

Finishing the Course - 02 Filling Up What Is Lacking

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of self-examination and humility in the Christian journey towards becoming more like Christ.

Duration: 1:00:47

Scripture: 2 Samuel 6:15-16, 1 Chronicles 13:9-10, Malachi 4:6, Matthew 6:33, 1 Corinthians 12:12, 1 Corinthians 12:16

Topics: "Finishing Well"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the issue of people attending church meetings but not actively seeking fellowship with others. He emphasizes the importance of filling up what is lacking in our spiritual lives. The speaker uses examples from the Old Testament, such as Hagar and Sarah, to illustrate the dangers of pride and comparison. He also highlights the need to love the truth, including recognizing our own defects, and the importance of being part of the body of Christ and relying on others. The sermon concludes with a call to take seriously the areas where we need to fill up what is lacking and to grow spiritually.

Transcript

We were thinking yesterday morning, and at other times during the day, of our theme, which is that we must grow up in all aspects unto Christ. It's not a theme that we must just think of at the conference, but at all times in our life. This is God's will for us.

We're not to be imbalanced. When we begin our Christian life, it's like that. But God's will is, as we go on in the Christian life, that more and more of that circle gets filled up, you know, a lot of empty spots, and we need to see what all spots are empty.

And, fill them up. And for each of us, as we saw, those areas may be different. And that's why we need to, you know, Paul says, we are not ignorant of Satan's schemes.

And one reason why Satan allows you to see the weaknesses of other people so clearly, you know, he shows you the circle of other people, and shows you all the areas in their life that are not Christ-like. How does it help you? It doesn't help you one bit. And the purpose of that is, that you never concentrate on your own circle.

And I believe that's one of the main reasons why many, many Christians don't grow. They're looking at all the other circles around them, and so little at their own. I believe that's the reason why we don't have a better ministry in our churches.

In front of my table, I have a verse written there to remind me that the happiest people in the world are those who judge, who never judge others, and judge themselves always. And ever since I got light on that, I have tried to live according to that, you know, in trying to live according to that, we slip up now and then and fall, but we repent and we come back. But I want to encourage all of you, my brothers and sisters, the mark of God's house is like I said yesterday, there are thrones of judgment where we judge ourselves.

Because we look at the glory of Jesus, and we see what a perfect circle His was, and as I see that, I immediately see the areas in my life which are not like that. Those of you who preach the word of God in your churches, I believe that your preaching God's word would have been ten times better or a hundred times better if you had gone home after each meeting and asked the Lord to show you where you failed in your preaching. I have done that for twenty-five years.

Every time I preach, I go and ask the Lord to show me, as far as possible, Lord, did I waste people's time? Did I bore people? Did I say something unnecessary, useless? Did I say something for my own honor? Did I take pains to convey your message accurately, correctly to people? And I find God speaks to me all the time. And I have to keep working on making my preaching circle perfect. But I find a lot of preachers don't do that.

They just get up and speak and imagine that everybody is tremendously excited to listen to them, not realizing they are probably boring people to death. And there's nobody to tell them, even their wives are not faithful enough to tell them, you were boring today. Why don't your sisters help your husbands? You're supposed, God appointed you to be a helper.

And if you don't help your, you know if other people go and tell your husband, they'll think, he'll think they hate him. But when you tell your husband that you were too long and you were too boring, he'll probably listen. See, there are so many areas where we need to fill up what is lacking.

So many areas. If we are humble enough to acknowledge, and what is humility? We have many definitions of humility. We were thinking on Sunday about being nothing so that God can be everything.

Another definition of humility, I would say, is just acknowledging that you have not yet become like Jesus. Do you have a problem there? Anybody has a problem acknowledging that you have not yet become like Jesus Christ? That's humility. And if you always acknowledge that, your life will become more and more perfect.

I keep acknowledging that. I say, Lord, my preaching, I'm not yet preaching like Jesus preached. I want to, I've got a goal to preach like Jesus preached.

Jesus was not boring even for one second. That's how he spoke. I want to challenge you folks who preach God's word in your churches to make Jesus your example.

How he spoke so simply, and to little children could understand. And I keep saying, Lord, my attitude to money, that's not yet like the attitude of Jesus. I really want to be like that.

I want to be like that. Do you have a passion? I'll tell you, brothers and sisters, you can hear any number of messages, but if you don't have a burning passion, that that circle must be filled up before you die. You'll never get there.

You'll never get there, no matter how many interesting messages you hear, and no matter how many times you hear them. You've got to have a passion. You've got to see that the purpose with which Jesus called you was that you might be like him.

And to be like Jesus is to have that circle perfect, and also to rub out all the areas outside the circle where the crayon has gone. You've got to rub all that out, and make sure that the circle is filled up. That's perfection.

That is the life of Jesus. That means get rid of the things in your life which Jesus wouldn't do. The way of speaking, the way of handling money, you know, things like that.

I was talking yesterday about people who make business with each other in the church and sell things for profit. You've just got to ask yourself, would Jesus sell something to Peter for a profit and try to get some money out of Peter? I can't imagine Jesus doing that. That's outside the circle.

I wouldn't do it. I said, to me, that brother is just like Peter. It was to Jesus.

I wouldn't do it. And all people who do such things, they are not at all like Jesus. They're like the devil.

They're not like Jesus. But they don't have light on it, a lot of them. Lot of things go on in the church which people just don't seem to have light on.

Why don't they get light? Does an elder brother always have to come and tell them, you should not do this, you should not do this? I mean, that's okay when we were babies. You had to tell your little children, brush your teeth, go and have a bath, change your clothes, time to go to school, do your homework. But if you had to do that to a 20-year-old son, how sad you'll feel.

And that's exactly how God feels about a lot of his children. He still has to tell them, brush your teeth, go and change your clothes, go and take a shower, go and have a bath. That's the type of thing because they don't seem to judge themselves.

They've got thrones of judgment to judge other people. Will you make one decision in this conference that you will never again spend your time judging people for whom you have no responsibility? That is crayons outside the circle. That means you have to judge certain people.

For example, if I'm an elder and two brothers in our church have a problem, I have to judge them because God's given me that responsibility. If two of my children have a fight when they're small at home, I have to judge them. So there is this fear in which I have to sit on a throne of judgment to judge others, my children, but I don't have to judge other people's children.

That's not my circle. God's given them a father. Let the father, I mean if they misbehave in the church, I talk to the father.

I've never in my life punished anybody else's child. Some of you may have foolishly done that. I never do it.

I wouldn't touch even my brother's child or sister's child or anybody's. That's not my business. I know my boundary and I stick to that.

I don't go to somebody else's home and talk to their servant and tell her how to conduct herself. That's not my business. If there's someone who works in my home, that's my responsibility.

You know, I'm amazed after so many years, so many people don't know where their circle ends. Lot of the problems that come in the church are because people go outside their circles. We need to really recognize and that's the reason why we can't fill up what is lacking.

Even in a home, do you know their husband and wife have got their own circles? Do you think just because some husbands think, well, I'm the head of the home. What does that mean? You mean your wife has got no circle? Your children have got no circle? You're the big Maharaja in charge of the whole thing? It's not true. The wife has got her circle and if a husband doesn't recognize that, he's not going to become Christ-like.

How many of you know, there's a verse in the Bible, how many of you husbands know this very important verse for husbands, wives, submit yourself to your husbands as unto the Lord. You all know that? Anybody here who doesn't know that? Any husband? Oh, you all know that. Do you know the verse before that? No? That's for you.

This verse is not actually for you. That's for wives. But see what it says in Ephesians 5, verse 21.

Ephesians 5, verse 21. Verse 22 is, wives be subject to your own husbands as unto the Lord. That verse is not addressed to husbands, it's addressed to wives.

But the previous verse is for everybody. Verse 21, be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. What does that mean? Who has to be subject to who in that verse? In the next verse, I know the answer.

Any child can answer. Wives be subject to your husbands. Okay, that's understood.

What about the previous verse? In the previous verse, who has to be subject to who? Even a child can answer that. Who? Everybody. Does a, tell me this, does a husband have to be subject to his wife or not? Loud! All the single people are saying yes.

What about the husbands? According to this verse, yes. Does an elder brother have to be subject to a younger brother according to this verse? Yes, all the younger brothers are saying yes. You know, what does this mean? Does that mean I have to take orders from my younger brothers? See, we've got this wrong idea of subjection.

Subjection means, you listen to me. That's how some husbands rule their homes. That's not the way to, that's not how Jesus told Peter, listen to me.

That's not even how God tells Gabriel, the angel. That's how the devil tells one of his demons, Beelzebub, listen to me. The fellow trembles and that's how some husbands run their homes.

That's not Christ-like. That's the rule of hell. There's a gentleness about Jesus.

Jesus always says, if any man wants to come. This thou shalt and thou shalt not, is back to the Old Testament. We need to do that for children when they are small, because children who are small are

under the law.

They are in the old covenant. You have to tell them thou shalt, thou shalt not, but we don't treat adults like that. No.

You don't tell your wife, thou shalt, thou shalt not. And when your children are grown up, you don't say that either. So, be subject means, now I want to explain this verse to you, everybody according to Ephesians 5.21 has got a circle.

And when I go into his circle, I'm going outside my circle. What does that mean? When I force my wife to do something which she doesn't want to do, I've gone outside my circle. I can give a suggestion, I can say this, but I can't force her.

Even Almighty God doesn't force us. How many of you can say that Jesus forced you to do something? Any time in your life, I've been a Christian 43 years, Jesus never forced me to do a single thing till today. And I'm supposed to love my wife like that, that I never in my life force her to do anything.

Because that's how Jesus treats me. Is there a single one of you that can say that Jesus forced you to do something which you didn't want to do? Never! Why? Because Jesus recognizes his boundary and foolish men don't recognize their boundary. You think it's difficult for Jesus to catch me by the neck and make me do something? Not at all.

It's so easy for him. And if I don't obey him, he can make me sick. And when you don't obey, he doesn't make you sick.

Why? Why? Because he respects your circle, the head respects the circle of the members of the body and says, if you want to follow me, follow me. When he sees some of you running after money, does he grab you by the neck and pull you back? No! He knows that will destroy you. He knows that is against the word of God, but he doesn't grab you and pull you back, he allows you to go.

So, that is respecting your circle. That's how we must deal with one another. Have you got light on something? And that brother doesn't have light on it yet? That sister doesn't have light? Be patient.

How long Jesus waited for us to get light? You think of some of your unconverted days, my brothers. You haven't forgotten your unconverted days, right, brothers and sisters? When you were unconverted and you did some things which you would be ashamed if people in this church knew what all you did. What did the Lord do to you those days? You wouldn't be sitting here if he was not patient with you.

He spoke to you and you wouldn't listen? You rebelled, but he waited, he waited, he waited. That's how we must love one another. That's how we must be patient with one another.

That's how we must be parents, must be patient with their children. If they don't suddenly get the light you have, be patient. Jesus was patient with you.

That is respect the other person's circle. There are areas in your home, perhaps, which are your wife's circle. For example, the kitchen and the home.

That's maybe her circle and you got to allow her freedom in that circle to run the kitchen and that department exactly as she likes, not the way you like. I find that a lot of problems can be solved if we recognize one another's boundaries. And even in fellowship, within, among believers in the church,

recognize each person has got a boundary and I don't want to tread into that person's boundary.

I want to say something, you know, many people come to me for advice, you can believe that. But I always tell them, when I, after giving them advice, you don't have to listen to me. I'm not God.

I'm not giving you commandments, I'm giving you advice. You need to know the difference between advice and commandments. God gives commandments, you better obey them.

I only give you advice and I will not be offended if you don't follow my advice, not at all. I'll have to be very immature if I get offended because you don't follow my advice. Any elder who gives advice and is offended because they didn't follow it, I say, you're a baby, you better grow up.

You know, you're not God. We can't give commandments to people, we give advice and say, pray, seek God about it. If you feel you should do it, do it.

If you don't feel you should do it, don't do it, it's fine, it's up to you. We need to recognize that even our children have a circle. For example, do you ever humiliate your children in public? You may think that as parents you have a right, absolute authority over your children even when they are small, you don't.

You know the little three, four-year-old children have a dignity? As far as I can remember, I never punished any of my children in public, even when guests were there, I would wait till the guests went away, because that humiliation can be worse than the punishment. Do you criticize your children in the presence of others, other people? I sometimes, I've had mothers come to me and say, please pray for my child, Brother Zag, he doesn't study, he doesn't eat properly. You know, I pray for the mother, I don't pray for the child.

I never pray for the child, when some mother asks me like that, I say, Lord bless this sister and help her to be a good mother, that's it. Because that's, you know, we ask for a lot of stupid things, and that's why all the children are my friends, just by the way. But I'm just trying to tell you that you, parents can sometimes humiliate your children, and you bring a distance between you and them, and gradually over a period of time they don't like you, but you're the one to blame, because you went outside your circle, you think, oh my child's got no circle, everything is inside my circle, no.

Even a child has got a little circle of their respect and their dignity, and as they grow up and become more and more mature, their circle becomes wider, and you've got to give them more and more freedom. You can't treat your 20 year old like he was when he was 2 years old, you can't do it. And if you do it, and you have problems in your relationship with that child, you've got to blame yourself.

There are so many areas where we need to keep that picture in our mind, Lord, am I going outside my circle? So many areas, as husbands, as wives, as parents, as children, as brothers and sisters, learn to recognize your boundaries, and concentrate on filling up what is lacking inside that circle, in your own circle, and when people see you like that, they will love you, your children will love you, they'll admire you, and they'll want to be like you, and they'll want to be Christ-like, and if you're an elder brother like that, your sheep will love you. You can correct them, they'll still love you. You can rebuke them, they'll love you, because they know you rebuke them out of love.

You want the best for them, and they know it. They know that you don't tread into their circle. Be like that, my brothers and sisters.

What a great need there is, in all of our churches, in all of our homes, for godly men, who know how to lead, and then what shall we do if we do cross a circle, and tread into somebody else's? You know what we need to do? We need to ask forgiveness, from God, and from man. You need to ask forgiveness from your wife, you need to ask forgiveness from your children. I'm sorry for hurting you, sorry for punishing you, when you didn't deserve to be punished.

We must be willing to change our mind, because we had a wrong understanding. We must be willing to apologize even to a beggar. If you spoke to a beggar rudely, you need to apologize to him.

If you got a servant at home, you spoke rudely, you got to apologize. Yeah, it's true. We had a brother here who didn't treat a servant at home properly.

I said, I'll never come to your house till you apologize to that servant. God is the God of the helpless and the poor, and God's servants are on the side of the poor and the helpless. Please remember that, my brothers and sisters.

We're not diplomats here, standing up to serve God. We are here to defend the rights of the weak, and the helpless, and the widows. The only time I really get angry is when somebody takes advantage of somebody else.

If they take advantage of me, it's okay, forget it, you can do that. I won't get angry, I promise you I won't get angry. But you take advantage of somebody else, and if you're in my church, boy, I'll tell you straight to your face what I think of you.

If you take advantage of another brother, if you take advantage of someone who's weak or helpless. Jesus was furious when he saw the Pharisees taking advantage of poor people, when he saw people taking money in the name of religion. He was angry, he was furious.

And I'm not as angry as Jesus, I'm trying to fill up that circle to become as angry as Jesus was. To take a whip, I haven't ever taken a whip yet, because I've not yet become like Jesus. But that's areas of my life that still need to be filled up.

There is an anger, which I'm sorry to say, a lot of people don't have, because they're not concerned about the rights of poor people. It's a shame when the communists have more concern for the rights of poor people than we who are supposed to be servants of Almighty God. It's a very sad thing.

Jesus had a tremendous concern for poor people, for widows, for helpless orphans, for servants. These are the areas where if you want to get angry, that's inside the circle. Get angry.

And don't get angry for silly things like somebody insulted you or somebody spat on your face or crucified you or something. Those are not things to get angry about. Those are all things to say, Father, forgive them, they don't know what they're doing.

We all get angry at the wrong things, and we don't get angry for the right things. So you see, there are many areas where we've got to fill up what is lacking, like we read in that verse. The things that are lacking, we need to fill up.

And let's really take it seriously from this conference onwards, to really fill up what is lacking in these areas. Let's just, I want to turn to Ephesians chapter 4, and I want you to see something here. In that verse

that we've got at the back, how shall we grow up? It says here about growing up.

Growing up means we are babies. And you know that that was drawn by a baby, not by an adult. No adult will try to fill up a circle like that.

And whenever people cross their boundaries in such a careless way, and don't fill up what is in their circle, you know that they are spiritual babies. They have not grown up. And we have to grow up, it says there, Ephesians 4, 15, grow up in all aspects unto Christ, who is the head.

That means I've got to look at Jesus and see what all areas, His circle was so perfect. And then I see my circle. Okay, a hundred other circles I see, they may not be filled up, but that's not my business.

God is their judge, He'll deal with them. If I'm an elder in Philadelphia, I don't have to worry about the elder in Sardis, if I'm an elder in Laodicea, I don't have to worry about the elder in Thyatira. God will speak to them directly, don't worry.

But I have to listen to what God speaks to me. Growing up, growing up, and growth comes when I see all aspects, all aspects. And how do I grow up? It says in this verse, speaking the truth in love.

I grow up in all aspects unto Him who is the head from whom the whole body being fitted together by that which every joint supplies. So I see three things here, truth, verse 15, love, and the body, verse 16. If I want to grow, I must love the truth, first of all.

I must seek to live in love to everybody around me. All going outside the circle is because I don't love. How do I love the truth? To love the truth means, first of all, to love the truth about myself, to recognize when God shows me that this is a defect in you.

I'll give you one example of that, I've mentioned it before, that some years ago, when a brother had some difficulty with me, and I sought the Lord, and I said, Lord, why in the world is He upset with me? I've never, I never said anything to Him, I never did anything to Him. Why is He upset? And the Lord said, that's exactly, you never said anything, you never did anything. You should have said something, you should have done something to build fellowship.

You know, sometimes, our sins are not sins of commission, that means not sins that we commit, but sins that we omit. There are two types of sins, sins of commission and sins of omission. Sins of commission are things which we do, like you yell at somebody or get angry with somebody, and sins of omission are where you just ignore someone.

Now, I'll give you an example. So I realized that at that time, and I said, the Lord said in the times when He did not have any strain with you, you did not, you know, visit Him or try to build some fellowship with Him. The result is, He may not be as strong as you are, a little something happened or some misunderstanding came to His mind and a distance came.

This happens so often between husbands and wives. You omit to do something. For example, you come back from a very busy days of work at home, in your office, to your home, and then you sit there and you have no fellowship with your wife, you just pick up the newspaper and read it, and your wife is just probably waiting for some fellowship.

And all she sees is a newspaper between you and her, and occasionally she asks you something and you say, hmm, hmm, from behind the newspaper she hears these grunts, hmm, hmm. She's not waiting for you to hear, hmm, hmm, when you come back from work. She wants some fellowship.

You never said anything, and then she blows up, and you say, Lord, what did I do? You didn't do anything. That's the trouble, you didn't do anything when you came back from your work. You should have built fellowship with her.

She's waited the whole day. These are little things. We need to recognize the truth, Lord, that time when my wife got upset, the fault was not with her, it was with me.

I shouldn't have sat behind the newspaper and said, hmm, I should have built some fellowship. But very often we think that the fault is with the other person. I'm just using an example, it could be many other things like that.

But that's to love the truth. Just imagine if all of us began to have a passionate love for the truth about ourselves. Can you imagine the quality of fellowship you'll have with your wife and husband at home or between the brothers in your church? The truth is number one.

And it says here that in love, speaking the truth in love, even when we have to speak the truth to others, we must always do it in love. If I cannot speak the truth in love, we shouldn't speak. Do you know there are letters that I have written that I have torn up and corrected about twenty times before I have mailed it.

It's much easier now when you have a computer. I read and read and say, is this the right way to say it, am I too strong here? Because we are human. Whenever you are writing a letter to someone with whom you are a bit upset, remember you have a flesh in which dwells nothing good.

So, be careful and humble yourself when you are going to meet somebody to whom you want to speak about something that's disturbing you. Remember that you have a flesh in which dwells nothing good. And it's possible that even as I am speaking, some of you sitting here have got a grudge in your heart against somebody else.

Right now, you have allowed a snake to come inside your heart. It's a snake. And I'll tell you something, please listen to these words of wisdom.

That snake will not kill your enemy, it will kill you. It's not such a great word of wisdom, it's just simple common sense that if a snake comes into your house, the snake will kill you, not your neighbor. You may have a grudge against your neighbor, but the snake will kill you because you allowed the snake to come into your heart.

You know what you need to do if you are really a born-again Christian? You need to humble yourself and say, Lord, I want to set that right at the first opportunity after this meeting is over. You must go to that person, or that person is not here, write to that person at the first opportunity and say, I'm sorry. Humble yourself, it will go very well with you.

But you don't do that, you stand on your pride, you can go and destroy yourself, it's up to you. And it will be worse because you heard so much of the truth in the church. So, do you have an attitude of love towards, can you honestly say that your heart has got an attitude of love towards every person that you know? If you don't, you're not going to grow up.

It says here, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up, otherwise you won't grow up. If you don't speak the truth in love, you will not grow up, I can tell you that. All grown-up people know how to speak the truth in love.

And the other thing is that God gives us the body to fill up what is lacking. You see, the right hand cannot do certain things without the left hand. You know that a person who plays keyboard with one hand doesn't sound as good as a person who plays with both hands, you know that.

You can do with one hand, I know. But it's so much better when you have both hands. And like that with so many things, you know, for example, the olden days when they didn't have these automatic keyboards, they played the piano or an organ.

And you know what all they had to have when they played an organ? There were two pedals and both legs had to be active and both, all ten fingers, the eyes had to watch the music and the ears had to listen. All of that just to get a piece of music out. That's how the church is meant to be.

You cannot, you can play with one finger, I know. But it'll never be as good as if you take humbly, take your place in the body of Christ and say, I need others. Is that lacking in your life? Is there a sense of needing other people lacking in your life? I am so tremendously thankful for the brothers and sisters, young brothers who have shared God's word in our meetings in Bangalore that have blessed my heart.

They don't know that they have blessed me. They just get up and share their own testimony. And unconsciously they blessed me.

Yeah. They have blessed me more than the clever people who got up and tried to preach to impress me. They don't bless me at all.

It's the other ones who don't seek to impress anybody who get up and give an honest testimony that have always blessed my heart because God said to me, that's for you. I said, thank you, Lord. And that's protected me, preserved me.

Learn to value the body of Christ. If you don't value the body of Christ in your locality, something's missing. The areas in our life that are missing when we don't value other members of Christ's body whom God has given us to preserve us and protect us.

And that's why I feel so sad when young people come to CFC and they don't get integrated into the body of Christ in our church. They come, they attend the meetings, but they don't really seek to get integrated and fellowship with the other young people. Something is wrong.

Something is wrong and you'll suffer the loss. These are the areas that we need to fill up. Don't fill up what is lacking.

God has provided us the body with a purpose. I want to say another thing, you know, in this matter of the body. I want to show you in the Old Testament a couple of examples.

First of all in 2 Samuel and chapter 6. You know, yesterday we were hearing from Brother Setu how we can get proud after God has blessed us a little while. You know, how Hagar got proud because she got a baby and Sarah didn't have. You know, whenever you get something which somebody else didn't have, doesn't have, you're in tremendous danger.

I'll tell you that. If you got a better job than somebody else, I'll tell you right now, you're in great danger. If you got a baby when somebody else didn't have a baby, you got married at the same time, you are in great danger.

That was Hagar's problem. Whenever something good happens to you which has not happened to somebody else, you know who's got a problem? You. You who got the blessing is the one who's got the problem.

It's the rich person who's got a greater problem than the poor person. Hagar had a problem because he was blessed. David had a problem as we heard when he got blessed.

Peter had a problem when he was walking on the water. He didn't have a problem when he was in the boat. But when he was doing this fantastic thing of walking on the water, then he had a problem.

Because it was an amazing thing that he was doing. And maybe God has done a wonderful work through you and you're going to have a problem. If God's done a work through you.

It's very, very difficult to keep our head in the dust after we have walked on the water for about 10 feet. I'll tell you that. It's extremely difficult to keep our head in the dust if you have walked on the water for 10 feet and that's when you sink.

And you can go right to the bottom. And you'd wish that you'd never have walked on the water at all. The people in the boat are much safer.

Yeah. Those people in the boat never sank. Who was the one who sank? Peter.

The one who did the great miracle. Who is the one in danger? The one whom God has used to do some wonderful thing which other people haven't done. If you don't keep your face in the dust.

So here it says in 2 Samuel 6 about the time when David was taking the Ark from the house of Abinadab. Verse 3. 2 Samuel 6. Verse 3. Now if you understand a little bit of this history here. You know the Ark was captured by the Philistines.

You read about it in 1 Samuel 6. And then came back to Israel. And it was kept in a place called Beth Shemesh. And in Beth Shemesh some people opened the lid of the Ark to see what was inside.

And God killed 50,000 people who poked their head into what was none of their business. And then they got all scared and said, Boy, we don't want the Ark here. 50,000 people here died.

We don't know who's the next fellow who's going to lift the lid and look inside. So they took it. We read in 1 Samuel 7 to the house of a man called Abinadab.

And in Abinadab he told his son Eliezer. You read that all in 1 Samuel 7. That you're going to look after the Ark. And Eliezer made sure that nobody poked their dirty heads inside the Ark.

And he was in charge of the Ark all that time. And now we come to 2 Samuel 6 where David is moving it from the house of Abinadab to Jerusalem. And this time, two of Abinadab's other sons were carrying the Ark.

Uzzah, no, I mean it was on a bullock cart, but they were in charge of transporting it. It says in verse 3, Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were leading the new cart with the Ark. You see, you've got to understand this.

Till now, Eliezer, Abinadab's oldest son, was in charge of the Ark. Now David said, Okay, Eliezer, you've had charge long enough. Let's get Uzzah and Ahio to do it.

This is like two other people becoming elders in a church. And they're very happy that Eliezer is removed. Now we are the fellas who are going to lead the church.

Can you imagine how Uzzah felt? All those years he was jealous of Eliezer who was in charge of the Ark in his house. He wouldn't even allow him to come anywhere near the Ark. And now David has selected him to lead the Ark and set Eliezer aside.

And it really went to Uzzah's head. Like it goes to a lot of people's head when they become an elder. It even goes to the head of the wife of the elder.

She begins to think I'm the elder's wife now. This problem is everywhere. And he went with that pride, leading the Ark.

Ahio was probably a humbler. His younger brother Ahio must have been a little humbler person. And as they went along, the Ark began to shake.

In verse 6 it says, the oxen nearly upset it and the great Maharaja Uzzah said, Okay, I'll hold it. I know I'm not a Kohithite or only the Kohithites by the way were supposed to touch this. He was not one of them.

He held it and God smote him dead immediately. Some people have wondered why did God do that to that man? God doesn't make a mistake. He saw pride and an arrogance in that man because he had replaced his elder brother and so proud that he could touch the Ark and God smote him dead.

It's happened many times where people don't humbly recognize that if God gave you a responsibility, rather be humble and don't go outside your boundary. It's the same thing that Saul did. It's the same thing that Uzzah did.

It's the same thing that so many people do. I know elders, some of whom are not with us today, who have interfered in the married lives of other people. What business does an elder have to interfere in somebody else's married life? An elder must bring a husband and wife together.

I know elders who have brought husband and wife further apart. Thank God they left us now. We don't want such elders in our churches.

We want elders who can bring husband and wife together. What God has joined together, who is the one who tries to separate what God has joined together? Satan. And when an elder brother comes between a husband and wife, however spiritual he may think he is, he is an agent of Satan.

Whenever anybody comes between a husband and wife, or comes between father and children, or splits a church of believers into two, he is an agent of Satan. Whoever he is. We've seen that happen.

Come between husband and wife. Come between parents and children. Instead of uniting.

You know the last verse of the Old Testament? I will smite with a curse all those who separate fathers and children. And I will send with the spirit of Elijah, my servants, to unite fathers and children. That's the last verse of the Old Testament.

In the church, we've got the spirit of Elijah uniting fathers' hearts to their children. Not separating fathers from children. No.

Not separating husbands and wives. Not splitting the body of Christ. So we see, there are many, many areas where we really need to be very careful and respectful of the circle God has placed us in.

I may be an elder brother, but that does not give me unlimited rights to do whatever I like in other brothers in the church. I have to respect them. Uzzah did not.

And God smote him dead. He deserved to be smitten dead. I believe with all my heart that Uzzah deserved to be smitten dead to be made a warning for people in the 21st century.

Don't go putting your dirty hands on something that doesn't concern you, which is somebody else's responsibility. You know when you see something going wrong in a church, ask yourself one question. Has God given you any responsibility in that church? Are you a Kohathite? Kohathites were the ones, the sons of Levi, who were appointed to take care of the Ark.

Even the Mererites and the Gershonites, their brothers, they couldn't touch them. You read in the book of Numbers. Who in the world was Uzzah to go and touch it? He had no right to touch it.

God can take care of his Ark. God can take care of his church. He doesn't need our dirty hands to go and steady it.

We must recognize, you know when you put your hand outside your boundary, that's exactly what happened. See this verse in Ecclesiastes in chapter 10. Ecclesiastes in chapter 10, it says in verse 11, sorry not verse 11, verse 8. Ecclesiastes 10 in verse 8. The last part.

If you break through a wall that God has built, a snake will bite you. That's absolutely right. If you break through a boundary wall that God has put around you, like Adam did when he went outside the boundary and reached out his hand to the tree of knowledge of good and evil, a serpent bit him.

And you got to blame yourself if a serpent bites you when you put your hand outside your boundary. It's written there in scripture. We got to be very, very, very careful.

That's what Uzzah did. He put his hand outside. Just because David had given a responsibility to him, he suddenly began to think he was somebody.

Let me show you another example in 2nd Chronicles chapter 26. 2nd Chronicles 26. You know, some of these Old Testament stories are a real warning to us.

2nd Chronicles 26, we read about Uzziah. He was one of the kings. He was 16 years old, verse 3, when he became king.

And he reigned for 52 years, 2nd Chronicles 26, 3. And he was a good king, verse 4. He did what was right in the sight of the Lord. He continued, verse 5, to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding through the vision of God. And listen to this verse.

As long as he sought the Lord, God prospered him. God blessed him. He went out to fight against the Philistines and, verse 7, God helped him mightily against the Philistines.

The Ammonites had to be subject to him, verse 8. His fame extended to the border of Egypt, for he became very strong, verse 8. When God blesses you, you really become strong. And he did so many things, so many wonderful things, it says in the next few verses. In verse 15, he made engines of war, invented by skillful men.

And last part of verse 15, his fame spread afar, for he was marvelously helped by God until he was strong. But, what a great tragedy, verse 16, that there has to be a but in a person's life. But, verse 16, when he became strong, his heart became proud and he acted corruptly.

What was the corruption he did? He didn't go and commit adultery or steal somebody else's money. He just went outside his ministry. He was a king, he tried to be a priest.

It says, he went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense. He had no right to do that. And Azariah the priest, thank God for such bold priest like Azariah, who can even rebuke a king.

Like Paul rebuked Peter once. Azariah went in with 80 priests and opposed king Uzziah and said, it's not for you Uzziah, to burn incense, that's for the priests. I don't care how much God has blessed you as a king, you've got to stay within your boundary.

You know, when God blesses your ministry as an elder, and you begin to think that you can now control other churches over which you have no responsibility, that's been the downfall of other elders in the past. Because God blessed them marvelously, till they became strong. And when they became strong, their heart was lifted up that they could try and control and give advice to a lot of other churches where they have no responsibility.

And Azariah and the 80 priests said, king Uzziah, God may have blessed you mightily within your boundary, but this is outside your boundary. And Uzziah got angry. You know, if you read these things in scripture, you can be saved from the same mistake yourself.

He got so angry that it says he was enraged, verse 19. In his hand was the burning incense and he was enraged. And I have a feeling he would have put that burning incense on all these 80 priests.

But before he could do that, it says the leprosy came upon him on his forehead. He suddenly felt a loss of sensation. And that's always what happens when elders cross their boundaries.

They begin to lose their sensation in their conscience. And you watch those elders after a few years, the sensitivity to sin is gone. Leprosy has come.

The leprosy broke out on his forehead and Azariah looked at him. Oh, how quickly God judged him. And they hurried him out of there.

And he also wanted to go out because the Lord had smitten him. What did he do? Did he commit adultery with Bathsheba? David, his forefather, committed a greater sin in human eyes, committing adultery with Bathsheba. This fellow only went inside the priest, as a priest.

But God did not smite David with leprosy. You know, it's a very serious thing to go outside your boundary. I know adultery is serious, but a man can slip up in that sometime when he, in a moment of weakness.

But when you scheme and plan and try to go into an area which God has not given to you, in God's eyes, that's worse. The David who was not smitten with adultery, Uzziah was smitten for adultery, Uzziah was smitten with leprosy. And King Uzziah, verse 21, was a leper, verse 21, till the day of his death.

And he lived in a separate house because he was a leper. God never healed him. And Uzziah slept with his father, verse 23, and they buried him with the kings and they put a tombstone over his grave saying he was a leper.

And if a man does not repent before he dies, that will be written on your tombstone, that you were a leper, spiritually. You didn't have a sensation in your conscience because you didn't humble yourself to stay within the boundaries God drew for you. My brothers and sisters, are we learning something here? Are we learning that God has given you enough to do within that circle? Why do you want to go outside? If God makes the circle bigger, you see, that's another thing God can do.

When he sees that you are faithful in that circle, he will make your circle bigger. And when he makes your circle bigger, you got a lot more to color. And he'll give you the crayons also to color it.

And I believe the crayons can refer to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit that he gives us to fulfill this wider ministry. You need a lot more crayons when you got a bigger circle. And only God can give it to you.

Don't seek to have a big circle if you got a small, teeny-weeny crayon. Humble yourself and say, God's given me only a small bit of crayon and he's given me a small circle. Let me color that perfectly.

And you're faithful there. God will make your circle bigger. And he'll give you a bigger crayon.

He'll give you those supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit of prophecy, of utterance, of words of wisdom. If you're faithful, if you love the truth about yourself and you love people and you never seek to justify yourself, always put your face in the dust and don't get your heart lifted up just because God blessed you. Just because you walked on the water for 10 feet.

Don't sink. Brothers, sisters, we are in tremendous danger. We need to really seek God.

And when God makes our circle wider, I'll tell you this, we really need to seek God for the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit. That is an area which is lacking. Many of us, God has given us a ministry, a circle.

Elders, you got a circle and you don't have a crayon. What are you trying to do? Just rub your finger on it? No. Go and ask God for a crayon.

And if one is not enough, ask him for more. Ask him for different colors. God has got many crayons in his crayon box.

That you can fulfill your ministry mightily. You don't have to have a single gap left in it. And as you fill it, he wants to expand your ministry.

And give you a wider ministry. A wider ministry and a wider ministry. Just think of all of us began to seek God for crayons.

If you are a mother, seek God for help to bring up your children properly. Don't go poking your nose into other people's lives. Just bring up your own children properly.

Teach them, teach the girls to have a meek and a quiet spirit and teach your sons to be bold witnesses for Christ. Why don't we do that? Why don't we ask God for gifts? If you are an elder brother, ask God for a supernatural anointing of the Holy Spirit to speak God's prophetic word. We need that.

We need power from God. You have not because you ask not. And we don't ask because we have so much confidence in our own ability.

Do you know how much I, I almost weep before God very often. I say, Lord, I cannot speak unless you help me. I will not be able to speak.

I know I've spoken for 40 years but I will not be able to speak today. I even said that to the Lord today. I said, Lord, if you don't stand by me, I'll bore people to death.

In 5 minutes, I'll bore them. I want you to stand by me. I want you to anoint me.

I will never rely on my experience. Many of us are trying to fill the circle without a chalk, without a crayon. Humble yourself and say, Lord, I don't have the ability.

Go to God and say, God, please give it to me. Cry out to him in the night watches and ask him, God, please give it to me what I have not had all these years. Give me all the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Let's ask God to give us the gifts of healing, words of wisdom to solve people's problems, words of knowledge to teach God's word aright, discernment of spirits so that people with the wrong spirit can't fool us when they come to the church. Let God give us discernment to see through them. We need these gifts.

Faith to move mountains and to establish the authority of Christ in the territory of the devil in this country. We need these supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit. Tongues so that we are always fresh in our spirit because when our mind is heavy that we can communicate with God in other tongues and if it's spoken in public then in interpretation of tongues.

We need all these gifts. Prophecy. The greatest gift of all to speak God's prophetic word exactly according to the need of the people in your church.

To encourage them, to challenge them, to build them up, to give them faith so that they will press on in the battle not to discourage them and condemn them. That's not prophecy. Prophecy is not to discourage and condemn people.

Prophecy is to challenge them, edify them, give them hope that God is a loving father. If God's given you a circle to color, do you think he won't give you the crayon? Do you think a mother will buy a coloring book for the child and not give a crayon to that child? If evil mothers know how to give a crayon to their child when they buy a coloring book for them, you think God will give you a ministry and not give you a crayon to color it with? He'll definitely give it to you. Why don't you have? He's been waiting for you to ask.

I know in my own heart there's been a desperate longing for the mighty power of God in my life and for his gifts. And I pray that that passion will increase and I pray in all of us, even you sisters. You know a sister can prophesy? You sisters should be blessing other sisters with your words of encouragement.

Get rid of all the words of gossip. Ask that the Holy Spirit will be poured out upon your life so that you can bless other sisters. That's God's will.

May the Lord help us.

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