

# God's Final Goal - the Church

by Zac Poonen

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*The church is built on Christ, the son of the living God, and has authority over the powers of darkness, but many Christians are ignorant of the New Covenant and are living under the Old Covenant.*

**Duration:** 58:26

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:3, Matthew 7:13

**Topics:** "Church"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of brotherhood and fellowship in the new covenant. He highlights that Jesus said that all men will know his disciples by their love for one another. The speaker challenges the audience to consider how they attract people to their church and emphasizes the need to preach the whole counsel of God, including the teachings of dying to oneself and detaching from possessions. He also emphasizes the importance of unity and warns against false prophets who may mislead people. The speaker concludes by emphasizing the need for fellowship and the importance of building a church and a fellowship that reflects the heart of God.

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## Transcript

We've gone through nine studies in the New Covenant, and the reason I took these studies is because I found that most Christians, and by most I mean more than 90 percent, are totally ignorant of what the New Covenant is all about, even though the New Covenant has been in existence for 2,000 years. It's like I've heard that some of the slaves in the United States never knew that Abraham Lincoln had proclaimed freedom even 40, 50 years after it was proclaimed. It would be like someone in India not knowing that India became free from British rule more than 60 years ago.

I mean, that would be surprising. I think even in the villages, people would know that. Think if 90 percent of people in India did not know that India was free from British rule.

That's something, a picture of the condition of a lot of Christians today. If you were to ask the average believer, if you don't believe me, just test it out. Go to the average believer you know and ask them, in what way is the New Covenant different from the Old Covenant? And I guarantee you will discover that 90 percent do not know.

And that's why I felt there was a need for this study. Now these 10 studies don't cover everything. There's a lot that we've spoken about through the years.

But these are the main things I wanted to stress. So today we want to come to Matthew chapter 16. We've been looking at some of the words that come for the first time in the New Testament and we've basically been looking only at the Gospel of Matthew.

How right in the first few chapters of Matthew, as it were, hidden our truths about the New Covenant. And here is a word in Matthew 16 that comes for the first time in the Bible. The first time that Jesus ever spoke of it.

That's the word church. Another word, which is totally misunderstood. And that's found in verse 18.

You see, Jesus had asked the disciples in verse 13, who do you people say that son of man is? And people had different ideas. Then he said, who do you say that I am? Verse 15. And Simon Peter answered and said, you are the Christ, the son of the living God.

And Jesus said to him, blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because you didn't get that revelation from your own intelligence, but from my father in heaven. And I want to say to you, Peter, you are, Peter, upon this rock that you just confessed. What did he just confess? Christ, the son of the living God.

What you just confessed, upon this rock I will build my church. So that is the rock on which the church is built. The Christ, the son of the living God.

And the next thing he said was, because it's built on Christ and it's built by Christ, the gates of Hades will not overpower it. Now in the Old Testament, we read many times that the gates of a city were the place where the elders of the city sat, the judges, the rulers sat in the gates of the city. Today we would talk about the parliament building or something like that, where the rulers of a city sit.

So it's talking about the headquarters, when it says the gates of Hades. Hades is the place of departed spirits. And so when it talks about the gates of Hades, he's referring to those who rule, the rulers of the powers of darkness.

They will not be able to overpower the church. And then he said, I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And we already saw that the kingdom of heaven was something particularly in the New Covenant.

It's not found in the Old Testament. The Old Testament was a kingdom of earth. And the New Testament is a kingdom of heaven.

Don't forget that. All believers who are primarily seeking after earthly things, even if they understand the New Covenant thoroughly, are still under the Old Covenant. It's not a question of what you understand.

You can understand all about electricity and have no electricity in your house. You know that. You can understand all about the New Covenant and still live under the Old Covenant.

And one of the clearest marks of it is that earthly things are primary to you. So, it's not a question of understanding. Because a lot of Christians today think, if I understand something, I got it.

If I understand how to be born again, I'm born again. No. If I understand how to be baptized in the Spirit, I'm baptized in the Spirit.

No. If I understand the New Covenant, I'm in the New Covenant. No.

If you are detached from earthly things and heavenly things mean more to you than earthly things, then you have come into the kingdom of heaven. Otherwise, the word is the kingdom of earth. That's what you seek.

Jesus said, seek first the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God. And then the earthly things you need will be added to you. So, Jesus gave Peter the keys for the kingdom of heaven.

Not for an earthly kingdom. Now, a lot of preachers today have got the keys to the kingdom of earth. Well, that they got from the devil.

But Jesus spoke here about an authority that we have when we are heavenly minded. You know, a lot of people use the name of Jesus whose minds are set on the things of earth. But they don't have that authority.

Do you understand why some of your prayers are not answered now, even though you pray in the name of Jesus? There is an authority in the name of Jesus, which is a very powerful authority. Nothing can stand before it. But that name has to be used by a man who is heavenly minded.

An earthly minded man, if he uses that name, it's like the sons of Sceva. You read in Acts chapter 19, trying to cast out a demon, saying, We cast out a demon in Jesus' name, whom Paul preaches. And the demon says, Who do you think you are? I know Jesus and Paul.

They are heavenly minded, but not you fellas. And that's exactly what the devil tells a lot of people today. Christians, born again Christians, who pray in the name of Jesus.

And the devil says, Ha ha, in the name of Jesus. I know where your minds are set. You think you are going to get me answer to your prayer? You can fool yourself that you pray, and when the answer doesn't come, you say, Oh, it's not God's will.

That's not the reason. The reason is you are earthly minded. You are not in the new covenant.

Why not face up to it? You see, man has had a tendency always to blame God when something goes wrong. Even in these insurance policies, they say, Acts of God. That means something went wrong, which we couldn't handle, like earthquake or fire or something like that.

They blame God for things which they probably have to blame themselves for. And they say, Oh well, it wasn't God's will. Blame God.

It wasn't that at all. They never think the fault could possibly be with me from Adam's time. You know, when God asked Adam, Why did you eat of this tree? He said, This woman whom you gave me, gave it.

Whose fault is that then? God's. And that habit has come down through six thousand years. Dear brothers and sisters, I've also said this.

One of the primary characteristics of a man who's come under the new covenant is also that he knows how to judge himself. Doesn't blame other people. Doesn't blame God.

So, the keys to the kingdom of heaven are not only for Peter. It's for us to be a part of that church. Then we confess Christ as the son of the living God and we want the kingdom of heaven.

Not the kingdom of earth. I give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. And once you've got that authority, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven.

See, this is speaking about warfare. And whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. So, we see here something that Jesus spoke about the church.

And I want you to notice a few things here before we move on. And that is, as soon as he spoke about the church. Well, first of all, he said that I will build my church.

That's the important thing to remember. None of us can build a church. It's very important to remember that.

The church that you build or I build will be destroyed by the devil in no time at all. There are people who think, I'm going to go and build a church. I've had people come to me after a conference and they taste the fellowship and life we have here.

And they say, oh, Brother Zach, I'd like to build the church in our local town. I say, you'll never build it. You try to build it, it will be destroyed by the devil in no time.

You may not know. But those who have been involved know. That every church that we planted, we never did it.

God did it. God did it without consulting us. He may have used some of us, but we never built a single church.

I wouldn't dream of doing it. Because I know it will be destroyed in no time. Because I know what Jesus said, I will build my church.

And I know that those churches which man has tried to build, and we've seen some of them too, crumble and collapse and never seem to progress. But that which Jesus builds, the gates of hell will never, never overpower it. So that's the mark of a church that Christ builds.

Now it's possible that Christ can build a church and after 30, 40 years, he can remove the lampstand from there. Like it says in Revelation chapter 2, he warned the church in Ephesus, which was a church that Christ built in the beginning through Paul. But he says there, I'm going to remove the lampstand.

That means I'm not going to recognize you as a church anymore. And then the devil is free. You'll still have your meetings, and your numbers will probably increase, and you'll have a wonderful time.

Your music will definitely improve in Ephesus. Because the world will come right in. But you won't be my church, the Lord said.

And you'll be preaching psychology and things like that in your church, and making people feel happy, and everybody will have a good time, and you'll be a wonderful club, but you won't be the church of Jesus Christ. You won't have any influence on the powers of darkness, and gradually you'll become more and more earthly-minded. That's happened to many churches, you can see that.

They don't preach the scripture, they preach psychology. They'll start off with one verse of scripture. Have you seen preachers like this on television and elsewhere? They start off with one verse of scripture, and then they go on and on and on and on, airing the views that psychologists teach, and stirring people up

emotionally and things like that.

Oh yeah, the numbers will increase in such churches. Money will increase, music will be good, but the powers of darkness will not be influenced. So the mark of the church that Jesus builds is that Satan cannot overpower it.

Because it's obvious, Christ is greater than Satan. And when he said, on this rock, and that rock meaning Christ, the son of the living God, how can a church built on the foundation of Christ, the son of the living God, based on the principles of the kingdom of heaven, ever be defeated by Satan? Satan may attack it, in fact he said he will attack it, but will not be able to shake it. So when we see churches around us, attacked and overpowered by Satan, confusion among the elders, and I'm beginning to see it in some of our churches too, happens after twenty, thirty years.

You know why? Because God's begun to bless them. Some of them have become rich, they were not poor like in the old days. The kingdom of earth has become very big in their eyes.

Heaven is not so precious to them like it was in the old days. There are very few people, very few believers, who can handle wealth. I've seen that.

I think among all the believers I've met, I would say about one percent can handle wealth. All can handle poverty, very few can handle wealth, and remain spiritual. Very, very few.

Because the kingdom of earth gets such power over us, when we have a lot of money, and earthly things become much more important to us than they were in the old days when we didn't have so many earthly things. And when we didn't have so many earthly things, we had more time for God. You see if that is not true in your life.

You see if now that television has come into your home, whether you have as much time for God as you had in the old days when there was no television in your home. You ask anybody in the world that. You see it's very subtle.

When the devil comes in to ruin the church, he doesn't come in with horns and hooves and forked tails and a lot of evil, because he knows everybody will turn away. He comes in a very subtle way as an angel of light and a minister of righteousness. But the church that's founded on Christ and that's seeking the kingdom of heaven will never be overpowered because it can see through all these subtle tricks of the devil.

And we see here that the church is involved in fighting. As soon as he spoke about the church, he didn't talk about a picnic, he talked about a battle. And that battle continues until Christ returns.

A church whose atmosphere is more that of a picnic and having a good time and prospering in business and making a lot of money is not really going to overpower the kingdom of Satan. But a church that recognizes that as long as we are on this earth, we are going to be involved in spiritual warfare. That's the church that will endure until the end.

And that's why over the years, the devil slowly removes prayer from the lives of believers. Can you answer this question whether you prayed more 30 years ago or today? Whether you fasted more when you first came to the church or today? See, it's very subtle the way the devil comes in. I give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven and what you bind on earth will be bound in heaven.

You see, it's a picture of a church which has such authority that the devil is scared of it. The devil was scared of Jesus. Demons were scared of him.

And the real church of Jesus Christ scares the devil. He's scared. And where people are afraid of the devil, you can be pretty sure that's not the church of Jesus Christ.

They're scared of the devil because they are so earthly-minded. The word of God says in Ephesians 6 about the spiritual battle, Ephesians is the great book which describes the church. 1 Corinthians speaks more about the local church.

But Ephesians is the book that describes the church as the body of Christ. Worldwide church. Right from chapter 1 speaks about the church being the body of Christ.

Chapter 2 speaks about the church. Chapter 3, chapter 4, chapter 5, chapter 6. So, in these chapters, there are certain things that are very important. For example, Ephesians is the only, Ephesians and Colossians are the only two books that speak much about the family.

Ephesians speaks about husbands and wives and parents and children and masters and slaves, servants. Home life is a very important part of the local church. And Ephesians is the only book that speaks about spiritual battle.

Isn't that interesting that the only book in the New Testament that describes the church so much is also the only one that describes spiritual battle because it links up with what we saw in Ephesians, in Matthew 16, that the church is involved in spiritual battle. Now, when we talk about spiritual battle, many of you may say, well, I don't know anything about it. If you are honest, if you are honest, I think many of you, perhaps most of you will have to say, I don't know anything about spiritual battle.

I mean, I know how to pray when my child is sick or when I need a promotion or when my children are going for examinations or when I want to buy something or build a house or something like that. I know how to pray, but spiritual warfare, what does that mean? I'll explain to you why you don't know anything about spiritual warfare. Turn to Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 12.

This is something the Lord showed me many years ago. I never read it anywhere. But in my own pursuit of the Lord, he showed me something from this verse, which is so obvious.

But sometimes things which are written so obvious in Scripture, you don't even see it until God gives you revelation. Here it is, Ephesians 6, 12. And I hope you'll get a revelation today that will change your life from this verse.

You have heard me say it before, I want to repeat it. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, against powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Now, first of all, I want to say, this battle is in the heavenlies.

Now, if there's a war going on in Iraq, and you live in Bangalore and say, Hey, I don't feel any war around here. That's right, because you're not living in Iraq. But you go and ask the people living in Iraq right now, and they'll be, every day there's war.

They hear sounds of gunfire, not once in a while, every day. Most of us have never heard the sound of gunfire even once. Why? Because we're not living in that area.

So if you're not living in the heavenlies, obviously you'll never hear any warfare, will you? Your warfare, you don't hear it, because this battle is in the heavenly places, it says. So if you're not living there, you won't hear anything about this warfare, and you won't know anything about it in your life. That's one thing.

The second thing I want you to see here is that the only folks who can fight against Satan are the folks who have stopped fighting with human beings. It says here, our struggle is not against human beings, but against demons. And I want to say to every single one of you, if you still fight with your wife, obviously you don't have a clue about fighting with demons.

If you still fight with your husband, or your mother-in-law, or brother-in-law, or neighbor, or auto-rickshaw driver, or railway porter, what in the world are you going to know about spiritual warfare? You've got enough to do fighting here with people on earth. Keep fighting, brother and sister. Why do I say that? Because the Bible says, he who is filthy, let him be filthy still.

It's in the last page of Revelation. After all that we hear, If we still want to fight with human beings, you know what God says? Go ahead. Keep fighting.

You'll wake up in eternity, and if you ever make it into the kingdom of heaven, if you ever make it, you'll live there with regret. I believe Christians don't take their warfare seriously. First of all, because they haven't taken the kingdom of heaven seriously.

They haven't understood anything about the new covenant. When we are in the new covenant, it involves spiritual warfare every day. If there are problems at your home, it may have been caused by the devil.

Why fight with your husband or wife? You remember that story in the Old Testament where, it says David, when he was a young man, was looking after the sheep, and it says a lion, you read that in 1 Samuel in chapter 17, a lion came, and caught the sheep, caught one of those little lambs, and grabbed it, and lamb was hanging in the mouth of the lion. He hadn't eaten it yet. And David, this is before he was anointed.

Amazing. I mean, Samson did it after he was anointed. David did it before he was anointed.

Have you noticed that? He went there, I mean, he had such faith in God, that he went and tackled the lion, and delivered the sheep from the mouth of the lion. Wasn't that sensible? Instead of standing there, and giving a lecture to the sheep, and saying, why in the world were you not careful? Didn't I warn you so many times not to go astray? Etc, etc. By the time the lion would have eaten the sheep.

And that's what happens when the lion, the devil, grabs your wife, or your husband, or one of your children, and is about to eat them up. And you get angry, not with the lion, but like a fool, you get angry with your wife, the sheep, or the husband, or your child. And you begin to give a lecture, and a lecture, and the lion is just enjoying the lecture, because he knows that gives him time to swallow up the whole sheep.

This is exactly what happens. I mean, it happens in unbelievers' homes all the time, I can understand that. It happens in Christians' homes, and it happens in believers' homes, and it happens in the homes of people who speak in tongues, who claim to be spirit-filled.

That's not Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit always leads to spiritual warfare. That's what I said, meant when I said, I hope God will give you revelation on this.

We do not wrestle with flesh and blood. Many years ago the Lord said to me, if you want to fight Satan, stop fighting with human beings. And when you completely stop fighting with human beings, you'll have such authority over Satan, that one word of yours, he will tremble.

It's true. It's absolutely true. We can have authority over Satan, when we cease to be interested in earthly things, when our mind is set on the things above, and when we stop fighting with any human being, anybody who is made of flesh and blood, stop fighting with them.

They're just not interested. So you see, this is the reason why the church is not being built the way the Lord wanted it to. Because He finds so few who are His co-workers, who, number one, have their mind set on heavenly things, and keep... It's not that they don't use earthly things, they use earthly things.

Jesus used earthly things. Jesus earned money through doing business. Do you think He sold His tables and chairs at cost price? Cost of material? How could He live then? He charged for His labor.

There's nothing wrong in that. The laborer is worthy of his hire. There's nothing wrong in doing business for a profit.

Do it honestly. And you can charge whatever commission you like. It's up to the other person whether he wants to buy it from you or not.

He doesn't want it from you, he'll buy it from somebody else. You can charge 50% extra if you like. That's not the question.

Jesus did it. The question is, are you honest, are you upright, are you cheating anybody of material, etc. Jesus did it.

He used earthly things, but His mind was not set on becoming the richest carpenter in Nazareth. No. His mind was set on earthly things.

What do you think Jesus was dreaming about at night? How to make more money? What do you think He was sitting at home and thinking about after He came back from the carpenter shop? How can I expand my business and make more money? No. How can I have more time for my Father? A lot of people say they are following Jesus solely in words. If you look at their private life, they are not following Christ at all.

Do you think Jesus could do His Father's will if He came back home and fought with His mother and His brothers and sisters? No. Jesus wasn't that type of Israelite who just went once a week to the church and sang wonderful songs and came home and fought with others at home. No.

Unfortunately, He's got a lot of children like that. He's got a lot of people who say they follow Him, but don't have a clue what it means to follow Him. See, the church is built on the foundation of Jesus Christ.

That's the rock. Peter said, you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Jesus said, Peter, that's the rock on which I'm going to build the church.

Everything has to be on this foundation. I mean, think of this building. They first laid a foundation.

And all the walls and pillars were on that foundation. Supposing they laid the foundation and then put the pillars somewhere else. This building would have collapsed long ago.

But it hasn't collapsed because the pillars are on the foundation they laid. And that's how any sensible builder builds a house. So it's not enough to say, well, I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I'm saved. That's the foundation. And then, everything else in the church, they follow the methods of the world.

Particularly in the area of money and music. Why do I mention these two? Because these are the two things that have replaced the power of the Holy Spirit in the church today. Money and music.

Today, more than 95% of Christians in the area of money are not building on the foundation of Jesus Christ. In other words, their attitude to money is not the attitude of Jesus Christ. That's the meaning of building on the foundation.

The way they raise money to do God's work is not the way Jesus used money to do God's work. Do you know Jesus needed money to do God's work? How do you think? I mean, for 30 years, he was a carpenter. For most of those 30 years, he supported himself.

But then, the last three and a half years, he was not a tent maker like Paul. As a carpenter, he couldn't carry his carpenter tools around and make tools and benches. He was supported financially.

There's nothing wrong in that. If Jesus was supported, what's wrong in supporting a Christian worker today? Absolutely nothing wrong. But it must mean the same way Jesus supported himself.

How was that? He never made his needs known to anybody. He never sent a prayer letter or reports or anything about his work to anyone hinting that I need this or I need that. He never went around with torn shirts giving people hints that I need a new shirt.

No. There was a dignity about him. He was the son of a rich heavenly father.

How could he go around like a beggar? Like, most Christian workers I've met today are absolute beggars. The biggest beggars are on television. You've heard me say this before.

Supposing a man with a suit and a tie, a white man on television, appeared and said, I'm the ambassador for the United States of America and our country is a bit hard up. We'd like you to support us. Give us some money.

I mean, they spent billions on the war in Iraq, but they still don't ask you for money. Imagine if one of them went on television and said, give us some money. You'd say, that guy's a hoax.

He can't be the ambassador of the United States. He can't even be the ambassador of Eritrea or Chad or some of these small African countries. No.

Nobody. That'd be disgraceful. For him to appear on television and say, send us a donation and we'll give you a little memento from Chad for you to keep with you if you send us 1500 rupees.

But if an ambassador of Jesus Christ gets up and says, I will give you a little memento if you send me 1500 rupees. Send us money for your work, for our work. We'll say, oh, that's great.

Why? Because in your understanding, the kingdom of Jesus Christ is way below even the kingdom of Chad and Eritrea and everything else. It is the lowest in your list. Your understanding is like that and that's

why you believe all these fellas.

And you're deceived by them. I'm not deceived by them because to me the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of Christ is far above even the kingdom of the United States. And an ambassador of that kingdom does not disgrace himself by being a beggar.

No. So, the church is not being built on this foundation in the area of money. The way they raise money, the way they hint, and the way they ask, and the way they are excited when some rich person comes into the church or it's absolutely disgraceful.

The way many people get excited when some rich man begins to be interested in that church. You know, when we started building the church, the first people who left us were all the rich people. But they never got used to being rebuked and corrected.

Most of them left us. And I think that was how it was with Jesus. We read of a rich young ruler who came to Jesus and thought he could become one of his disciples and Jesus said, turn him away.

He went away. And the other thing is music. You know, if you look at almost all Christian music today that I have seen and you ask them, ask these song leaders, where did you get that style from? Invariably the answer is some worldly musician or some worldly church.

If you don't believe me, go and ask them. Where did you get? I mean, there is a particular style you follow. The answer is always they watch some music video and they decided to imitate that style and that guy on that music video got it from some worldly musician.

How many song leaders can say, I pray and I wanted to lead songs the way Jesus would lead if he were here. You ask the people who play instruments in any Christian group today including some of ours. Ask them, where did you get the style from of playing instruments? I saw it on some music video.

I saw it in some other worldly church. And you ask them, do you think that's the way Jesus would play if he was playing that instrument? They haven't even thought about Jesus playing a keyboard or a guitar. It's not built on the foundation of Jesus Christ.

They've laid the foundation here but then they go and build their music on the world. They build their preaching on the world. They build their money attitudes on the world.

No wonder the gates of hell are enjoying themselves working havoc in the churches. That's not a new covenant church. Not at all.

I'll tell you, when I started preaching I said, Lord, I don't want to preach like these American preachers. I don't want to preach like Indian preachers I've heard. I want to study the scriptures to see how Jesus would preach.

How would he speak? I mean, if he were here physically how would Jesus speak? I want to speak like that. I want to speak the way he spoke to wicked sinners. I want to speak the way he spoke to self-righteous Pharisees.

I want to teach the way he taught the disciples. And I studied. I mean, God is my witness that 45 years I've spent studying the earthly life of Jesus to try and... I don't know how much I've succeeded, but I've tried.

That of God is my witness. I've tried to understand. That's my calling.

And I think if I were a musician in the church I would study and understand how would Jesus lead the singing? How would Jesus play an instrument? That's how I would have done it. Or anything. Or in handling money in the church I would think how would Jesus handle this money? That is what has protected me for 41 years in Christian ministry.

I've seen young people who came started serving the Lord with me and I see where they are today. They've destroyed themselves. Because they were born again.

They laid the foundation. But then they built the pillars somewhere else. This is happening all over.

That is not a new covenant church. The new covenant church, Jesus said, this is the foundation Peter. Christ the Son of the Living God.

And I want to ask all of you. I told you about the importance of the home in Ephesians 5. What sort of a home should we have? How should we guide our children? I remember one young sister once came to me and asked me, how should I dress? What advice did I give her? Should I tell her the length of her blouse or the length of her salwar kameez? No, no, no. I mean if you start on that, the list will become very long.

I said something much more simple based on this principle that everything must be built on the foundation Christ the Son of the Living God. Peter, this rock I will build my church. And I thought, well, I said, sister, this is what I would say.

If Jesus were living in the next street and he invited you to his house saying, I want to go for a walk with you. And he's going to take you for a walk down Commercial Street or somewhere else. How would you dress? When you go to meet him and you go for a walk with him.

Dress like that every day. Not only when you come to church, when you want to look holy, but when you go to work, when you want to look smart like the others. And you've given up the foundation of Jesus Christ because now I'm going to work.

I'd like to be like the world. No wonder your Christian life is so shallow. You want to be like Christ on Sunday, like the world the other six days of the week.

Well, go ahead, sister. Nothing ever much will come out of your life. But you can change today.

You'll be different. People make fun of you. You'll be odd because you're the bride of Christ.

I'm not making any rules. All I say is, do you want Jesus to go with you only once a week? Or do you want him to be with you every day? Every moment? In everything you do, ask yourself. I remember once a brother came to me to sign as a witness for some sale deed that he was preparing.

And I knew something about that house transaction. I was only signing as a witness. Witness that this is the right person signing.

I could have signed it, but there was something about that house transaction. It wasn't totally unrighteous, but I didn't feel free about it. And I said, I think you can go ahead.

There's nothing unrighteous in it. But I don't feel free in my spirit to sign that because I didn't feel Jesus would sign it. Because there was something shady about it.

You know, some of these gray areas. Not exactly black, but a little gray, not white. So I said, I'm not saying you shouldn't go ahead with this.

Go ahead, but ask somebody else. And he, because he respected me, said, oh, if your brother Jack doesn't sign it, then I won't go through with it. And he didn't.

And he lost that house. Lost it means he didn't buy it. And, ah, within a very short time he got a better one.

The first was only a test. You remember how God showed Adam all the animals? And he looked around and said, no, I don't want any of these. Then God gave him a wife.

Can you imagine what would have happened if Adam had chosen one of these other ones? Where would you be today? What would you look like? Thank God Adam said no to all those animals. It was only a test. If you don't believe me, it says there, God took all the animals past Adam and asked him to give them a name.

But he says, but none of them were suitable to be a partner for Adam. It's exactly like that in scripture. I'm not inventing something.

And so it says in the next chapter, God said, OK, I'll give him a wife now. You know, many times we read, that's in Genesis 2, many times we see that God tests us with something to see whether we take that and you miss the best. So don't think that the first thing that comes along your way is God's will.

May not be. It may be a test. To see whether your mind is set on the things above.

Whether you're seeking the kingdom of heaven first. When you want to build a church. I found, I found, we've been working in this church for more than 32 years.

And I'll tell you this. Something that you don't know. Maybe only one or two of us know it.

We've had numerous testings and temptations through these years. To be worldly. To adopt worldly methods.

To go back under the law. To be legalistic. Sometimes we have failed.

But quickly we have repented and come back. And I'm so thankful that God has constantly given us light. It's not easy.

I'll tell you it's not easy. It's easy to start building a church. Get a congregation.

But to preserve it in New Testament standards is not at all easy. But the ultimate goal of the new covenant is not the individual holy Christian. Almost everything we spoke so far in the previous nine sessions was about the individual coming into the new covenant.

I want to tell you this. Your personal growth in holiness if it does not lead to building fellowship with others who are walking in the light is a deception. Sanctification without fellowship is a deception.

Under the old covenant it was ok. Elijah could be a very holy man and be all alone. He didn't even have fellowship with Elisha.

Elisha only poured water for him to wash his hands. Elisha had no fellowship with Gehazi. Gehazi was just a servant.

A lot of pastors are like that today. There are big shots who have no fellowship with the ordinary people. Some of you may not know that because you've lived in this church too long.

I sometimes wish some people from here would go and join another church for another year or so. Get a transfer or something. Go to some place where they don't have any good fellowship.

Oh, they're coming running back with their tails behind their legs and saying, Hey, I would like to be back here. Yep. You know, we don't appreciate brotherhood that we've tasted here sufficiently because many of us either have never seen anything else or have forgotten what it was like in the old churches we were in.

Brotherhood and fellowship is the ultimate goal of the new covenant. That's why Jesus said, All men will know you're my disciples. Now we know the answer because we know John 13, 34 and 35 when you love one another.

But supposing Jesus had said, asked his disciples, imagine if you were there at that time before he made that statement. He asked this question, How will all men know that you're my disciples? You ask people today. How do you try to show other people you're my disciples? In other words, put it like this.

How do you seek to attract people to your church? Let's put it that way. It means the same thing. How do you seek to attract people to your church? With most people the answer is music.

That's the way to get young people today. Or have a lot of worldly programs for young people. That's the way to attract them.

And you see what type of church they build. I was visiting somewhere once where a family told me they had visited numerous churches in that area and they couldn't allow their children to attend any of those churches. Because they didn't feel any of them would have a godly influence on their children.

There's many, many families that have told me that. And you know what some of them do now? What do you do? They don't have good teaching. They sit at home and their Sunday services, sitting together as a family singing a few hymns turning on to the internet to our cfcindia.com website and listening to a video message.

That is their Sunday service. It's happening in many countries. That's why I praise the Lord for opening this avenue for a small insignificant church like ours.

We're one of the smallest churches in the world I think. And that God has given us people who can work at this. I don't have the ability to do it.

But God has given us people who can do that. We work as a body. Otherwise I mean, no matter how well I may preach here and you people get blessed those others will not get blessed if there were not some people behind the scenes working and making sure it gets to them.

That's the body of Christ. Each don't have the same function. I can't do what they can do and they can't do what I can do.

And that applies to every part of the body of Christ. There are different ministries. And I'll tell you this.

There may be different functions but all are equally important. What is the mark of the person who is a disciple of Christ? Some would say holiness. Some would say speaking in tongues.

Some would say people have asked me this in different places when I meet people they ask about my church and they say by their question you can know which church they belong to. Do you all speak in tongues? You know which church that fellow belongs to. Do you all break bread every Sunday? In case you didn't know that's the brethren.

Do your sisters cover their heads? And some churches do they cover it 24 hours? That's people who come from the Amish and Mennonite backgrounds. So I mean through the years I've come to see even when I close my eyes and I listen to somebody pray I know ah that chap is from that denomination. There's a way about we acquire a culture.

And different people ask me different questions about various things. Is it on Sunday that you have your meetings? You know in the gulf countries where they have holidays on Friday there are some churches which still would meet on a Sunday evening because they feel that Sunday is the only day they can break bread. It's amazing.

I mean there's about 5% of churches like that. But these are the things that are important. But they don't mind that in their church they fight and quarrel with each other and backbite and gossip.

Those things are not important so long as we break bread on Sunday. But Jesus said none of these things is that you love one another. And the moment you say one another it's got to be more than one.

When God made man he didn't make him alone. He said let us make man in our image. And that means if God is a trinity there has to be more than one.

See when you say God is love it has to mean there has to be more than one person in the trinity. Do you know there are some famous preachers whom you listen to on television who don't believe in the trinity? You may be surprised to know that. But there are.

They don't believe that there are three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They believe Jesus is the Father and Jesus is the Son and Jesus is the Holy Spirit. They just take three different forms.

You know like me saying I'm a father and I'm a husband and I'm an elder. I'm not three persons. That's how they believe in their trinity but that's not how it was.

I mean when God made man he made man and woman, two separate people. It's not that one time Adam was a man and another time he was a woman. Not like that.

They were two separate persons. And God said let's make man in our image. He made them man and woman and they were to love one another and that's why they failed.

Okay. God sent his son and said let's start again with a new creation. On the day of the resurrection Jesus rose up from the dead to build the church and he said okay now let's start a group of people who love one

another and what's the one thing Christians do not do? Love one another.

What are the things they do? They have meetings, they have music, they have raise money, they have programs, they have social programs, they help the poor, they establish schools, they establish colleges, they speak in tongues, they believe in water baptism, they do everything except love one another. What a work the devil has done! If you love one another the proof of it is over a period of time you'll become more and more one with each other. I can say that about me and my wife.

We became more and more one over the last 39 years. I can say that about me and many of brothers in the church, not all, few, that over the years we've become more and more one because we love one another. It's not that we don't disagree.

We can disagree as long as we live on this earth we'll disagree. It's not this type of unity where one dictator says that's the way we're going to do it. Oh yes sir.

That's not unity. That's dictatorship. A lot of homes are dictatorship.

Either the husband is a dictator or in some cases the wife is the dictator. The husband meekly obeys. That's not unity.

You know when a person says there's perfect peace in my house, no quarreling. That could mean two things. Either it's a dictatorship where one or the other keeps quiet for the sake of peace or it's real fellowship.

In most cases it's dictatorship. But most of the other homes they just fight and yell and quarrel and they don't even believe that they should love one another or they feel that you should love one another once in a while. Once in a while? Are you supposed to breathe only once in a while? How many of you believe that love is like breathing? I'm supposed to love people all the time just like I breathe all the time.

Love is the breath of the Christian life. And the whole purpose of the new covenant is to bring people to that where Adam and Eve failed to bring us to unity and oneness. That's the church that Jesus is building.

The purpose of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit is not to display. See how I can heal people. See how this fellow's ear that was only 80% open is now 90% open after I prayed for him.

This type of rubbish that goes on. Displaying themselves as great. The purpose is not the gifts of the Spirit is to make people one.

And the church that has succeeded is the church that has become more and more one where fellowship is more important than even understanding of the Bible. I think all of us have got enough understanding of the Bible. I think many of us have got even more than Paul and Peter.

We can explain things better than Paul and Peter could. But that's not the test of spiritual growth. Fellowship.

How do you evaluate your home? Is it how many more gadgets you have in your home? How much more life has become more comfortable? How well your children have done in their studies? And got good grades and etc. etc. and school and college and jobs etc.

No! How much more is there peace in your home? Not the peace of dictatorship but the peace of unity and fellowship. That shows whether your home is a new covenant home. You know the church comprises of homes.

And you can't have a new covenant church without a new covenant home. That's why we have spoken so much about Christian homes through the years. We've got to build a home and I want to urge you my brothers and sisters can we make a beginning today after all that we heard about the new covenant.

Here's where we must end. In love and fellowship with one another which means we have to die to ourself. If I were to ask you, where do we see the love of God? All of you would say at the cross where Jesus died.

Where can I see your love as a husband? On a cross where you die. Where can I see your love as a wife? On a cross where you die. Where can I see your love as a brother or sister? On a cross where you die to yourself.

That's the only way of fellowship. When Jesus stretched out his hands on the cross, he was saying, I want you both to be one. I want you all to be one.

Not one at the expense of truth. If you read John's gospel, many people go to John chapter 17. Oh, see how Jesus spoke about unity, unity, unity, unity, unity.

I agree. We must be one. We must be one.

But, you know, like people take verses out of context. I said before John 17, have you read John 14, 15 and 16? You know what he spoke about in John 14, 15, 16? Truth, truth, truth, truth, truth. I am the truth.

I'm going to send you the spirit of truth. He will guide you into all the truth. And when the spirit of truth has come, he spoke so much about truth in three chapters.

Then he spoke about unity in chapter 7, 17. And that's why Christians have missed the bus. They don't want truth.

They don't want the spirit of truth. They want the spirit of excitement, emotion, and they want unity. It'll be a counterfeit unity, as you can see in all these churches that talk about being filled with the Holy Spirit.

They split, split, split, split, split, split. Why is that? Because they've sacrificed truth for the sake of unity. 1 Timothy 3, 15 says the church is the pillar and support of the truth.

So we're not going to sacrifice truth for the sake of unity. No. If he sacrificed truth, we would have a mega church.

Huge crowds. But we don't sacrifice truth. We preach the whole council of God.

We preach the entire sermon on the mount. We preach you've got to die to yourself. We preach you've got to hate money.

We preach that you've got to be detached from your possessions. You've got to love Jesus more than father, mother, brother, sister, job, car, house, everything. That's the truth, to be a disciple.

Then, unity. What is the result of that? Jesus said in Matthew chapter 7, this way is very narrow. Very few find it.

You know, it's in Matthew chapter 7, verse 13, 14, 15. This way is very narrow. What I've just described in the sermon on the mount, Matthew 5, 6, 7. And very few find it.

The next verse is, but beware of false prophets. And I want to paraphrase it. Who will tell you millions will find it.

All of India will be converted one day. I don't believe it. I believe that very few will find the way.

If you preach the whole truth of God. If you compromise that and leave out 90% of the truth, then of course you can have big crowds. And that's what's happening today.

Don't be deceived. When you read Christian books and listen to Christian preachers, see how much of the sermon on the mount they preach. Not even 10%.

Go and ask a Christian, for example, do you know what it means to be poor in spirit? They'll all say that means to be humble. It does not mean to be humble. Humble is another word.

To be poor in spirit means to see your own needs and nobody else's. The kingdom of heaven belongs to them. Get me a poor in spirit husband and a poor in spirit wife.

Their home will be like a heaven. They will be united. Give me two poor in spirit brothers, they'll really be one.

Make it 3, 4, 5 poor in spirit brothers, they'll really be a church. That's the solution. That first verse of the sermon on the mount is the key to the entire new covenant.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. The kingdom of heaven is theirs. That's the church which the devil is afraid of.

We want to build such a church, build such a fellowship. That's what we have striven to do and may God do it even more in our midst in the days to come. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, give us light. Revelation. We've got the understanding now.

Give us revelation that changes our lives on these truths that we have heard. Your name be glorified through us, Lord. Father, we see your heart's desire.

Children who are one. Homes where there's love and the peace of God. We pray there'll be many more like that in the face of the earth.

We pray in Jesus' name.

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