

# Building the Body of Christ

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of building the body of Christ through unity, service, and proper church governance.*

**Duration:** 1:26:51

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:19-21, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 23:8-12, Acts 20:28, Acts 20:33-35, Ephesians 4:30-32, Revelation 1:12-13

**Topics:** "Body Of Christ"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of living a humble and sacrificial life, just as Jesus and the apostle Paul did. He highlights how Paul worked tirelessly to help others without seeking personal gain, even though he had the right to receive support. The speaker also emphasizes that Jesus taught the principle of giving and serving others, even in ordinary tasks like cutting vegetables or making furniture. He encourages believers to follow Jesus' example in their workplaces and homes, showing love and helping others. The speaker concludes by reminding listeners that true leadership in the church requires sacrificial service and a willingness to give up everything for the sake of building the body of Christ.

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## Transcript

I'd like to turn to a verse in Ephesians and chapter 4. We've been looking so far at the distinctives of the New Covenant and just to review what we have seen, things that people in the Old Covenant could never experience. They could not experience repentance from the root of sin. They could not get the root removed in the Old Testament.

They could not know grace, because grace came with Jesus Christ. They could not know God as a Father, but now we do. They did not know the Holy Spirit as a helper, as we do.

They could not overcome Satan, they wrestled with flesh and blood. And then sixthly we saw, they could not build a spirit-filled family. They were lone great men.

And then this morning we saw, they did not have an example. Jesus is our forerunner, they had none. And now lastly, I want to think of something they could not do.

They could not build the body of Jesus Christ. They could not make two people into one. In Ephesians 4 and verse 12 we read, verse 11 and 12, that Jesus when he ascended up on high, he gave gifts unto men, verse 8, and some of those gifts are, he gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some

pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, or the equipping for service of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying or the building up of the body of Christ.

The whole purpose of Christ's death was not to produce a bunch of holy individuals. Even where holiness is preached in many, many churches today, the ultimate aim is to produce a holy individual. And lot of Christians think that they have attained to the heights of glory when they have overcome sin, they are no more afraid of Satan.

All the things we said so far, they have repented from selfishness, self-centeredness, they know the Holy Spirit's fullness in their life, they know God as their father, they follow Jesus as their forerunner, and they are good fathers and good mothers, bringing up a good family. That, I am sorry to say, is not the goal. You can get that far, and still have completely missed what Jesus died for on the cross.

Because finally, when Jesus Christ is going to present us to the Father, He is not going to present a holy man or a holy woman, a holy brother here and a holy sister there, or even a holy family. He is going to present one new man, one body. And there is nothing that tests our holiness as much as when we have to mingle, work together, and fellowship with and love people who are not in our family, who are different from us.

We need to be built together with them. The difference between the body of Christ and a congregation is the difference between a pile of bricks and a building. There is a lot of difference.

In India, we build houses with bricks. And you can have 10,000 bricks out there in the road, on the roadside. There is no building.

They may be good bricks. We use the illustration, holy bricks. Humble bricks.

Loving bricks. But still not a house. Every one of those 10,000 bricks may be good, but it's not a house, till it is built together.

You can have a church with 2 or 10,000 holy people, humble people, good people, good families, and it's not the body of Jesus Christ, till it's built together. So many people talk about somebody coming and stealing a member of our church. Now, we've been building the body of Christ in number of places in India for the last 25 years.

Started, as I said, with two of us coming together with a vision. And it's grown to a large number in our own city. Maybe a couple of hundred or so, including the children.

And then grown from us to 30, 40 other fellowships. But everywhere, our aim has been not to build a congregation. They had a congregation in the Old Testament.

They had a huge congregation. Bigger than the world's biggest churches. They had 22 million people there in the wilderness.

600,000 men alone, including women and children. It must have been about 2 million people. A huge congregation.

But even two of them were not one. Then Jesus came. And Jesus gathered 11 people.

He worked with 11 for 3 and a half years. The greatest preacher that ever walked on this earth. The most anointed preacher that ever walked on this earth.

The one who taught without a single mistake, with clarity. Who sought with all his heart to deliver people from legalism and the law. And taught everything perfectly in such a way that he never had to retract anything he ever said.

And at the end of 3 and a half years, they were still arguing as to who is going to be the greatest. Two of them were not one. They were deciding who is going to take over the leadership after Jesus died.

Exactly like it is in so many Christian organizations. They were not one. But Jesus said, That is because there is a reason.

The reason was not a failure of Jesus' ministry. It is because they did not have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. Those 11 disciples.

And so Jesus said in John 14 verse 12. He said, after I go, you folks are going to do a greater work than I did. Have you ever thought of that? Verse John 14, 12.

He who believes in me, the works that I do, shall he do also. What are those works? That is what we considered this morning. Walking as Jesus walked.

Let me just say a word about that. The works that Jesus did are not just feeding the 5000, walking on the water, raising the dead. That was only in the 10% of his life in his ministry.

The works that Jesus did included a lot of other things in the 30 years of his life like carrying a bucket of water from the well for his mother. Helping his mother cut vegetables at home. Sweeping up the home.

Working in the carpentry shop and supporting his 4 brothers and 2 sisters and his mother after Joseph died. There are many practical things like this. Those are the works that he did for 30 years.

But very often when people think he who believes in me shall do the works that I did. They immediately think of doing miracles, raising the dead. Let's not start there.

Let's start where Jesus started. Carrying a bucket of water to help his mother cutting vegetables in the kitchen and working in the carpentry shop to support the family. That's where he began.

Those are the works that he did. That was the will of his father for 30 years. Jesus spent 90% of his life in 2 places.

30 years in 2 places. In his home and his place of work. He spent 10% of his life in public ministry.

What about us? We spend 90% of our life in 2 places. In our home and in our place of work. We spend 10% of our life in ministry.

Jesus is the perfect example for us. And he is an example at home, our place of work. There was nothing slip short about his work.

Everything was perfect. When he sat on the cross of Calvary, it is finished. That was typical of everything he did in his life.

Before he went to the cross, he said in John 17.3, Father, I have finished the work you gave me to do. He never did a half job. If his mother sent him to the village well to draw a bucket of water, he never brought half a bucket.

He brought a full bucket. It is finished. That was the principle of his life.

If he was given a, if he had to make a table in his carpentry shop, he never did a slip short job. It was a perfect job. It is finished.

That was characteristic of everything in his life. And when we think that 90% of his life, he lived doing these ordinary, what we would call mundane, earthly tasks, not what people think are spiritual. We see that these are the works that he did.

And he taught us how to bring heaven into cutting vegetables. How to bring heaven into carrying buckets of water. How to bring heaven into making tables and benches and stools.

How to help a poor widow by making a chair for her and giving it to her freely, not charging her. That's how Jesus lived. He never became the richest carpenter in Nazareth.

He couldn't. Because he gave away too many things freely to poor people who couldn't afford them. And he did a perfect job.

And he said, He who believes in me can do the works I do. You can work like me in your place of work. You can work in your home like I did.

You can help your mother and your father like I did. You can support your family at home like I did. For 30 years.

And then to the one who's called to preach and minister the word, he's an example there too. You can preach like I did. I remember when I started preaching.

I said, Lord, I've heard so many preachers. I don't want to preach like any of them. I want to go to the scriptures and see how Jesus preached and learn from there.

I want to recommend to you, whatever your calling in life is, look to Jesus as your example. Look at his attitude to children. If you want to know what your attitude to children should be.

Look at his attitude towards religious hypocrites. If you want to know what your attitude to religious hypocrites should be. He was never neutral to religious hypocrites.

Neither should a follower of Jesus be. If you want to know your attitude to your enemy should be. Look at Jesus.

In everything, that is the example. He who believes in me, the works that I do shall he do also. But more than that, John 14.12 says, greater works than these shall he do.

Because I go to the Father, he said. Because when I go to the Father, I'll send the comforter. And when the comforter comes, you folks will be able to do something which even I was not able to do.

Now, that does not mean that we are greater than Jesus. I mean, it's obvious. To use an illustration.

There was a great scientist who lived many years ago, who discovered things in relation to gravity. By the falling of an apple. His name was Isaac Newton.

And he was a great scientist. But today, one like me, who probably does not have 1% of Isaac Newton's intelligence, can do calculations quicker on my computer than he could do in his lifetime. That's not because I'm cleverer than him.

It's because I have access to a computer which he did not have. That's what makes the difference. Today, we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in people's hearts.

And that's why, even though we are not 1% of Jesus, we can do more than what he did. Because now the Holy Spirit has come to dwell in people's hearts. Now we don't need 11 people sitting together arguing about who is going to be the greatest.

And that's what happened after the day of Pentecost. Peter and John were no longer in competition. They worked together.

They walked together. The Holy Spirit baptized them into one body. And God has given apostles in the church.

Apostles are elders to elders. We have elders in churches. And when the elders have problems, there were apostles in those days who were elders to the elders.

Like Paul and Peter who could guide them and correct them. Who could sort out problems in the churches when they themselves couldn't sort it out. We have today many forms of church government.

But it's very rare to find in this day the type of church government and pattern that's found in the acts of the apostles. Today we have churches run like a one man show. It's one pastor running the whole church.

The apostles always appointed elders in a church. As I said yesterday. To balance.

One would balance out the other. They never take a decision without both agreeing. That would protect the church from becoming run by a tyrant and a dictator.

And also today we have authoritarian structures where you have whether you call them a pope or a general superintendent or a chairman or president of an organization or whatever it is. It's a head. And from that head comes a pyramid of vice presidents and vice chairmen and maybe cardinals and archbishops and bishops and all the way down to lower levels of people.

And there's this huge pyramid. It's an authoritarian structure where you if you are in it you have to submit to this authority that goes up to the top of the pyramid. Now there wasn't anything like that in the days of the apostles.

Wasn't like that in the New Testament. You read in Revelation chapter 2 and 3 that there were seven churches in Ephesus, Philadelphia, Smyrna, Tyatira and so on. And if you look at a map they were only about 30 miles from each other.

And yet there was no bishop over all of them. They were all independent churches with their own elders. And maybe one of the elders was a senior elder who was like the messenger of the church to whom the letter was written.

But God didn't say to John send a letter to that bishop and he'll just circulate it among the seven churches. There was no bishop. He had to send an individual letter to each church because each church was independent.

And what was the advantage of that? That if one church backslid the infection didn't go all around to the other seven. Even though they were 30 miles apart. That's the advantage of a local church.

Whereas if they were all joined in a denomination if one is infected everybody is infected. And once the person at the top becomes corrupt the whole thing becomes corrupt. But that doesn't happen when you have local churches.

So God's will is local churches. That's one big difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the Old Testament we read that in the holy place they had a lamp stand.

And if you have seen the Jewish temple lamp stand you've seen pictures of it perhaps. It's got seven branches. One central stem and three little branches that come out of it.

It's one of the symbols of Israel today. It's seven branches of one lamp stand. But when you go to Revelation chapter 1 you don't see seven branches of one lamp stand.

What do you read? You read seven separate lamp stands. And each lamp stand is a separate church. And Jesus Christ the son of man is in the midst of that church.

Now that's the New Testament pattern. Ephesus was not over Smyrna and Philadelphia was not over Thyatira. No.

They were local churches. Corinth was not over the churches in Galatia and Ephesus was not over Philippi. No.

They were individual churches. And each church had its own elders. They were self-governing.

They had fellowship. And there was no authoritarian structure to which they had to submit. There was no pope living somewhere else whom they had to submit to.

But what did the church in Corinth do when it had a problem? There could be 10,000 teachers passing through Corinth teaching them. But none of them could help their problem. But thank God they had a father.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 4 you can have 10,000 teachers but you got one father that's me. And so when they had a problem they wrote to their the apostle who founded that church. Obviously the elders couldn't solve that problem.

We read in 1 Corinthians 1.11 Paul says the family the household of Chloe has written a letter to me and told me about a lot of problems you fellows are having. And I can imagine what the contents of that letter was.

He must have told them about Chloe must have written to Paul about this fellow who was living with his stepfather's wife in adultery and talking about the abuse of the gift of tongues that was going on there with the confusion and he must have written to them about women making a lot of noise in their meetings and he must have written to them he must have written to Paul about people doubting the resurrection and he

must have written to Paul about a lot of confusion concerning the gifts of the spirit and he must have written to Paul about confusion concerning head covering and Paul replies to all of them all those points and he tells them he says that man who is living in sin put him out of the church you see there was an authority these apostles had he was an elder to the elders there

now what happens today is there is no such authority and so what happens when there is confusion in the church it just splits or break off into two three branches and then they quarrel with each other and all types of problems it is very rare to find the type of church government that we see in the acts of the apostles and one reason is people don't want it and people either have this authoritarian structure which very often we see in the Roman Catholic system and in some other cults and in some protestant denominations where there is a man right at the top in the pyramid or we have this free for all like in most protestant churches like it says in the book of judges there was no king in Israel and every man did what was right in his own eyes that about describes most of protestant

Christianity every man does what is right in his own eyes but neither of these is scriptural authority in the new testament is never imposed from above there is authority in the body of Christ Jesus is the head there is only one head we don't have two heads in the body of Christ children born with two heads don't last long there are some children born like that but they don't live long Jesus is the only head but under Jesus he is the one who has appointed apostles with authority Paul says God has given me authority as an apostle there were elders who were appointed with authority what type of authority is that it's not the authority of a dictator it's the authority of a father the sacrificial loving serving authority of a father over his family that seeks the best for the children that

denies himself if there is only one loaf of bread he will give it to the children and not eat it himself it's rare to find elders like that but that's the type of elders the ones who will wash the feet of their disciples not just go through the ritual of it but have that attitude in everything they do and such elders will not impose their authority on people I have said to the people in my church I said I take my job as an elder very seriously and one of the things the bible says to elders is that Hebrews 13 17 that elders the latter part of that verse watch over the souls of the people under their charge so that they have to because they have to give an account to God for them and so I tell them listen I take my job as an elder very seriously I have to give an account to God for my own

children who are in my home and also for the ones over whom I am an elder I am not interested in lording it over you or running your life but I have to give an account to God not for the type of house you build or the shirt you wear but for your spiritual condition and I am going to take that responsibility very seriously and if you not joyfully voluntarily accept me as your elder I am your elder otherwise I am not your elder I don't want to be eldership in the new testament is not imposed from above like in the Roman Catholic system it is accepted from beneath that means that brother accepts me as an elder I say ok then I will take responsibility for your soul but I don't have a lust for you to accept me as your elder but somebody may say well can I come and sit in your church and

without accepting authority I say fine if you only want to listen to some message and you want to be blessed by hearing the word of God you are welcome to come here every year for the next till the end of your life he won't stop you from there and you don't have to give any offerings also you can come and hear the word of God and be blessed and go home and we like to bless you and if you are in any need sometime come and meet me I will help you as much as I can but I will not take responsibility for your soul no because you don't accept me as your elder I will not I will help you in every practical way I can if you if

you are in need I can help you those things I do for anybody anyone who is a member of the body of Christ they don't have to be under me but the ones I take responsibility

for that means if I see you slipping up spiritually I'll come to you and put my arm around you and say brother something is happening what's the matter you seem to be slipping up and I say I can't stop you from back sliding I've told the brothers in our church but I'll tell you one thing at least a few months before you fall away I'll see signs of it and I'll warn you of it I can't stop you but I'll warn you but I'll give you freedom just like God gave Adam freedom in the garden of Eden to sin if he wanted and I'll give you freedom I'm not going to hold you with reins and ropes and chains to prevent you from doing wrong God did not send Adam into the garden of Eden with ropes and chains and things like that to pull him to prevent him from going here and there He left him completely free

and I believe to be Godly is to leave people completely free God is like that He leaves me completely free even after I'm born again He leaves me free even after I'm filled with the Holy Spirit there is a difference between being filled with the spirit and being possessed by a demon it is spirit filling and demon possession please understand the tremendous difference between these two to be filled with the Holy Spirit is to have the spirit energizing us leading us guiding us but never controlling us the fruit of the spirit is self-control He gives us freedom He gives us freedom to do what we want to do demon possession is not like that when demons possess a person the chap loses control of himself if you have seen demon possessed people it's like that they don't have control over

themselves think of that man who had demons inside him legion of them he was cutting himself he didn't want to do it he was cutting himself and hurting himself and that type of control is not Godly that's demonic control is possession demon possession there are demons who make people speak in tongues they can't stop it just goes on and on and on there are demons who disturb meetings but spirit filling fruit of the spirit is self-control and so if I'm Godly I will not possess a person I won't control him to such an extent that the person is not free to do what he wants not free to have his own opinions not free to disagree with me I believe true liberty in the church is where a person can turn around to me and say brother Zach I disagree with you there but I respect you and I submit to you

as my elder and I will not force him to agree with me I will not force him to conform to my understanding in these non-important peripheral areas if I do I will not be building the church of Jesus Christ I'll be building a uniformed army perhaps where everybody looks nice but they have to conform to my understanding on everything before they can be in my church I don't understand that as a church of Jesus Christ there are a lot of things like this that we need to understand the authority that the Lord gives us I remember the Lord showing me this verse once in John chapter 17 about spiritual authority I mention this because we need authority we need authority from God to be able to do God's work I would never dream of preaching if God didn't give me authority I would never dream of being

an elder in a church if God didn't give me an authority I would never dream of taking responsibility over many churches if God didn't give me authority and if God didn't back up my authority but it's authority for this in John 17 in verse 2 Jesus says as thou has given him power and the word there really means authority over all flesh that he should give eternal life to as many as thou has given him authority is for one purpose to give people eternal life to lead them to eternal life to lead them and eternal life is another expression for divine nature eternal life does not mean endless life life that never ends because if that's the meaning of it then people who go to hell have got eternal life too they've got a life that never ends but that's not the definition of eternal eternal means

something which never had a beginning and never has an end that's eternal my life had a beginning so it cannot be eternal even if I live forever it's not eternal because it had a beginning at a certain point in my mother's womb but eternal life even the angels don't have it eternal life is a life which has no beginning and has no end and it's only the life of God so eternal life is another expression in scripture for divine nature God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life it's not existing forever it's not quantity of life but quality of life that's emphasized there divine life divine nature that I can partake of God's nature is the message of the gospel that I don't become spiritual by the law

striving striving striving striving striving I become divine by my nature being changed my nature is human and when God changes my nature just like it was easy for me to tell a lie before it becomes easy for me to tell the truth just like it's easy for a pig to be dirty it's easy for a cat to be clean there's no strain for a cat to be clean there's no strain for a pig to be dirty it's just natural it just goes out and becomes dirty and when that pig has little piglets they don't have any strain to become dirty they just love it and when this cat has little kittens they don't have any strain to become clean they just love it it's nature and when I have Adam's nature it's no strain for me to tell a lie is it? not at all it's easy it's no strain struggle for me to get angry not at all it's

no struggle for me to lust it's no struggle for me to hate somebody it's no struggle for me to love money it's all natural because it's nature I don't have to teach my child to tell lies I don't have to teach my child to be evil selfish it's nature and when I get divine nature and that gradually begins to come as a little seed and as it grows and begins to possess my being it's like a you think of a black circle and a little white little circle has come in the middle you're born again and gradually that little white circle begins to possess more and more of this black circle and the divine nature begins to possess as I walk with the Lord and allow the Holy Spirit to control more and more areas of my life as I take up the cross it becomes easy to speak the truth it becomes difficult to

tell a lie it becomes difficult to hate somebody it becomes difficult to do wrong just like it's difficult for a cat to be dirty nature that's eternal life and that's the nature into which I have to lead people in the church and I say if a man doesn't want to do that I say forget it don't try to be an elder don't be a preacher if you don't want to lead people to eternal life what's the use having authority if you're not interested in leading people into this life what's the use getting up and preaching is it just to show you're a great preacher you want to preach like somebody else forget it that's Babylon that's the spirit of Babylon in Jerusalem the true church of Jesus Christ we lead people to eternal life we lead people to partake of God's nature and when people have God's nature

as each takes up the cross what happens is they gradually become one with each other because God's nature is such that hates strife hates conflict hates division seeks to be one with others who have God's life that's how we build the body of Christ it's like the body growing in the womb of a mother starts very very small and in the body of Jesus Christ it's life that makes that body grow in the mother's womb and the shape of that little embryo or fetus in the mother's womb may not look exactly like a human being in the beginning and the church that is just forming may not look like the body of Christ in the beginning I don't know whether you have seen pictures of these little embryos and fetuses inside a mother's womb sometimes when they have a miscarriage and lose it you see pictures I

have seen pictures of it and they they look more like tadpoles than human beings they got a huge head and something like a little tail doesn't look like a human being at all but that's how it starts and as time

goes on it grows and becomes a beautifully shaped body and so it is in the building of the body of Christ you don't have all the structure and everything right at the beginning it starts and doesn't have much of a shape in the beginning and there may be sometimes one brother who is probably taking most of the responsibility for everything because the others are all new it's like those little embryos with a big head and little tail but just give it time and if this person doesn't end up as a dictator gradually everything will fill out and will come out as a beautiful baby and that's

how the body of Christ is built it is life so life is the most important thing not shape when you look inside that mother's womb and you take a scan of that little embryo it doesn't look like a human being at all shape is unimportant all that the doctor wants to see is their life so when I see a new church beginning in some village or somewhere I'm not worried about the structure first a lot of people are interested in structure it must be like this everybody must be like this this is what they must do in the meeting and this is how they must dress and this is what they must do I say you're going to kill the baby you take that little embryo and say hey this hand is a bit too short we must pull it a bit here and this leg is a bit too short we must pull it a bit here you're going to kill

that baby just leave it alone just make sure it's got life and that's what I say that's how the body of Christ is built I go into these churches and I say yeah this looks like a tadpole ok fine never mind is it got life the life of Jesus are they eager are they pursuing it and I come back year after year and I say hey it's becoming more and more like a body and a few years later it's a body we got to be patient you got to be patient to have a baby come out of mother's womb you can't hurry that job and neither can you when building the body of Christ but always the emphasis is on life now it's much easier to have the emphasis on form and structure rather than life and that's how all these great movements that God raised up in history ended up in such a state of spiritual death look at all

the great movements that God has raised up with any great leader since the beginning of the reformation and there have been so many mostly from Europe there were great movements and in other countries people God raised up a man to start a work particularly in the last four five hundred years and the men who started the movement were fed up with Babylon and wanted to come out and start building Jerusalem and the true church and come out of this dead church and they were godly men and they did not come out because the structure was wrong they came out because the life was wrong and they came out and led people to a life and naturally when a church comes together it has to have a structure I mean a life inside the mother's womb has got to form sure it's got to form we need a body but and so

they formed a structure for the church but after they died the next generation they didn't know God like their leader and so they were left with the structure and so the next generation onwards they began to emphasize doctrine authority the position of the elders and the leaders and the bishops and that became far more important than eternal life and they completely forgot about John 17 too that Jesus was given authority to lead people to eternal life and that's what the Lord showed me that the only authority I have over anyone is to lead him to partake of God's nature not to run his life not to make him serve me and do all types of things for me as an elder brother I don't want him to do anything for me the son of man did not come to be served he came to serve and I'm not here to get

these people to do jobs for me because I'm an elder brother I'm here to do jobs for them sure that's our calling to serve them that is a true elder brother who's here to clean the other brother's car not to get the other brother to clean his car there's a lot of difference and very few like that I'll tell you that and that's why there are very few expressions of the body of Christ because that spirit of being a servant that Jesus had

who did not come to be served but to serve is so rarely found even among people who wash the feet as a ritual they don't know what it is to serve the ritual is easy to practice but the reality is quite another thing even when they break bread there's one bread and we are breaking a bread in our meeting and I take that bread sometimes before the brothers and

sisters and I say do you know how many grains of wheat went into making this bread they were all individual grains of wheat once upon a time but they submitted to being put inside the grinder and they really got crushed now they could have avoided that but they submitted to being crushed to be broken and then they got kneaded together and then as if the crushing was not enough they were put in an oven at 300 degrees Fahrenheit and heated up that's how we got this bread that's how God's gonna make us one body he's gonna crush us he's gonna take us through the fire but we'll come out as one bread one body with care attached to one another as one so I say when we break this bread and you put it in your mouth and you eat it and the other brother next to you and the sister next to you does it

you're saying that you are one body like this you don't wanna live just as a holy individual all by yourself you wanna be a part of one body I say if you don't want that when the bread comes to you just look at it and admire it and pass it on don't tell a lie that's how it should be breaking a bread communion is a very serious thing it's a covenant with God and with man Lord I wanna follow in the way of brokenness that Jesus went I wanna be broken so that I can be one body with my brothers and sisters who are breaking one bread with me to build the body of Christ that's God's goal and I tell you a lot of problems come when we begin to preach that how the body of Christ should be built to give people freedom not to hold them with rules and regulations and chains and all types of things

which the Pharisees try to hold people like that they say you can't do this and you can't do the other thing and you must do it like this and you must do it like this and the Jews conformed that they were in bondage till Jesus came into those synagogues and just opened the prison doors and let people free and they hated him for it they said we wanna invite this fellow to preach in our synagogue again he is liberating people it's the same old story after two thousand years the Pharisees are back leading the synagogue the money changers are back in the temple and every prophet that God sends into their midst to liberate the common people they never wanna hear him again because he disturbs their structure you see if Jesus had only spoken about things like we must love our enemies they'd let

him preach again we must you know wash one another feet they'd let him preach again we must be humble they'd let him preach again we must love one another they'd let him preach again as long as he stuck to just things like character be good be kind be merciful and let's be humble but the moment he began to touch their structure and their traditions that's when they got mad the moment he began to say these traditions of yours who said everybody should wash their hands up to their elbows I know you fellows do it go ahead and do it but why do you make that a rule for fellowship is that the basis on which God accepts people why do you make these rules then they got upset with him yes the Old Testament law there was a law which said thou shall not lift a burden on the Sabbath day right right

and so the Pharisees you know the cleverer you are the more astray you can go from God Jesus said you gotta be like a little child a little child reads that and doesn't think further he understands what it is I shouldn't carry away and do some work on the Sabbath day that's the meaning of it but when clever people get that verse their brain works overtime and begins to think about that verse and they go astray and I've never had problem with simple village people in our villages they simply understand these things but the cleverer people are they go astray and I can really praise God with Jesus who said I thank you

father that you've hidden these things from the wise and the clever and intelligent and you reveal them to babes what did the Pharisees say when they read a verse saying you

shall not lift a burden on the Sabbath day they said do you know this is how clever minds work every time you walk you're lifting your foot yeah and you got shoes on your feet that's a burden but they realized they couldn't walk barefoot so they finally came to conclusion a shoe that weighs more than so many ounces is a burden that's how they made their laws and another law you shall not do any work on a Sabbath day can you get a Gentile to work for you on a Sabbath day if you don't want to work in the kitchen and cook food get a Gentile to do all your cooking of your food and Jews are generally rich so it's easy to employ Gentiles to work on the and you get the benefit of somebody else working for you they said no you can't do that and then one Pharisee would ask what about if a hen lays

an egg on a Sabbath day can we eat that because the hen did some work can we get the benefit of somebody else's work they got into all these silly little questions and we can sit here and say thank God we are not like the Pharisees but we can have just as silly rules as they had in our midst today which the angels will laugh at because we've expanded on what God has said we don't leave it where God said leave it we want to control people and we don't want anybody coming in disturbing the structure we don't want anybody coming in disturbing our inherited traditions which we've had for so many years because the only way to keep people away from the world is with these traditions and these rules and regulations you really think you've separated them from the world worldliness is in the mind

it's not on the outside Romans 12.2 is very clear be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind not by the changing of your dress by the renewing of your mind when your mind is renewed then that works itself out in many other external forms in what you have in your home in your dress and in a hundred and one other things but it must begin in the mind you know this is the thing about God's work God's work always begins in the inside have you noticed I don't know whether you've noticed this when God gave Moses the pattern for the tabernacle supposing you were giving a person a pattern for the tabernacle how would you begin just think of that sometimes when we read the scriptures we need to ask ourselves is this the way we would do it if I were being if I

were giving Moses the pattern for the tabernacle I would say listen Moses this is how it must be the length of this tabernacle must be a hundred and fifty feet width fifty feet and inside that you've got this little tent forty five feet by fifteen feet with the outside boundaries and the size of the tent and etc but that's not how God started that's interesting you read in Exodus chapter twenty five that when God started he told him he said to Moses about the mercy seat and the ark that was right in the center in the most holy place right in the spirit God starts from there where we start from the outside God starts from the inside he's going to work his way to the outside don't worry he'll come to the curtains around the outer court and all that but the point is where does it start and

that's how the godly men who founded these great movements of God started they started from the center with man's heart but their followers started from the outside and what happens it never reaches the center it just remains on the outside so it looks pretty nice in the eyes of men oh we're following the traditions of the elders only on the outside and that's what Jesus came to show them and we need many prophets to come and tell people today that that's exactly what happened this is not the body of Christ this is just the denomination that holds a certain pattern just like the philistines could make a tabernacle you can copy the pattern but you won't have the glory that the founders of the movement had and this has been the history throughout Christianity but the Lord always brings

people back you know we read in the time of David David was a great leader well before that let's go back to Joshua Joshua was a great leader who established the Israelites in Canaan and then we read when Joshua died the great leader who knew God face to face died now his elders the second generation continued for a little while carrying on in the momentum of what they've got from Joshua and kept Israel going okay but then the time came when Joshua when that generation died and the third generation came and you read in the book of Judges it was absolute chaos they still have the structure they still talked about Jehovah they still have the tabernacle there in their midst they still sang songs of praise to Jehovah but it wasn't the same it was confusion and chaos and God was nowhere they

were defeated and ruled by the heathen so you see this principle first generation the man of God Joshua second generation decline begins and the third generation is chaos now the same thing happened with David's time years later 500 years later God raises up another man David he's got a vision for God he's got a man after God's own not God's own mind God's own heart always the thing about the heart you know the big difference between Saul and David there's a verse I don't have time to show it to you you read it in the first in 1 Samuel chapter 9 or 10 or something it says there that when they were looking for Saul they found him and they made him king and he stood in the midst of the people he was about 9 inches taller than everybody else that's what it says his head stood out over all

the other Israelites he was a man of the head but David God says I haven't found a man after my own heart that was the difference between Saul and David and that's the difference between a Christianity of the head and a Christianity of the heart and that's the difference between a man who knows God and other people who got clever heads like Saul and try to follow that they don't build the same thing they may understand the doctrine they may explain it they may build Bible schools and all the false prophets in the Old Testament came out of these Bible schools no true prophet ever came out of a Bible school no true apostle came out of a Bible school but we have proliferation of Bible schools particularly in my country hundreds and thousands of Bible schools funded from America producing

multitudes of false prophets even today but no true prophet ever came out of any of those I've never seen one that's how it was head head head head head Saul had knowledge study study get your hang it up on your wall and there you are ready to serve god trash absolute garbage but David didn't have any certificate a man of the god's own heart knew his heart loved God he was a man of the heart he built something in Israel that God love.

He had his mistakes, he was not perfect. No man whom God has used has ever been perfect. But he really built something that God was happy with.

And then he handed it over to his son, the second generation, Solomon. Now see the same principle that happened in Joshua's time. Solomon started out so well.

He was moving on the momentum that he got from David. He sought God for wisdom. He said, I don't want money, give me wisdom.

But he didn't continue. After a while, decline came in. And by the time you come to the third generation of Rehoboam, it split into two kingdoms, two denominations.

Now the same thing has happened in Christendom for 2000 years, particularly in the last 500 years since the Reformation. Here's a great man of God. There are many whom God raised up in Europe and different countries through the centuries.

He starts something, it's happened in India, it's happened in China, it's happened in different places. And I've made a careful study of these to see this principle operating. And it always works like this, this David-Solomon-Rehoboam principle.

A man of God who knows God, meets Him, and he's a man after God's own heart. He's not after a structure. He's after life.

He loves Jesus with all his heart. He's not interested in a ministry or a structure. God gives it to him because God wants to build the body of Christ.

And he starts something. And there are other men who come along with him, gripped by this vision. And they are usually denounced by the existing religious church of their day, saying these are heretics, these are false prophets and all.

They are thrown out and they meet in some mountains or caves or somewhere in some small little house. But God is there. God's not in that big building with a cross on top.

God's in that little group over there meeting with this man of God who's got this vision. And that grows. There are other people here and there who hear about it and come together.

This is God's remnant. This is Jerusalem. These are the people who come out of Babylon and they are building Jerusalem.

The church of Jesus Christ in their generation. And that grows and grows and grows and grows. And finally that generation, that man dies.

He can't live forever. And the next generation come and fortunately they have a little bit of that vision. But it's not the same.

Now the structure has become big. They've got to make sure somebody doesn't steal their sheep and all these things which the original leader was not bothered about. He was just bothered about God.

He was bothered about getting them eternal life. Not increasing his numbers and making a membership list and all that. He wasn't interested in all that.

He was interested that people became godly. But now it was a structure. And now there were gradually in some cases the leaders and bishops and all that type of thing came on top again.

And by the time and the decline started and by the time it came to the third generation. Oh there were competitions and splits in this group. Just like Rehoboam's time.

Back again. All the denominations and this thing which started as Jerusalem became Babylon again. And then God has to pull out some other man from this and start all over again.

And this is what's happened. Again and again and again and again. So what should we do? You should see where God is moving in your generation.

Not where he was moving 500 years ago. Not where he was moving 300 years ago. Not even where he was moving two generations ago.

I am not interested. But if you do that, you'll suffer the same fate as these great founders whose tombs we whitewash and whom we praise so much as great men. You don't realize what they suffered.

They were called heretics. They were called all types of names and they were hounded some of them. They tried to kill them and finally they killed some of them.

The same thing that happened to Jesus. Same thing that happened to the apostles. It happened in Paul's time.

You know what Paul told the elders in Ephesus? He said, I know that after my departure Acts chapter 20 wolves will come into this flock. Paul had been there for three years and he built the body in those three years and he was about to go and he called the elders together in Acts chapter 20. He called the elders of Ephesus together in Acts 20:17 and spoke to them right up to verse 38.

I don't have time to read it, but this is in a nutshell what he said. He said, you fellas, you've seen me for three years. Three years means what's that? Over a thousand days.

Anyway, I've been here for more than 1000 days and I preach to you day and night. He says there means I preach to you at least 2000 sermons, right? You fellas have heard 2000 sermons from me on all types of subjects and I'm not going to remind you of any of those sermons. I want you to see how I lived in your midst.

It's not his sermons that he reminds them of after three years. He doesn't say, do you remember that sermon I preached on humility? And do you remember the other sermon I preached on holiness? That time there was a great stirring at the end of the meeting. So many people came forward.

He's forgotten all that. We remember these things. Paul says, you know how I lived among you in humility, pleading with you.

I never took any money from you fellas. You were poor and I didn't take, I didn't covet your clothes or your gold or your silver. I labored night and day, three years to help you, showing you and I worked to help my fellow workers, showing you how Jesus said, it is more blessed to give than to receive.

And he said, but I know what's going to happen after I leave. There are wolves waiting outside. They couldn't put one step inside this church for three years.

But after I leave, I know that grievous wolves, Acts 20:29, will enter among you, not sparing the flock and you dear elder brothers, 10 of you sitting here, from your own selves, from you fellas sitting here, some of you will arise. God's given me discernment on that. Who are going to speak all types of perverse things.

What are these perverse things? Perverse things are not saying Jesus Christ is not God. He did not die for our sins. No, no, no, no, no, no.

People wouldn't accept such a man. They'll preach all those right things. The perverse things are, they will draw disciples after them.

That's the perverse thing. Here in verse 30, they're going to get a following after them. Paul never permitted it.

He never had permitted anybody to follow him. We've been very careful about that. One reason why God has raised up so many brothers to lead the churches in India, godly brothers in so many places, is because we have never allowed anybody to lean on us.

As soon as I see somebody leaning on me, I just pull away and let him fall. I say, you better lean on the Lord. I mean, I'll take care of you when you're a baby, one or two years, but you got to stand on your own feet, brother, and go out and be an elder, make a few mistakes.

I made many more than you did, than you will ever do. That's how we learn. And don't draw anybody after yourself.

But Paul says, I know that after I go, things are going to be different. How did Paul know that? Was this arrogance? I mean, if we heard that, we're so carnal, that when we hear that, we go according to rules. Rules that anybody who speaks like that must be arrogant, to say after my departure wolves will come in.

We've got these rules, that we cannot understand a godly man. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians chapter 3, the natural man cannot understand a spiritual man. You cannot assess a spiritual man, because if you're carnal, you live by rules.

And if you had heard Paul stand sitting there with these seven or ten elders and saying, after my departure, you fellows will not be able to keep the church pure. You would have gone away from there, since Paul is one of the most arrogant preachers I've ever met. He thinks so much of himself, as if he's the only one who can keep the church pure.

He was a prophet. And you can't understand prophets sometimes. But what he said was absolutely right.

Look at the condition of the church in Ephesus, by the time the second letter to the Ephesians is written. Have you read the second letter to the Ephesians? That's in Revelation chapter 2, where the Lord writes this letter to the Ephesians and says, you fellows have left your first love? Verses 1 to 5. That was about 25, 30 years after Paul had spoken these words. Exactly what he said happened.

They've gone. And yet in Paul's time, when he wrote Ephesians, that's one of the most spiritual churches around. You can see by the tone of the letter to the Ephesians what a spiritual church it is.

But he didn't have a doorkeeper. Every church must have a doorkeeper. A man who makes sure the wolves don't come in.

Not one who holds people with rules and regulations, but one who leads people to eternal life. And those wolves out there, those agents of Satan knew, well, we don't have a chance in this church as long as Paul is around. But he's not going to be here forever.

We're just waiting for him to move on. Once he moves on, oh, these other fellows, we can handle all of them. This fellow is interested in his business, and this fellow is interested in some position, and the other fellow is just interested in preaching in the church.

And the other person has got his own private agenda, and this other person is more interested in structure than in life. We'll handle this church, no problem at all. So they were just waiting, hanging outside these wolves, waiting for Paul to go.

That's how it happens. Even in that generation, the apostles went, and the next generation, there was a little bit of momentum. But by the time it came to the third generation in AD 95, you see the condition of the churches in Ephesus, Pergamos, Katera, Sardis, Laodicea, churches founded by the apostles.

What is their condition now? Backslidden, lost their first love, leaders having a name that they are alive. The same David-Solomon-Rehoboam principle happened in the days of the apostles, and it's happening today. And God had to start all over again.

It's always been like that, and I don't think it'll ever change till Jesus comes again. And so, when we seek to be that remnant that's seeking to build the body of Jesus Christ, there's nothing to be proud of. The moment you become proud, God will be your enemy.

It's very difficult to be a remnant and not be proud, I'll tell you that. God destroyed a lot of remnant churches because they became proud. Their attitude became, Oh Lord, I thank you that I'm not like these other denominations.

We have meetings like this, we believe this, our dress is like this, and we don't do this, we don't have television in our homes, we don't have this, we don't have that, we don't have the other thing. Lord, we thank you. God doesn't have much time for such people.

God is gathering together people who are broken and humble, and who are not conscious of their holiness, who are not conscious of their humility, who are not conscious of their goodness, and who are not comparing themselves with anybody else. I believe this is the reason why the body of Christ is not built in many, many places. People start off so well, and God blesses them, and it's very difficult for God to bless somebody, because as soon as God blesses, they become proud.

Oh, see what God's done here. We are hundred people now. Reverend Church, just wait.

Just wait four or five years and see what happens. I believe we've got to keep our mouth in the dust. You see, it's a tremendous temptation that comes to us day and night to compare ourselves with other people.

And what do we compare? Structure, external forms. Are you comparing that brother's heart with the heart of that brother in the Presbyterian Church? No. You can't look at his heart, and you can't look at that person's heart.

No. Are you comparing that person's attitude to money, with the attitude to money of that brother in the Methodist Church? No. That you can't do.

What are we comparing then? Maybe external forms, maybe external dress, what we have and what we don't have in our homes, compared to what people don't have in their homes, length of women's hair and various things like that. But the central things, we may not think about at all. And those are the essential things.

It doesn't say in the scriptures that God gives grace to those sisters who have long hair. It says God gives grace to the humble. I believe in sisters having long hair.

But I'm sorry to say, you don't get grace just because of that. You get grace if you're humble. You don't even get grace if you're fundamental and evangelical in doctrine.

Otherwise the devil would get grace. He's fundamental and evangelical in doctrine. No.

There's so many things we glory in, which compels God to oppose us, because he opposes the proud. And what have we? In terms of eternal life, what do we have? Perhaps very little. But in terms of form, structure and doctrine, we may have lots.

And we can glory in that. And God says, I'm committed to opposing the proud, and I have to oppose it. It's God's nature.

You cannot get God to support you, even if you're his beloved child, if you're proud. It's his nature to oppose the proud. How does pride come? Can a student who got 10% in mathematics in the class be proud? If you've heard me ask this question before, you know the answer.

If you haven't, I'm sure you don't know the answer. Can a student who got 10% in mathematics be proud? Usually the answer is no. But supposing everybody else in his class got 5, and 3, and 2, and 1, and most of them got 0. Can he be proud? Sure.

He comes running home and says, Mummy, I came first in the class. How much did he get, son? 10 out of 100. And he's proud.

How does pride come? By comparison. You take that same child and put him in another class, where brilliant students, where nobody gets less than 98, 98, 98 and a half, 99, 99, 99 and a half, 100, 100, 100, 100. All of a sudden he's become humble.

How did this person become humble all of a sudden? Humility comes by comparison. Pride comes by comparison. All the pride we have comes by comparison with other people.

We compare ourselves with other churches and we are better than them. Perhaps we are bigger than them. We have more people.

We may even compare our remnant church with some other remnant church. Oh, they've got only 30. We've got 150.

It's that easy to be proud. We can compare our families. Oh, none of my children have gone astray.

That family, one has gone astray. My family is better. I did a better job of bringing up my children.

There's no eternal life there. There's only the arrogance and the pride of Lucifer there. Despite all the glory and how nice little tin soldiers your children are.

It's just a shop window. God deliver us from this. And in this we also see the secret of humility.

I believe this is the fundamental law for building the body of Jesus Christ, that we've got to remain humble. Pride comes by comparing ourselves with all the other people around us and we are definitely better than them in so many ways. Praise God.

But that should, instead of humbling us, lifts us up and then God committed to his laws has to oppose us. And that's how degeneration begins. See, the devil's already opposing me.

My lusts are opposing me. And if Almighty God also opposes me, I'm finished. I'm doomed.

And he opposes the proud. How does humility come? How did this person getting 10% comparing himself with all the Methodists and Presbyterians and Episcopalians around him and thinking he got more than them

because he had 10%? How did he suddenly become humble? He was put in another class where everybody was getting over 98. So humility comes by comparison.

So I've discovered the secret of humility. Never compare yourself with anyone other than Jesus Christ. Simple.

Any chance of you becoming proud? Not in your lifetime. Do you want to go that way? You will never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never compare yourself with another human being. Your wives are going to stop from this moment comparing yourself with your husband, right? And your husbands are going to stop this moment comparing yourself with your wives.

And you're going to stop this moment comparing yourself with the Charismatics and the Pentecostals and the Methodists and the Television Evangelists and all the other people. And from this day, you're going to say, I'm going to compare myself only with Jesus Christ. Looking unto Jesus, Hebrews 12, 2, 1 and 2, let us run the race.

And the meaning there in that Greek language is looking away from everything else and everyone else unto Jesus alone. That's the thing. We're looking at too many things.

That's why we can't run the race. That's why we fall down so often. Looking away from all the Charismatics and Anticharismatics and the Catholics and the Protestants and the Baptists and everyone, looking away from everyone unto Jesus, let us run this race and you'll never trip.

God will never have to oppose you because you will not be able to be proud for one second. God will come behind you and push you forward instead of coming in front of you and pushing you back because you've been comparing yourself with others. If we do this, I believe the Lord can use us to build the body of Jesus Christ and we can grow from one degree of glory to another.

How can I go from one degree of glory to another if God doesn't get behind me and push me forward? If God's in front of me opposing me, I can never go from one degree of glory to another. I'll go backwards. And that's what 1 Peter 5, verse 5 says, repeated twice in James 4, verse 6 and 1 Peter 5, 5. God is opposed to the proud.

That means if I'm proud, He's just going to push me back and back and back and back all my life, no matter what the length of my hair is or what the size of my dress is or what my doctrines are or how pure and holy I think I am or whether I have television or don't have television in my home, He's going to oppose me because of one thing, pride. I tell you, God hates pride more than He hates television sets. God hates pride more than He hates miniskirts.

He hates pride more than He hates jeans. He hates pride more than He hates short hair on women. He hates pride more than He hates makeup, name it, jewelry.

He hates pride more than He hates anything because the Bible says that's the only fellow whom God opposes. God opposes the proud and God gives grace to the humble. That's why I say it's so difficult for God to bless us.

It's so difficult for God to give us revelation. So what's the answer? Shall we sin that grace may abound? No, no, no. Shall we become, shall we dress in any way we like? No.

We shall keep our standards and we shall be humble. We shall not compare ourselves with others. That's the answer.

We don't have to bring television sets back into the house. No, let's keep them out. But let's compare ourselves with Jesus, alone, and say, God be merciful to me, a sinner.

You know, when I was a young Christian, I thought I was pretty good. The closer I got to God, the more I realized what a lot of unchristlikeness there is in my life. There's tremendous amount of, you know, I told you about this cube of ice.

There's so much underneath the surface which other people can't see. As we walk with God, He shows us all those wretched, corrupt, selfish things. Try and do this at the end of each day.

Ask God to show you what all you did during the day which was pure selfishness, where you thought only of yourself and maybe your family, nobody else. And I tell you, you'll get a lot of revelation of the selfishness there is in your life. The way you spent your money, ask God to show you the selfish way you spend your money, month after month after month after month.

I just ask God to show it to you. How you think of yourself, your family, having a good time. Of course, you're spiritual, and you're dressed all right, and you do everything right, and you don't have any makeup, but you spend all your money in a selfish way for yourself and your family.

And there's very little sacrifice for God and His kingdom. Yeah, of course, you give God a tip. Tip is necessary in restaurants and in churches.

You've got to put 15% or whatever it is. And you give God His tip, and you think it's okay. Just ask God to show you the selfishness.

You know, in the book of Revelation, you read about Babylon and Jerusalem. And if you read carefully, I don't have time to show that all to you, but Babylon is always described as great. Babylon the great.

Babylon the great. Babylon the great. And Jerusalem is described as the holy city.

What's the difference? Babylon is quantity, Jerusalem is quality. That's the difference between greatness and holiness. That's the difference between a congregation and the body of Jesus Christ being built today.

Another thing, in the book of Revelation, you see Babylon is linked with business. You see Revelation chapter 18, the sale of this, and the sale of that, and the spices, and the cinnamons, and the wood, and the gold, and the silver, and the garments, and the purple, and all. Revelation 18 is just business.

Business. It's an economic system. Revelation chapter 17 is religious.

Revelation chapter 18 is business, and the two are combined together. Religion plus business. This is Babylon.

Jerusalem does not operate on the principle of business. What is the principle of business? The principle of business is, what profit can I get out of this? If I don't get any profit out of this, I'm not going to do it. You'll never go into a business in an area where there's no demand in your area, in your locality.

You wouldn't be able to sell anything. What's the principle of anyone who does business? What am I going to get out of it? Not what is society going to get out of it. No.

Not what the church is going to get out of it. Not what God is going to get out of it. What am I going to get out of it? Am I going to get profit? Then I'll do this business.

That's the principle of all business, and that's right. That's the only way you can do business in the world. All I say is, when you come to the church, you can't run the church like that.

And when you run the church like that, or you come into the church, and you begin to think, what can I get out of the church? That's Babylon. You come to the church and get up to preach to get honor out of the church. What's that? Business.

You come to the church to make contacts, to spread your business around a bit, like the Freemasons and the Lions Clubs and all that type of stuff. Make contacts to spread my business. What's that? That's not Jerusalem.

That's Babylon. People who do that, they're in the church for their own gain, some business contact, some honor. They want to get up to sing, to show how well they can sing.

They're using the church to promote themselves, using the church to promote their families, to give more experience to their children and things like that. This is not the church. The church is Jerusalem.

It's got the opposite principle of Babylon, sacrifice. Jesus did not come from heaven to earth to get some profit. He came here to suffer loss.

You know, this is the tragedy of Christian work in India. 90% and more of Christian workers in India are making profit out of Christian work. Very often supported by many people in Western countries who are 100% sincere, 100% faithful, 100% sacrificial and 100% foolish.

That's how it is. Supporting works that are destroying God's work in India, that are hindering God's work. Dishonoring the name of Jesus Christ.

These folks out here who send the money get some satisfaction that conscience is eased. Oh, we're supporting some mission work out there. Okay.

But what's happening out there? People are just making profit. The whole thing is Babylon, top to bottom. Where's the sacrifice? If there is no sacrifice, if a man's made profit out of coming into Christian work, you're going to build Babylon.

That's exactly what's happening all over the world. It's happening to the television evangelist here. It's happening to other people there.

Jerusalem is the principle of sacrifice. It follows Jesus who came from heaven and got nothing. He lost everything.

But he came to win people, even if he lost everything. He longed that other people may have what he had in heaven. And that's the only basis on which a man can be an elder or a leader of God's people in the church.

He sacrifices everything he has, his home, his convenience, his money, his time, his energy. And I've seen people like that in India. And I tell you, God has used them to build the body of Jesus Christ.

I praise God for giving us such brothers whose longing is that other people may have what they have, who don't want to sit forever as elders, who are longing to serve and then move out of the way so that other people can take over the leadership and they can move on to some new area and do the whole thing all over again. They're not in it for any profit. They're not in it for any gain.

Therefore, God gives them grace. God gives them grace. And if God sees anybody like that who's got a longing to build the body of Jesus Christ, he'll test you in the area of sacrifice.

That's why I say, search your heart every day and see the number of things which you did out of pure selfishness where you thought only of the fun and the happiness and the enjoyment of you and your family. And you'll get a lot of light and a lot of sins and worldly attitudes which you never thought were there in your mind because you always thought worldliness was dependent on how you decorated your homes or your body. Worldliness is not in that.

You can see worldliness in the way you spend your money. You can see worldliness in the way you spend your time. It's not just in your possessions or not just in what you don't have in your homes.

I don't go to the movies. I don't drink. I don't gamble.

My clothes are modest. No, these are all good. But worldliness is much more subtle than that.

I wish we could get rid of the world so easily. It's not so easy. And if you don't start from the inside, you'll never get rid of it.

Jerusalem is built on the principle of sacrifice. And I've seen this for 25 years in India. Where God can find a man who gives all that he has, like Jesus did, and who never wants other people to serve him, who wants to serve them, who wants nothing from them, who wants to live for them, that they might have what he has, God will build a church.

The rest will all be Babylon. That's how it is. Jerusalem is the city of sacrifice.

And then God will give that man authority to lead these people to be built together to have eternal life. The great thing about that church will be not its size. It may not be great.

It may be small. But it'll be a humble, lowly people. Let me turn you to Zephaniah.

There's a lovely verse here. Zephaniah. That's the fourth last book from the Old Testament.

Zephaniah chapter 3. It says here in the middle of verse 11, I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride or in their pride. God is out to remove proud people from the midst. And I will leave in the midst of thee, verse 12, an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord.

This is the real remnant. Verse 13. And the remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity nor speak lies.

Neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth. You see, God has cleansed away the proud in verse 11. And he's left a very humble people there.

And then it says, the Lord thy God, verse 17, is in the midst of thee is mighty. That's the type of people into the midst of which the Lord wants to come. And that's what he's doing today.

And I believe God is with the church when he removes the proud. As much as we can say he's with the church when he adds humble people. I don't want great people in our churches.

I want humble people. And if God is adding humble brothers and sisters who do not think much about themselves, but who judge themselves, who value. A humble brother or sister values other people.

He does not despise anyone. It says in 1 Corinthians 12, the head does not say to the feet, I have no need of you. Jesus himself does not say to the lowest member in the body, I don't need you.

And one mark of a person, one of the many marks of a person who's humble is he values the weakest and the lowest brothers in the body of Christ. You know, there are some retarded and sick children here. I want to ask you, how many of you believe that they contribute something to the building of the body of Christ in our midst? I believe it with all my heart.

They bless me without their knowing it. When I look at them, I become a little more compassionate. In other words, I've become a little more like Christ.

But does he know it? He doesn't know it. He thinks he's just sitting there doing nothing. Nobody gives him a medal for making me more compassionate.

Nobody gets up and says that he did a great job, but he did. God's ways are not our ways. I tell you, it's not just the preaching in the pulpit that does God's work.

It's some of these weak, retarded ones who make us a little more like Christ. I praise God for that with all my heart. If you don't value the weakest brother, the weak one, the person who can't do things properly, there's some pride left in you.

God's doing a work on the inside. He's getting rid of all this emphasis on traditions and He's getting us back to reality. That's what God is doing.

I want to just sound one last warning. There's a lot of so-called Holy Spirit power today, which is not Holy Spirit power. It is human soul power.

I believe that if we want to build the Church of Jesus Christ, we need to distinguish clearly between soul and spirit. The Bible says in Hebrews 4.12, the word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword dividing between soul and spirit. There's a difference between that, which is a result of human intellectual power, human emotional power that can stir people and the power of Jesus Christ.

There's a lot of difference between psychological gimmicks that are supposed to heal people and healing in the name of Jesus. Don't be deceived by all these people who talk about healing. I've been around all these churches and I've discovered there are as many sick people in Pentecostal charismatic churches as in other churches that don't proclaim healing.

There are as many people who die of cancer in those churches as in these churches. Then what is all this that's going on? Babylon. A lot of people are making a good living out of it.

Where would they be able to have their private homes by the lake and their Learjets and things like that, if they didn't run these campaigns? It's a racket. Don't be deceived by it. Jesus Christ, you know, I've often said to people, the reason why I can't cooperate with all these healing campaigns is because I'm looking for one man who will not take a collection from people before he prays for their healing.

And I haven't found him yet. Not in India, not anywhere. I'm looking for a television evangelist who won't ask people for money.

I haven't found him yet. You know, it's everywhere. Jerusalem has got no interest in money.

God provides it. If they get it, they serve. If they don't get it, they still serve.

But in Babylon, everything is money, money, money, money, money. That's the main thing. God's Word cannot go on without money.

That's Babylon. In Jerusalem, God's Word cannot go on without the Holy Spirit. That's the difference.

And as much as these people are crying out for money to build Babylon, the remnant is crying out for the power of the Holy Spirit to build Jerusalem. You know where you stand. What's your mind on? How much do you hunger? You know, I feel lots of Christian churches today.

Think of this. The Holy Spirit that's in the world, if He quietly left the world tonight, lots of churches tomorrow will carry on just as if nothing happened. I believe that.

They won't even know that the Holy Spirit left. Because they never needed Him in any case. Their projects and everything will continue just as it's always gone for years and years and years and years.

They never needed the Holy Spirit. But the ones who were really needed the Holy Spirit, they'll say, Hey, what happened? It's like the heating being turned off in winter time. Hey, I'm feeling cold.

Would that be true in your case? He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Let's bow our heads before God. I think of that verse in the Old Testament.

It says, There were great searchings of heart. That means I'm searching of your heart by the Holy Spirit. Respond to Him and say, Lord, I want to use the one life you give me to build a body, not a congregation.

People who are one, lowly people who value one another. Help us, we pray. Help us, Lord, each one.

You called us with a purpose. Help us to fulfill it. We ask in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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