

Building the Body of Christ - 5 Doing a Greater Work Than Jesus Did

by Zac Poonen

To follow Jesus means to follow his example in life, not his ministry, and to do good to others, healing the oppressed.

Duration: 55:31

Scripture: Luke 9:23, John 14:12, 1 Corinthians 11:1, 1 Corinthians 12:27, Ephesians 4:3

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

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of following Jesus in His life rather than just His ministry, highlighting the need to imitate His character, such as never grumbling or complaining, and to focus on building unity in the body of Christ. It discusses how every Christian is called to take up their cross daily, die to themselves, and be filled with the Holy Spirit to contribute to the unity and growth of the church.

Transcript

We were looking at John 14 and verse 12, where we saw that if we believe, we can do the same works that Jesus did. And we must look at the earthly life of Jesus and follow his example, how he lived on earth, especially the first 30 years. Because the last three and a half years, he had a very unique ministry, which all of us don't have.

Because when Jesus said, follow me, he was not asking us to follow him in his ministry, but in his life. Every Christian must follow Jesus Christ. He said, for example, in Luke chapter 9, he said, verse 23, if anyone wants to come after me or follow me, I will deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me.

So we see here that God, the Lord wants us all to follow him. But we can't all follow him in his ministry. Can all of us feed 5,000 with five loaves? Can we all walk on the water? Can we all heal lepers? So many things in Jesus' ministry was unique.

That was his ministry. He died for the sins of the world. Who can do that? That is a ministry.

The big mistake that many people make is they think Jesus told us to follow him in his ministry. You go and heal the sick. They teach that every believer can raise the dead.

That is an absolute nonsense. Nobody can do that. It's a ministry that Jesus had.

We have to follow him in his life. See, the apostle Paul told the Corinthians. 1 Corinthians chapter 11, he says in verse 1, be followers of me as I am of Christ.

That means the way Jesus walked, I am also walking, Paul says. Now you also walk like me. He was an apostle.

Was he telling all the Corinthians to be apostles? He was caught up to the third heaven, Paul. Is he telling all the Corinthians also to come there? Paul raised the dead and planted churches. Is he telling the Corinthians also to raise the dead and plant churches? So when the Bible says we can do the works that Jesus did, it's not talking about his ministry, it's talking about his life.

Let me show you one verse about his life. It says here that Jesus of Nazareth was anointed with the Holy Spirit with power and he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil for God was with him. So what are the two things he did? He went about doing good.

Can you do that? Is there anybody here who says I can't do good to other people? Jesus in his whole life, he went about doing good. Long before he was 30 years old, in those 30 years also he did a lot of good in Nazareth. So even if you can't raise the dead, you can do good to people.

That's what it means to follow Jesus. To do good. You can do good to your husband, to your wife, to your neighbours, to your enemies, to those who do evil to you.

We can do good to everyone. Think of that man who came to capture Jesus. Peter cut off his ear.

Jesus bent down and picked up the ear and healed it and put it back. Who did he do good to? The chap who came to kill him. What an example.

We find it difficult to do good even to somebody who has spoken some evil about us. Jesus went to do good to those who came to kill him. So when we talk about following Jesus, it's very often just empty words.

When we say that, it must be in our life. The other thing he did was deliver people who were oppressed by the devil. See, around us are thousands of people who are oppressed by the devil.

We have to set them free. When your children behave badly, we have to deliver them from that habit. The desire to fight and quarrel with people is from the devil.

So, around us are so many people who are influenced by the devil. We must do what we can to set them free. So, we can do the works that Jesus did if we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

But Jesus was very patient for 30 years. It says in Hebrews chapter 12, it says that we have to run this race, verse 1 and 2, looking at Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Verse 1 and 2. No, no, no.

Chapter 12. See, Jesus went through the life taking up a cross. Every day.

And then finally reached the throne of God. So, we got to go the same way. This is to do the works that Jesus did.

The Bible says, for example, never to complain or murmur. Always give thanks. Be patient with everybody.

How patient Jesus had to be with all those irritating brothers and sisters he had at home. We are surrounded by people who make us very impatient. They will not change.

But we can change. And one mark that we have changed is that we become more patient with them. Many of you have been believers for 15-20 years.

If you want to know whether you have grown spiritually, ask yourself how much have you become patient with other people. Who irritate you and trouble you. And who you used to be irritated with once upon a time.

But now you have become more patient with them. Then you have grown spiritually. But if you are still as irritated with them as you were 20 years ago, what shall we say? You are still sitting in the first standard.

How long are you going to sit there? God wants us to grow. I am amazed at Jesus' patience with people. Even with his disciples who were so slow in learning many things, he was very patient with them.

I used to think about how Jesus was when he was a young man. For so many years, 15 years at least, he used to go and sit in the synagogue in Nazareth every Saturday. They had a synagogue in Nazareth where all the Jews would meet on Saturdays.

And Jesus was sitting there. And all these boring Pharisees were going on with their long sermons. He would sit there listening to all these boring sermons.

And he would go home. And next week he would again come and sit listening to all those boring sermons. He never said a word.

Because his father said, just keep quiet. This boring Pharisee will teach you some patience. So he sat quietly.

One day when he was 30 years old, God said, now get up and speak. He said, I am well pleased with you. Do you have a great desire in your life to hear those words from Jesus when he comes again? Whenever he can say, you went through so many difficult situations but you never grumbled or complained.

He always trusted me that I would never allow you to be tested beyond your ability. I am so happy that you had such faith in me. Or will he say, I am so disappointed in the way you lived.

I will tell you, I want to hear the Lord say, I am pleased with the way you lived on earth. I am not so worried whether the Lord thinks my sermons are very good. I want to know whether he thinks I am patient with people.

Because sermon is a gift God gives to some people. I can't take any credit for that. It is a special gift God gives.

But patience is something we have to work with in our life. So I can do the works that Jesus did. I don't believe Jesus ever grumbled or complained even once in his whole life.

In 30 years he lived without grumbling. Whether his mother's food was good or bad, he never grumbled. Never in the carpenter shop.

I want to reach that goal where I never grumble about anything in my life. Because I have a great passion in my life to become like Jesus. Do you have that passion in your life? Then every year you should be getting closer and closer to that.

See it says in Romans 8, verse 29, that God has predestined us to be conformed to the image of his Son. So here it says the English word is predestination. That means your destination is already written down.

It's like if you get a train ticket, it's already written there, to Delhi. So when you go to the station, you look for the Delhi train. And if you got into the right train, which is according to the destination written on your ticket, every hour your train will get closer and closer to Delhi.

If it is going further and further away from Delhi, you are in the wrong train. Then what will you do? You get off that train. You say get into the right train.

Okay now apply that to your life. When you were born again, the Lord gave you a ticket. The destination is written there.

And the destination is not heaven. You ask the average Christian, what is your destination? He will say heaven. You say where does it say that in the Bible? You ask him where does it say in the Bible? No, he heard it from some preacher.

He said I will show you in the Bible what your destination is. Romans 8.29. Your destination is to become like Jesus Christ. Once you understand what your destination is, you say hey I should be in the train which takes me closer and closer to that destination every day.

I want to be in a church where I am challenged to become like Christ more and more every time I come together. I don't want to be in a church that is only telling me how to go to heaven. I want to be in a church that is taking me to the right destination.

Because my destination is not heaven. It is becoming like Jesus Christ. I will tell you quite honestly, I am not very particular about going to heaven.

But I have a great desire to become like Jesus Christ. If I go to heaven, life will be very miserable if I don't become like Christ. But if I become like Christ, my life will be like heaven even here on this earth.

I don't have to wait till I die. My home can be like heaven. My life can be like heaven.

My church can be like heaven. That is the type of home and church we must build. I will tell you honestly, I am not waiting to go to heaven.

I want to have a heavenly life right now. Because Jesus said, John the Baptist said, the kingdom of heaven has come near. Jesus said, the kingdom of heaven is near.

And when the day of Pentecost, the kingdom of heaven came to the earth, heaven came down to earth. So people ask, what is the mark that you are filled with the Holy Spirit? Well, your life will become more heavenly. Because the Holy Spirit came to bring heaven to this earth.

Your home will become more heavenly. Your children will have a memory of a home that was a little fortier of heaven. All our children will one day grow up and leave our home.

My children have all grown up and left our home. They have set up their own homes. I want to ask myself, what memory do my children have of the home they lived in for 18 years, 20 years? They must have a memory of heaven.

Our children grow up so quickly. Then they have to go to college. Or they go to get married.

And then they are gone. What memory do they have of your home? I hope it is a memory of a little taste of heaven on earth. It is no use.

You are giving them a lot of money and a lot of earthly things. To say, oh my parents could buy so many things for me. Or they were so rich they could give me a big home to live in.

Or we had a car. But our home was like hell on earth. Oh that is sad.

That is really sad. But that is how many Christian homes are. It is far better to live in a little hut and have your home like heaven on earth.

It doesn't matter if you can't buy all those things for your children because you don't earn so much money. There were so many things we could not buy for our children because we just didn't have the money. But we wanted to make our home a little foretaste of heaven for our children.

But our goal is to become more and more like Christ. So this is a good question to ask yourself. In the last one or two years, have you become more like Jesus? No, you should not answer that question yourself.

Ask your wife. And ask her to tell you the truth and not to be afraid to tell you the truth. Ask your husband.

Ask him to tell you the truth. Ask your brothers. Do they see a more heavenly person in you? Not perfect.

But a little more Christ like than they saw you two years ago. A little more gracious. A little more humble.

A little more holy. A little more loving. A little more patient.

If that is true, then you are on the right train. You are going in the right direction. But if it is not true, you better get off the train you are sitting in.

Something is wrong. You may have so much knowledge in your head. The Lord is not able to lead you closer to your destination.

So when we think about building the body of Christ, we gather together in a local church to build the body of Christ. Then you ask yourself, there are thousands of churches. Which one shall I join? It is like going to a station where there are thousands of trains.

Which train shall I get on to? I look at my ticket. The ticket says Delhi. So if there are a few trains going to Delhi, I can get on to them.

That will take me to Delhi. So think of a huge station with 1000 trains. Maybe 10 of them are only going to Delhi.

I can get into any one of those 10. Because they are going to Delhi. How do I know? When I get in, I find every hour I am getting closer to Delhi.

It is like that with churches. Today's churches are going in so many different directions. You go there and the direction you get is in a certain way.

Some churches you go, they will tell you how to make more money. That is their goal. That is their destination.

That God will give you a better house and a better car and a better job on this earth. So I look at my ticket in Romans 8.29. God has written destination becoming more like Christ. Not getting a bigger house and a bigger car.

So I don't criticize them. I say okay there are some people who want to travel in that destination, let them go. But I want to get off that train.

That is not where I am going. I am looking for a train where I get in and it makes me more like Christ every year. That is the church I want to be a part of because that is my destination.

That is where the body of Christ is being built. We need to understand the real Jesus. In 2 Corinthians 11, Paul tells the Corinthians.

The Corinthians had so many problems in that church. They were going to court against each other. They were very rich.

They were happy with their money. Only rich people can take you to court. Poor people can never take you to court.

That is written in the Bible. That is written in James 2. Only rich people can take you to court. And it is true also.

So the Corinthians, many of them were rich people. They could take people to court. They were very selfish people.

When they came with their lunches to the meetings, they wouldn't share their lunch with anybody. They would eat it all themselves. They were very selfish people.

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Somebody has come to you and preached another Jesus and you receive, you accept it. Who is this different Jesus? Jesus is a name. There are many Jesuses.

You know if you go to Spain, there are many people whose name is Jesus. If you go to Mexico, there are many people there whose actual name is Jesus. In South America, there are many people whose name is Jesus.

So when you say we follow Jesus, I say which one? The one in Mexico or Spain or the one in the New Testament. How to know which one you are following? One simple test. The one in the Bible, it is written in Matthew 1.21 that you shall call his name Jesus because he will save his people from their sins.

So the real Jesus is one who saves us from our sins. But if you go to a church which talks about Jesus and you are not saved from your sins, you are defeated by the same old anger you were defeated 25 years ago. Or it has become worse.

And you are still watching internet pornography. I say which Jesus is that? That is another Jesus. I don't want to be following another Jesus.

I want to be in a church that gathers around the name of Jesus who saves people from their sins. Not in the name of Jesus who makes you rich. Not even in the name of Jesus who heals your sickness.

I will tell you honestly. I would rather keep all my sicknesses and be saved from all my sins. Even if I have sicknesses and I am not healed.

That's okay if I am saved from all my sins. Because sickness can never send me to hell. Do you think if you have cancer you will go to hell? If you have AIDS you will go to hell? No sickness can send you to hell.

Only sin can send you to hell. So I am more desirous to be free from sin than I am from sickness. I also want to be healed from sickness.

That is not number one. That is number two. I want to be saved from poverty also because I don't want to live on the streets like a beggar.

But that is number three. Number one is to be saved from my sin. So I want to be in a church that is helping me to be saved from my sin.

And I want to preach in such a way that I can save people from sin. That is the meaning of preaching in the name of Jesus. See let me show you Matthew chapter 7. Now you will understand this verse better.

You have read this verse many times but today you will understand it for the first time. So I want to paraphrase it and give you a picture of what happens at the judgment seat of Christ. This is Matthew 7 verse 22 and 23.

So they all stand before Jesus and many will come and say, Lord we prophesied in your name. We cast out demons in your name. We did miracles in your name.

And Jesus says in my name, in the name of Jesus who came to save people from sin. And verse 23 you lived in sin and other people were living in sin. But in this name you didn't deliver anybody from sin.

You just delivered them from sickness. You just delivered them from demons. But my name Jesus means to deliver them from their sin.

So what did you prophesy in my name? Did you understand my name at all? And their mouth will be shut because the meaning of that name was written in the first page of their Bibles, of their New Testament. They can't say we didn't know the meaning of your name. Lord will say it's in the first page of your New Testament.

How can you say you didn't know the meaning of it? Even if people have not read the New Testament, at least they read the first page. You don't have to go past the first page to know the meaning of the name of Jesus. You don't have to go past the first page.

And so how can you say in your name we did all the other things? In your name we never delivered anybody from sin but we taught them how to make money. And in your name we passed the bag around and collected money from people. Where do you think Jesus is going to send all these deceiving preachers? The Lord says verse 23, get away from here.

You never knew my name. I never knew you. It's a very serious thing.

These people are not building the church. What is a church? Matthew 16, sorry 18, no Matthew 18, verse 20. Here's a Jesus definition of a church.

Whether it's two or three people or a hundred and hundred and twenty people. They must gather together in my name. In the name of Jesus.

Which means being saved from sin. Lord we have come together in your name. In every church in the world I've heard people say, oh Lord we are gathered in your name.

I say do you fellows know the meaning of that name? You say you're gathered together in the name of Jesus. Which Jesus? The Jesus mentioned in Matthew 1, 21 or another Jesus? Have you gathered together in the name of one who came to save us from all our sins? It's only there that the body of Christ is built. So many other people, they just use the name of Jesus, Jesus.

I don't know whether that is Jesus in Spain or Mexico or which Jesus it is. So many Jesus in the world. But there's only one Jesus who saves people from their sins.

That's the one Joseph, Gabriel told Joseph about in Matthew 1. No, Gabriel told Joseph. That is the real Jesus. I can easily find out whether I'm following the real Jesus or an imaginary Jesus.

Am I being saved from my sin? Am I being saved from my sin? So Paul tells the Corinthians, this is the reason for all your problems. You're singing songs to Jesus but it's some other Jesus. You're gathering together in the name of Jesus but it's some other Jesus.

But Paul says we preach the real Jesus. See 2 Corinthians 11.4 again. If somebody comes to you and preaches another Jesus whom we have never preached, which is the Jesus that Paul preached? One who can save you from your sins.

One, Paul said sin will not have dominion over you when you come under the grace of this Jesus. Dear brothers and sisters, don't glory in the fact that I go to this church or that church. Some people can say we are connected to CFC.

We are connected with CFC Bangalore, some people say. That's like the Jews who told John the Baptist, our father is Abraham. To John the Baptist.

So please baptize me. No, our father is Abraham. John the Baptist said no.

So what if your father is Abraham. If you don't repent, I won't baptize you. We should not glory in being connected to some godly man like Abraham.

Are you being saved from your sins? Otherwise we can glory in the wrong thing. We are not like other churches. Like the Pharisees who say Lord I thank you, I am not like that church and that church and that church.

But if you are not being saved from your sins, what is the use of that type of empty glory? There is a lot of that in Christendom. A lot of that foolish type of boasting. Let me read to you now John chapter 14 verse 12 again.

In John 14 verse 12 he says, If you believe in me, you will do greater works than I have done. Not only the works I have done. Greater works than I have done.

What is the greater work than Jesus did that we can do? Are we going to feed 10,000 people with 5 loaves of bread? Or are we going to raise somebody from the dead who was buried 10 days ago? What is the greater work that Jesus could not do? I have never heard of any believer who has raised somebody who was buried 3 days ago. Jesus did it. In the history of the world nobody has done it.

Even the apostles did not do it. The apostles raised up people from the dead who had died a few minutes or hours ago. How can you do a greater work than Jesus? He is not talking about the quantity of miracles.

He is talking about something that he himself could never do when he was on the earth. He is telling his disciples after I go, You fellows will be able to do something which even I could not do when I was on the earth. What was it that Jesus could not do on this earth? Only one thing.

He could not make his 11 disciples into one body. They were all individuals fighting with each other. Even on the last night after dinner they were discussing who is greater, you or me.

He could not make them one. He could not make them humble to say, You go ahead, you be the leader, I don't want to be the leader. So they could never become one.

Those 11 people came together. Everyone was fighting to be the leader. But Jesus said, when I go, I send the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit will come inside all 11 of you. Then something will happen which cannot happen now. You will become humble.

You will become one. You will not compete for leadership. It's not because Jesus was powerless.

It's because they didn't have the Holy Spirit. So they could not become one. But we can do it today.

Not because we are greater than Jesus. But because now people can receive the Holy Spirit. That is the greater work Jesus said you will be able to do.

Which will be greater than what I have done. So I learned from there, that the greatest work I can do for Jesus on this earth today, is to build his body. Not just bringing souls to Christ.

That is necessary. But then those souls must be built to become one. See, before this building was built, say a lorry brought 10,000 bricks here.

That is evangelism. Bringing those 10,000 believers. But that is not a building.

The mason took those 10,000 bricks one by one and made a building. That's why we can sit here. So that is what we have to do with people who are converted.

We have to make them one, like this building is one. Once upon a time, all the bricks in this building were all loose bricks. But today they are not loose bricks.

They have all become one. They have become one house. That is what Jesus said, I cannot do now because the Holy Spirit has to come.

Now, many churches are like those 10,000 bricks lying on the road. And the evangelists are like the lorries going and bringing more bricks, more bricks, more bricks. Yes, bricks are necessary to build the building.

But that is not a building. But that is not a building, a pile of bricks. Nobody can live inside that.

And not only that, you know what will happen in India if you keep 10,000 bricks on the road for one month? It will gradually become 9,500 and 9,000 and 8,000 and after a few months it will be zero. That is the problem when you don't build them. But the 10,000 bricks in this room, nobody can steal, not even one.

If you build the body of Christ, there is no such thing as sheep stealing, like some people say. How can they steal a brick from here? So when some pastor says, hey, you stole somebody from my church. That's

because you kept it on the roadside as individual bricks.

That's why they stole it. I have never complained in 34 years that anybody stole my bricks. We are building a building.

How can you steal it? But you know, it's much easier to collect bricks and drop it on the roadside than to actually build a building. This is more difficult. But to just leave it there, to collect it from somewhere and put it on the road is easy.

A lorry can do it in 2-3 hours. But to build a building like this, it takes 2-3 months. So I want to be in a church where they are building people together to become one.

Not just like a pile of bricks on the roadside. And it's very difficult to build people into one. Because the devil is always trying to bring division.

If you want to know how difficult it is for two people to become one, go and ask any husband or wife. We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. So when we are filled with the Holy Spirit and you take up the cross and die to yourself, God can make 2, 3, 30, 40 people one.

That's the body of Christ. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, help us to take seriously what we have heard.

Thank you for the tremendous privilege to build the body of Christ. Help us to do our small part to build that body. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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