foolishness you missed it, you may regret all your life.

Boy, if I had not done that one foolish thing, I could have got ten million dollars. Like some people in the stock market. They say, boy, if I had bought that share, I would have got ten million dollars today.

But that's nothing. To miss out on rivers of living water flowing through us is a far greater tragedy. All I say is don't miss out on it.

Let's pray. Let's bow our heads before God. It may be in a different way that the Lord has spoken to each of you.

But I want to urge you, in your own interest, do not get offended with what you heard. Jesus said, blessed are those who don't get offended. Blessed are those who don't get offended.

Humble yourself. If you are still in doubt about something, go back to the Bible, read it again yourself and see what God says to you personally through the scriptures. And live before God's face.

But I can say with absolute certainty, God never uses anyone whom he does not break first. Never. It's never happened in history and it won't happen today.

He does not use people who have a lot of knowledge. He uses people who are broken. That's how he led Jesus.

That's how he led Joseph, David, Moses, Peter, Paul, everyone. And he hasn't changed his method. Let's learn from the rebellion of Satan against authority that we don't unconsciously hold hands with him thinking we are very clever.

Satan thought he was very clever. But he discovered he was the greatest fool in the universe. Don't make that mistake that our human intelligence leads us to become the greatest fools on earth.

Heavenly Father, I pray in Jesus' name that you'll help us to have wisdom concerning spiritual truths which are hidden from the clever and the intelligent and revealed to those who humble themselves like babes. Please give us that wisdom, Lord, we pray. Bless everybody here.

We want a strong church to be built here that is 100% obedient to your word, that does not seek to obey any human being, but seeks to obey the Lord and respects authority and is filled with broken people who can be crushed and made into one loaf of bread. Thank you. In Jesus' name.

Amen.

Video: https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/SDWuy_zyU8o.mp4

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