

# Having Authority Over Satan

by Zac Poonen

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*The church must exercise its authority to bind Satan's activities and stand as a light in a dark world to defeat Satan.*

**Duration:** 1:14:31

**Scripture:** Psalm 139:23, Matthew 16:18

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Christian Character"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of building a church that reflects the character of Christ, focusing on self-judgment, humility, contentment, and grace in speech. It highlights the need to look to Jesus as the standard for behavior and to judge oneself first before others. The goal is to create a church where Satan has no foothold, where pride, discontentment, accusation, and offense are overcome through a Christ-like attitude.

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## Transcript

So we've been thinking about what Christ looks for in his church. I want to turn to a verse where the first time the word church comes in the Bible, in the New Testament. It's where Jesus spoke about it for the very first time in Matthew chapter 16 and verse 18.

Where Jesus was saying, and the literal translation of that would be, I say to you that you're Peter, a small stone, a small rock. And upon this big rock, which you just confessed in verse 16, the Christ, the Son of the living God. On that big rock, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not overpower it.

Or as the margin of some Bibles say, the powers of spiritual death will not be able to overpower my church. So whenever you see a church that has been overcome by Satan, you can say that's not the church that Jesus built. There's something wrong, either in the foundation or the superstructure, something in the way they built or gathered together and the way the church was led.

Usually the fault is with the leaders, but the church that Jesus builds, Satan can never overpower it. And a lot depends on the leadership. See, we have discovered in our own experience that if the leadership in a church is strong, Satan can never get in.

And that's why in the New Testament church, God has always appointed plural leadership. I want to say to you that this one-man pastor system is never found in the New Testament. It's as much an idea of man as

child baptism.

A lot of people have rejected child baptism, have not rejected the one-man pastor idea. They don't understand that one is as unscriptural as the other. Because God has appointed, you know, in the Old Testament it was one.

One king, one high priest, and very often just one prophet at a time in one area. Even when there were two prophets living at the same time, one would prophesy in one area, another in another. They never worked together.

But as soon as you come to the New Testament, Jesus begins his ministry sending people two by two. And you come to the Acts of the Apostles, the Holy Spirit says, separate me Saul and Barnabas. You read in Acts chapter 3, Peter and John go to the temple.

It's always two by two. And when Barnabas drops out, Paul takes Silas. That is God's will.

Because the church is to be like a family. In a family, there's dual leadership. Father and mother are the elders of a family.

And God puts them together so that they can jointly, you know, the woman's to be a helper to the man. That means they got to work together to lead the family. So that is God's plan.

But if it's an organization, you know, then you have a CEO. And many pastors are CEOs. Well, then call it what it is.

Don't call it a church. It's a corporation. Maybe a Christian corporation.

It's not the church of Jesus Christ. Not at all. The church of Jesus Christ, the principles are taught in Scripture.

And where Jesus said, where two are gathered together, there I am in the midst. So, that's the second time Jesus spoke about the church. Here in Matthew 16, 18, he speaks about the church and immediately he talks about the gates of hell.

And the church fighting together. And the church always winning. That's the church I want to be in.

Christ looks for a church that's always triumphing over Satan. Maybe persecuted, maybe hated, despised and forsaken, like Jesus himself was. That doesn't matter.

But overcoming. I mean the church may be crucified, but it will come out in resurrection and overcome. That is the church of Jesus Christ.

The world will hate it just like they hated Jesus. And do so many things to the physical body. But the church of Jesus Christ will be triumphant.

The second place where the church is mentioned. Jesus spoke about the church only twice in the gospels. One is here.

And he speaks about conflict. It's very important to realize the church is not in a picnic. It's in a conflict.

To a lot of people the church is a place where we have a lot of fun and entertainment. And no, it's in a battle. And it's a battle where we always win.

If we do it God's way. So in the Old Testament you read about battles. And those are written for our instruction.

That whenever they followed God's instructions, they hardly had to do anything. You remember when they walked around Jericho without firing a shot or firing an arrow. The whole city collapsed and came under their power.

They just blew the trumpet. You know, that's what we do. We proclaim Jesus is Lord and the walls collapse.

That's what we need to experience. We mustn't just read it in the Bible and say, Oh, what wonderful thing Joshua did. We can experience it spiritually today.

So the church is supposed to overcome. The second place where Jesus spoke about the church was in relation to discipline. Of a brother who would not listen to spiritual authority.

You know, brother sins in Matthew 18 and verse 15. It's interesting that Jesus spoke about discipline. Now a lot of people think there's no need for discipline in a church.

There is. You know, the Bible says that which father is there who does not discipline his children. Unfortunately, a lot of fathers like that today.

But God disciplines his children. In fact, he says in Hebrews 12, if you're not disciplined, you're not a real child of God. Every true father disciplines his children.

The form of discipline may be different. God disciplines in different ways. But here he speaks about a brother who sins.

And you go and reprove him. Because notice the aim. There are two ways you can reprove.

When a brother sins, and that can happen in a church. And what does Christ want to see in the church? Loving discipline and reproof. If you reprove a brother, not in order to say, hey, you're wrong.

You don't deserve to be here. No, no, no. Look what it says, to win your brother.

The whole aim is to win that brother whom the devil has got a hold of. But you must do it in wisdom. And if he doesn't listen to you, then you take two or three others.

And you go to the elders and speak to them. And if he refuses to listen to them as well, then tell it to the church. That's the second time he speaks about the church.

Again, it's conflict. You see, the devil has now got a hold of one brother in the church. Made him sin.

And the devil has got such a grip on him, that he's not willing to receive correction. He's not even willing to receive correction from the elders. Jesus considers that possibility.

And I've seen it happen. Where a brother is not willing to listen even to the elders correcting him. Those two or three are elders.

And then you have to treat him like a non-Christian. Here he was a born again Christian. And now he says, the Lord says, treat him like a non-Christian.

Or a sinner. Now don't try to be more spiritual than Jesus. This is the most loving person that walked on the earth.

Who said that if a person doesn't listen to the discipline of the elders in the church, treat him like a non-Christian. And I've seen many believers who try to be more loving than Jesus. And get into the grip of the devil and destroy the church.

I've seen that. Because their understanding of love is human. Not divine.

So when you see a brother sin, I'll tell you what to do. Lay aside your own understanding. Go to Matthew 18 verse 15 and do what it says there.

Don't talk about it to everybody else. Either speak to him. If you don't have the courage to speak to him, go and tell the elders.

The elders speak with him. And he doesn't listen. Treat him like an unbeliever.

The aim is to win. And then it says here about the authority the church has. You see here is a situation where Satan has come in.

Actually. Through one person. And it happens again and again in the church.

If you don't know how to handle this, you won't be able to build a church. You have to recognize it. And this is where a lot of carnal believers sitting in a church cannot understand why an elder brother disciplines someone.

Very often they don't know the facts. And they go around talking, talking, talking. And they become more of the agents of the devil.

Creating more confusion. But if there is strong eldership in a church, however much these people go around gossiping, the devil will still be defeated. It all depends on strong eldership.

I can tell you from my own experience. We've been functioning 39 years as a church that started with 3-4 families in our home. 39 years ago.

But right from the beginning the two of us have been in leadership. I handed over that 15 years ago to, there are others now in leadership there. But all the years we were together and all these years we still work together.

The devil has never been able to come into our church even once. There have been occasions like this mentioned here in Matthew 18-15 where we've had to discipline people and they've had to be even put out of the church only 2 or 3 in all these 39 years. But we've not been hesitant to do that when necessary even if they won't listen.

But the devil has never been able to come in. Because between us we've been united. Both of us.

This other brother and I in the leadership of the church. If the devil tried so much to separate us many times because we have had our disagreements. We are not zombies just saying yes to each other.

When we disagreed we decided we would not be disunited. Disagreement is not disunity. We can have different opinions because we don't see things exactly the same way sometimes.

You look at a building from one side and I look at it from the other side and we think we are seeing it from the same side. We're not. It's the same building but we've got different views.

But we should not be disunited. The reason why God puts multiple leadership is so that we can have different views of the same point, of the same subject. So it's good that people have a different view.

So I always tell the elders I work with in our churches. I say don't ever force an elder to have the same viewpoint as you. Because then you've destroyed him.

It's like a husband who forces his wife to have the same view as his. No, let her take the photograph of the building from the south side and you take it from the north side. You'll get a better view of the whole building.

So that's called being complementary to each other. So the devil's not been able to come into our church because we've been united. It's the same in our home.

Because my wife and I have been united. The devil was not able to come into our home. Do you think the devil didn't try to attack our home? He attacks the homes of God's servants more than any other Christian home, I'll tell you that.

To try and destroy their children, destroy the home. But he hasn't succeeded. So I want to tell you, this is why the devil tries to separate husband and wife.

Because husband and wife are united, Jesus is in the midst. Where two or three are gathered together, they're in the midst. If he can separate them, Christ is no longer in the midst then.

And he can come right in, and you may be strong enough to stand against the devil, but your children are not. And he gets your children. That's his aim.

So don't be foolish as husband and wife, stay united. What are the silly things we fight about? Usually some earthly thing. I always tell people 2,000 years from now when you look back over the things you fought over, you'll feel so stupid to fight over something so worthless.

And the devil's accomplished his purpose. You've got to be very careful. In a church the leadership must be extremely careful to remain united.

So that Christ is always in the midst. The devil can never get in because he's conquered. So this is very important.

It's in this context of binding the activities of Satan on earth. Verse 18, Matthew 18, 18. Speaking about the church.

What's the church now doing? Binding on earth something that will be bound in the heavenlies. Heavenlies means where Satan is. Not the third heaven which Paul went to where God is.

But between the third heaven and earth is the heavenlies. Ephesians speaks about where there are principalities and powers and forces. You know Satan is not in hell by the way.

He's in the heavenlies. It's from there he comes down to earth and his demons possess people. And we have to bind those heavenly evil forces.

Heavenlies means the second heaven not the third heaven. Evil forces by our authority on earth. And this is where we need to see verses 18 to 20 together.

Where two or three have been gathered together in my name. Now this is one of the most misread verses. I'll tell you how most Christians read it.

And you'll see how you perhaps have read it also. Where two or three gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst. Did I read it right? I'll read it again.

Where two or three gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst. Did I read it right? I'll read it a third time. Where two or three gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst.

No. Gathered together by somebody else. Not gathered together.

Gathered together is you and me deciding hey let's go and meet together. Let's start a church. Gathered is by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit has gathered us together. There he is in the midst. It's not any Tom, Dick and Harry deciding to start a church.

It's the Holy Spirit gathering two people together and uniting them. And there Jesus is in the midst. And these two or three, verse 19, must be agreed.

It's very important. Agreed in spirit. And the Greek word there is symphony from which we got the musical word symphony.

It's saying these two or three people who come together must sound like a symphony. There must be no discord. They don't have to be two or three hundred.

Two or three is enough. But there must be a symphony between them and their spirit. And then whatever they ask.

And now remember, this is not asking for cars and houses. It's asking, verse 18, to bind satanic activities on earth. Remember, read a verse always in its context.

Binding satanic forces on earth, it will be done. You can lose people who've been bound by satanic forces in your church. And you can bind those satanic forces who are trying to cause confusion in your church.

We have seen that happen again and again and again and again. The Bible opens with the story of two people gathered together by God, Adam and Eve. And the very next chapter is Satan coming, separating them.

That's how the Bible begins. And then, the first book of the Bible, by the way, is Job. Which is written before Moses wrote Genesis.

And the first, that is the first book of the Bible. And it's interesting that God wrote about a man who was the target of Satan. Because he was such a godly man.

So you see in the beginning of scripture, whether it's Genesis or Job. Satan is a very prominent figure there. Right at the beginning.

It's very important to see that. And when Jesus speaks about the church, Satan is mentioned there. The church, we think about the church trying to reach out and help the poor and feed the homeless and all.

You can do all that. I'll tell you, Satan won't object to all that. So long as you don't disturb his kingdom.

The primary function of Satan, please listen, is to register the victory of Christ in the territory of the devil. And the whole world is the territory of the devil. It's in darkness and the church must stand there as a light.

And that's why we need to build a church. What's Christ looking for in a church? A church that can have the same testimony that he had. He was the first body of Christ.

And I want you to see here what Jesus said in John 14, just before he went to the cross. He said in John 14, verse 30. John 14, verse 30.

He says, I'm not going to speak much more with you now, because he's going to die soon. The ruler of this world, that's Satan, is coming. But he's got nothing in me.

That means for 33 and a half years, Satan tempted Jesus in so many ways, trying to get a foothold in him. He was tempted, the Bible says, in every point as we are. Whatever temptation you're tempted by, Jesus was tempted by and he overcame.

And he overcame as a man filled with the Holy Spirit, not as God. If he overcame as God, he would be no example for us. Like an angel flying across a swimming pool with his wings, tells you to follow him.

He can never teach you swimming. And if Jesus had come as God and said, follow me, I can straight away say, I can't follow you, Lord. I'm mad.

I'm pulled by this law of gravity called sin. And if an angel has to teach me to swim, I have to first tell him to get rid of his wings. Take a body like mine, get into the pool, then teach me how to swim.

And if Jesus were to say, follow me, not admire me, but follow me. He'd take a body like mine, be tempted like me and overcome. And he did that.

That's a wonder of his humanity. Tempted like me. And he didn't sin.

He felt that pull from Satan. Otherwise, it's not temptation. And he overcame it in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And in 33 and a half years, the devil could not penetrate him. To me, that is the greatest miracle Jesus did. Many people think the greatest miracle is raising the dead.

And they go around trying to imitate Jesus and doing miracles. They don't succeed. They're just frustrated and they fool other people that they're doing the same miracles Jesus did.

A lot of fake healers like that in Christendom today. Deceiving a lot of Christians. Look around and see how many people are healed.

It's not like the healing ministry of Jesus. Not even remotely like it. But the greatest miracle Jesus did was that he never sinned.

In word, or deed, or thoughts, or attitudes to people, or even in motives. Try and live like that for one day. It will be a miracle.

If you can be completely free from sin in thought, word, deed, attitude, motive towards every human being for one single day. It's a great struggle. That's the great miracle that Jesus had a body like mine.

Tempted like me. And for 33 and a half years never sinned. Showing us that if we yield to the power of the Holy Spirit.

If you pray like he did. If you cry out like he did. And if you hate sin like he did.

And if you love the Father like he did. You can live like that. The devil wants you to believe that you can't.

It's a lie. The prince of the world comes and he's got nothing in me. Today we are the body of Christ.

And as Satan comes, we should be able to say, he's got nothing in our church. He's got no foothold in our church. Do you have a longing, my brothers and sisters, to build for your Savior a church like that? I have a great longing.

I've had that longing for many years. For my Savior who gave everything in order to build a church that would be pure. And he's committed that charge to me.

And to you. I take it for myself. And he says to me, I want you to build a church for me on earth.

I'll help you. I'll give you the power of your Holy Spirit. But it must be like my body.

Where Satan has got no place. It doesn't have to be big. But it must be a true representation of my body.

That the prince of the world comes and he finds nothing there. That is the church that I have sought with all my heart to build for the last 39 years. And I've said, Lord, I'm willing to pay any price.

And whatever it is. In terms of money, time, energy, ridicule, misunderstanding, criticism, being called the devil. And I faced all of that.

It doesn't make a difference. I say, Lord, I'm only concerned about one thing. I'm not concerned what people say about me or what people think about me.

Even the praise of men about what is accomplished is worth nothing. I've always taught people, the opinions of men are fit for the trash can. Whether they call you a devil or call you a prophet, put it in the trash can.

It's not worth anything. It's only God's opinion about you that matters. He's the only one who knows 100% of you.

The best of men, the closest of men know about 10% of you. What do they know about your thoughts? What does your wife know about your thoughts, even though you've been married so many years? You can have filthy thoughts and she doesn't know it. You can love money in your mind, she doesn't know it.

You can be very clever. It's worth nothing. Even your wife's opinion about you is not really worth much.

I mean, she can see your external graciousness and externally that you don't lose your temper and all those things. Okay, but that's just 10%. You know that 90% of us is inside, our thoughts, attitudes, motives.

Who knows that? Only God. And if He doesn't give a certificate of us, all the opinion of men is fit for the trash can. Remember that, my brothers.

Otherwise you'll get so taken up with discouragement because people think badly of you or with pride because people think highly of you. It's fit for the trash can. If you don't get clear on this point, I'll tell you, you'll never be able to build a church.

So when we think of Satan coming and he's got nothing in us, one of the things that's helped me is to see what is Satan's nature that he tries to communicate to us. Because Satan has communicated his poison to the race of Adam. And we are born with that.

You see, children who fight, where did they learn it from? It's not that the parents teach them to fight. They're born with it. Satan is like that.

He wants to possess and grab and fight and quarrel. It's all of the devil. And we have to build a church where Satan's got no place in us.

The number one characteristic of Satan that we see in the Bible is pride. We read in Ezekiel chapter 28. Now, the reason I mention the characteristic of Satan is because that's what must not be found in the church.

The gates of hell will prevail against the church if Satan succeeds in putting his nature into the people in your church. And this is the responsibility of the leadership of the church to keep preaching against it, teaching against it, live against it, fight against it, bind satanic activities so that this is not found in the church. And the same thing applies to your home, my brothers and sisters, those of you who've got families.

Your home, remember, is a little church with a few members. Make sure Satan doesn't get in there. The first characteristic of Satan is pride.

It says in Ezekiel 28, I don't have to go into all the details there. He's called here the king of Tyre in verse 12. That means the real ruler of Tyre who was inside the human ruler.

And he started off, verse 12, last part, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. He was supposed to use all this for God. He was an anointed.

Verse 14, he was full of wisdom, perfect in beauty, and anointed with gifts, verse 14, and blameless, verse 15. Boy, imagine a perfect human being, beautiful in appearance, wisdom, and anointed, and blameless. If you have a servant of God like that, it's amazing.

And his heart, verse 17, was lifted up because of his beauty, and his wisdom, and his position, and his anointing, exactly like many preachers and servants of God. Their heart's been lifted up because of their beauty, and their wisdom, their Bible knowledge, and their anointing, and their giftedness, and what they've accomplished in their ministry, pride. You got corrupted, and immediately, as soon as it comes, the

Lord says, I cast you to the ground.

That is how many people fall into sin, because God's withdrawn his grace from them. You suddenly hear of a gifted preacher having fallen into sin. It's because God withdrew his grace, that's all.

There's no other reason. And the reason God withdrew his grace is because God saw what you didn't see. Then that person's heart was lifted up because of his beauty, or his wisdom, or his anointing, or his gift, or how people admired him, and people said things to him.

He didn't throw it immediately in the trash can. He preserved it, and frequently meditated on it, and ruined himself. Be careful.

A wise man learns from the mistakes of others, so that he doesn't do it himself. Satan's number one characteristic is pride. We have to be very, very careful, my brothers and sisters.

It's very easy. You could be proud of your beauty. You can look in the mirror and say what the Pharisee said.

Lord, I thank you that I'm not like other people. I'm so good looking and fair. There are different reasons why the Pharisee can boast, I'm not like other people.

Thank you, or you're very educated and clever and smart. Lord, I thank you I'm not like other people. Or you know the word better than everybody else in the church, and you say, Lord, I thank you I'm not like other people in the church.

I really know the scriptures. It's all the Pharisee. Or, Lord, I thank you I'm humble, unlike other people.

That's also the Pharisee. And pride is most deceptive, and it is gobbled in the garb of humility. So what's our hope? I'll tell you.

I've found through the years, you know, everybody's tempted with pride. The great scholar is tempted to be proud of his Bible knowledge. The rich man is tempted to be proud of his wealth.

The clever man is tempted to be proud of his cleverness, and the spiritual man is tempted to be proud of his spirituality. There's only one solution. I've discovered that pride comes through comparison.

You know, as I've sought to find out, Lord, how can I ensure that the devil has no place in me? It's only then I can ensure that he has no place in my home, which is my little church first, and then in the larger church over which God's placed me as an elder. What's God looking for? What's Christ looking for in the church? That the devil has no place in it. No pride.

You must build a church where people are not proud. Nobody there. They'll come in, like little children, with a lot of pride.

That's how they come in. But the preaching of the word must be such that it drives it out. And it has to be driven out of the elders first.

So as I've sought in my own battle in this area to try and understand how to be like Jesus, because the first thing Jesus did was not live a holy life. That was after he came to earth. He didn't show his love.

The first thing Jesus did was humble himself. By just coming from heaven to earth. Remember, that was the first thing that Jesus did.

And that's the first thing you and I must do. Before we pursue holiness and love and feeding the poor and caring for the homeless and taking care of the orphans and the widows and all the wonderful works we do and preaching sermons and singing songs and all that. Before all of that, follow Jesus in his humility.

That's the first step. And that's the first step a lot of people don't take. And they try to follow Jesus and become Christians without taking the first step.

It's like, without learning the ABC, you go into third or fourth grade and try to understand physics and chemistry and you can't even read. That's exactly the condition of many Christians. They haven't learned the first lesson of humility.

And they're trying to follow Jesus. Crazy! It's like sending children to school and they don't learn the alphabets, don't know how to read and they try to teach physics and chemistry. They're confused.

So this is how I've discovered. I've seen that pride is always the result of comparison. And I use this example.

In India, we don't have grades in school, ABCD. We have marks out of 100. So if a child got 10 out of 100 in mathematics, can he be proud? What do you think? The answer is yes.

If everybody else got 5 and 4 and 3 and 0, he can be so happy. Mommy, I came first in the class. He's so happy when he comes.

And this is how pride comes. Comparison. You're not even 10% like Jesus.

Not even 10%. You didn't even get 10. You probably got about 5 out of 100 or 1 out of 100.

But you're proud. Why is that? Because everybody else got half or quarter or 1 third out of 100 or something like that. It's by comparison.

Now you take that same child who's got 10 out of 100 in mathematics and put him in another class where everybody's getting 99 and 100. How does he suddenly become humble? How did this proud person become humble? Because he saw he was last in the class. Not only last, everybody was getting about 90 marks more than him.

Everybody's getting 100 and he's getting 10. How did he suddenly become humble? By comparison. How did he become proud first? By comparison.

There I learned the secret. How did the devil become proud? He compared himself with all the other angels. And he was more good looking, wiser, cleverer, higher position, greater anointing, greater gifts.

And he became proud. Then he looked at God. And he was nothing compared to God.

That's why he was determined, I've got to go above that. That's how he became the devil. He was a perfect angel before that.

So I realized, as long as I compare myself with others, my Bible knowledge with others, my preaching ability with others, my anointing with others, the results of my ministry with others, or anything with others,

it's a danger of pride. If I find people are much better than me, danger of discouragement. Either way it's dangerous.

So I realized, the solution is to look at someone who got a hundred percent. All the time. That's Jesus Christ.

And that's why the Bible says, Let us run the race looking unto Jesus. All the time. I want to tell you, it's something I pursued for many years now.

It's a guaranteed, guaranteed cure for pride. If you take the medicine daily. And many times daily.

Let us run the race looking unto Jesus. Whatever Bible knowledge you have, compare yourself with Jesus. Whatever ability you have, whatever anointing you have, whatever holiness or goodness you have, or however much good you think you're doing, or how generous you are, and how loving you are, and everything else.

Put it all together and just compare yourself with Jesus. I tell you, you'll fall like John the Apostle at the feet of Jesus in the Isle of Patmos, with your face in the dust. And he was 95 years old then.

He'd already lived for 65 years a spiritual life. He was better than any of us. And as soon as he saw Jesus, he was flat on the ground.

That's what the constant advice I give to my fellow elders in our churches. I say, Dear Brothers, Put your face in the dust. All the time.

Keep your face in the dust. This is what I seek to do, my brothers. And this is what I tell you to do.

The devil will never get power over you. And you cannot fall. You know, if you stand, you can fall.

If you sit, you can still fall. But if you're flat on the ground on your face, can you fall? No. You're safe.

It's the safest place to be. Flat on the ground, with your face in the dust, before Jesus. Not once in a while.

Not in moments when you feel humbled. But all the time. It'll take practice.

Everything in life takes practice. Even when you were a kid, you had to learn how to brush your teeth. It took a little practice.

But it's sort of automatic now. Nobody has to remind you, like your mom and dad had to brush your teeth this morning. It's many things that we keep on doing.

After a while, it becomes a habit. And I want to tell you, in Jesus' name, it can become a habit for you, as it has gradually become for me, to look at Jesus all the time. To compare ourselves with Him all the time.

I'm trying to tell you how the devil will get no hold on your life. Or your home. Or your church.

See, it's because of pride, that we get offended. One of the first things, we learn to overcome, when we decide to follow Jesus, in this area, and look at Him, is getting offended. Things like anger, can be deep rooted.

Dirty thoughts, sexual thoughts, deep rooted, takes time to get rid of it. Love of money, takes time. These are massive onions with many many layers.

You know, particularly anger, sexually dirty thoughts, and love of money, three that come to my mind immediately. So, let's start with something which is a little easier. Getting offended.

Why don't you work on that first? You'll find then it's easier. There's a song we sing called Yield not to temptation for yielding is sin. Each victory will help you another to win.

So, if you start with the easy things, you can move on to the more important things. When they teach you mathematics in school, the first thing, start with addition. 2 plus 2. You don't go to calculus and all straight away.

That'll come. But you got to start with 2 plus 2. Start with the easy things. And start with the easy things in the Christian life.

Getting offended. Can you decide, Lord by your grace, I want to overcome this business of getting offended. That no matter what people say to me or do to me, it doesn't change me.

If 10,000 people call you a prophet, will you become a prophet? No. Then why are you worried if 10,000 people call you the devil? You don't become the devil because they call you the devil. You are what you are.

So, what people call you a prophet or a devil is just the same thing. It doesn't make a difference. Don't get offended by what people say.

Don't get offended with people ignoring you. God doesn't ignore you. Sometimes people get offended that somebody didn't smile at them.

Or passed by them without shaking their hand or not noticing them. What conceit there is in this, that people who walk by us should notice us. Who do you think you are? That everybody should notice you when they pass by you.

Let's have little smaller thoughts about ourselves. It will help you a lot. You know, once Jesus said, The gate is narrow to enter into life.

It's a wonderful way, the way of life. But the gate is very narrow. But you know, he told us how narrow it was.

How narrow do you think that gate is? One inch? Sure. Quarter inch? Sure. It's as narrow as a needle's eye.

He said that to the rich young ruler who was not willing to give up his money. After he left him. It's easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye.

There he defined the size of that gate. It's not one inch. It's not quarter inch.

It's much smaller. It's a needle's eye. Why does a camel find it so difficult to go through a needle's eye? Why do you find it difficult to go through a needle's eye? Even your finger can't go through a needle's eye.

You know the problem? It's all too big. There's a little creature called the amoeba. People who study chemistry and all know about that.

It's the smallest little creature on earth. It's so small you've got to have a very powerful microscope to even see it. It's such a teeny weeny thing.

And for an amoeba, a needle's eye is so huge. And you ask an amoeba, can you go through a needle's eye? Oh sure, I can run in and out of it through it. It's like me running in and out through that door.

It's no problem. An amoeba says, I can go in and out of it easily. What do you mean it's so difficult? It's not at all difficult.

It's easy. You find it difficult to go through it? You're too big. That's the problem, brothers and sisters.

We don't enter into this abundant life that Jesus promised us because we're too big in our own thinking. We've got high thoughts about ourselves, about our abilities, maybe your accomplishments. And all the stupid things the devil keeps reminding you about which you've accomplished or what you think you are.

How much we listen to the devil and our head gets bigger and bigger and we don't fit through the needle's eye. What do we lose? Life. Abundant life.

I'm telling you from the stupid things I have made in my life. All my sermons come from the lessons I learned from my stupidity in my younger days. That's why I can be compassionate to people.

Because I went that way myself. I've been that way. Failure and defeat from the pit.

I used to get angry with my wife when I got married. It was just normal married life. Fighting and quarreling.

But it's gone. It's gone. I longed for a life where I'd never raise my voice once at my wife any day of the year.

And God's brought me there. You can be there. You've got to be small.

The way of life is wonderful. Where you don't get irritated and upset and angry and offended if you're small enough. Jesus was small.

When they called him Beelzebul, Prince of Devils. He said, I want to paraphrase his words. I'm an ordinary man.

It's okay. You're forgiven. I asked the Lord for a definition of why he called himself son of man, son of man, son of man all the time.

And right or wrong, this is the definition I got in my heart. I'm an ordinary son of a man. I'm an ordinary man.

Was he an ordinary man? Not at all. He was almighty God walking in human form. But do you know what he thought of himself? I'm an ordinary man.

And when I saw that, I said, Lord, help me to be an ordinary man all my days. People can call me what they like. They can treat me like rubbish.

What does it matter? You can be forgiven. I'm an ordinary man. The bigger we are, the more easily we get offended.

Seek with all your heart to become an ordinary man, an ordinary woman. You will not get offended. People may say you'll be able to keep your mouth shut.

You won't even have bad thoughts about them. I'm telling you from my experience. It will not be possible for people to work you up and get you angry.

Even if they get angry with you, they get irritated, upset and say all types of things. You will not get angry. Anger is the result of pride.

Let me tell you this, my dear brothers and sisters. It may hurt you, but it's good to get hurt. If you know the truth.

Anger comes because there's some pride in you. Which makes you feel that nobody can talk to you like that. Nobody can treat you like that.

Nobody can ignore you like that. Because you're an important person. You're not an ordinary person.

Well, it's very difficult to go through the narrow gate then. You won't enjoy the abundant life. Satan will get a power over you and he'll get a power over your home and he'll get a power over your church.

What is Christ looking for? Not a lot of Bible knowledge and a preaching ability. But be small in your own eyes. Bible says in Galatians 6, if anybody thinks he's somebody when he's a nobody.

Thinks he's a somebody, he's actually a nobody. That's in Galatians 6, verse 3. If anyone thinks he's somebody when he's a nobody. He's deceiving himself.

There's a lot of deceiving of oneself in Christendom. We think we're somebody just because we've done something for the Lord. You know when Paul said, you know that well-known verse, Philippians 3, 13.

Forgetting the things that are behind. Pressing forth to the things that are ahead of me. When we quote that verse, we're thinking of all the sins we've committed.

Oh thank God I can forget all the things that are behind. You know what Paul was talking about? I'm forgetting how spiritual I've become. I'm forgetting how much I've become like Jesus already.

I'm forgetting all that I've accomplished for Jesus already. All the raising of the dead and all the churches I've planted and all the scriptures I've written. Forgetting all that.

That means, Paul says, I look at myself as one who has not done anything for the Lord till today. Not grown at all. I'm a baby.

He was a mature saint. He'd been a believer for 30 years. He'd done great things for God.

He says, forgetting the things that are behind. That's what made him go full speed for the goal. Do you forget the things that are behind? Or do you keep reminding yourself of all that you've accomplished in the past? How spiritual you've become? How useful you've been in God's kingdom? No wonder your progress is so slow.

Like the tortoise. I'll give you a little suggestion. Forget the things that are behind.

Stop comparing yourself with others. Don't let the devil, pride is his nature. Getting offended, getting angry.

If you say to yourself every time you get angry, Lord I'm proud. That's why I got angry right now. You didn't give me grace to overcome that.

Ephesians 4.31 says, put away all anger. If I say put away all the chairs from this room, there shouldn't be one left. Put away all anger means zero anger.

I remember I went to a car factory, a manufacturing factory in India once. And I saw a little plate on the board there, on the wall there. We aim for zero defect.

I said, wow. What a motto for my Christian life. I aim for zero defect.

I offer that to you. Are you aiming for zero defect? I may not get there, but I tell you if that's your aim, you'll get pretty close to it before you leave this earth. That's the goal.

Zero of Adam and hundred of Christ. Make that your goal. That is my goal.

I say before God, that is my goal. I want to behave like Jesus Christ 100%. I want to speak like Jesus.

I want to preach like Jesus. I want to have the same attitude that Jesus had towards women and men. And I want to have the same attitude towards the Pharisees that Jesus had.

I want to have the same attitude towards the money changers in the temple like Jesus had. You know it's balanced. The kindness and the severity of God.

I want both of it in my life. I don't want just the kindness. I don't want just the severity.

I want grace and truth. It's like saying I want flesh and bones. Not just flesh, like jellyfish.

And not just bones like a skeleton. But flesh and bones is beautiful. Grace and truth.

That's what we must have. And God will help us. Then a second characteristic of Satan is discontent with what God has given you.

It's connected to pride, but it's good to look at it in another aspect. There must be zero discontentment in our life. You know, he was discontent with being the head of the angels.

He was there. God had already given him a position. But he wasn't happy.

He wanted more. Discontent. And he was thrown down.

When he came into the Garden of Eden, he got Adam and Eve to be discontent with what God had given them. Sin came from discontentment. It's like God saying to Adam and Eve, He told Adam, here is a huge circle with 10,000 trees.

You can eat from any of them. There is one tree outside that circle. Don't go there.

And that's the very tree he went for. He was discontent with this huge circle which God had given him. And he wanted to go where God had not allowed him to go.

It's the same spirit of Satan. Discontent. Now we got to be careful that that's never found in us.

You know that getting into debt is a form of discontent? Your salary is like a financial circle that God has drawn around you. Now I'm not talking about emergencies like a sudden hospital bill or something that is so urgent that you have to borrow. I'm not talking about such things.

But I'm talking about the lust to spend when you don't have the money to spend it. The lust for example to go on a vacation when you don't have the money so you use your credit card and use money because you see a vacation is essential. Do you know that's absolute nonsense? That a vacation is essential.

In India hardly anybody goes on a vacation. When our children were small I think we went on one vacation in about 15 years. It's not an essential thing.

I'll tell you why we couldn't go. We didn't have the money. I rode a scooter for 42 years in India.

I couldn't afford driving a car around. But I decided one thing. When the Bible says, owe no man anything.

I said I'm going to stay inside the circle. As I said yesterday I'm not talking about a house loan or a car loan where you got something in lieu for the money that you borrowed. But do you try to use your credit card carelessly? Do you think it glorifies God when you have a credit card debt? Which you could have avoided if you had learned to live a little simply.

Say Lord let me live a little more simply there. Let me not go outside my boundary. There's a verse in Ecclesiastes 10 which says Ecclesiastes 10 8 The last part.

The one who breaks through a wall, a serpent will bite him. The serpent is the devil. The wall is the boundary God has drawn around you.

And you're discontent with staying within that boundary, within that financial circle that God's drawn around you. And you want to go outside it. And say okay I've got a credit card.

I can go outside it. I can buy things which I can't afford right now. A serpent will bite you.

Let me tell you something. In the Hebrew language the word for serpent bite is the same as the word for debt. Or pretty close anyway.

It's a serpent's bite. Discontent. I realize this is of the devil trying to make me discontented.

Now I'm not speaking from without experience. When we were married we were extremely poor. For two or three years we struggled.

We couldn't even afford house rent. But I decided we're not going to go outside our circle. We may struggle.

We can't buy a lot of things. We won't buy new clothes. We wash with our hands instead of because we can't afford a washing machine.

That's fine. But we will not go outside our boundary. As I look back I see that those were years when God was testing me.

To see whether I would take his word seriously before he could commit a ministry to me. Is it possible that there's a ministry God wanted to commit to you but he could not commit to you because he tested you and you failed? You know they test aluminum for making airplanes and they test it in various ways. Put it in fire and in ice cold water and fire and ice cold water.

See that it just doesn't break up. If it does break up we say we can't use that for an airplane. Use it for children's toys or something.

Use for something else. You could have been used to have been made into an airplane. God says no.

Fit to make a children's toy. That's all. Because you didn't pass the test.

Which you could have passed. Discontent prevented you from passing it. But you can still pass now.

God gives you another chance. He's not the God of the second chance. He's the God of the thousandth chance.

Praise the Lord. So the times of ignorance God overlooks. Don't let the devil get a foothold in your life.

You got only one life to live my brother, sister. Let it count for God. To build the church of Jesus Christ.

Overcome discontentment in your life, in your home. If you're the head of the home you have to say to your wife. Sorry darling we can't afford that.

Can't buy it. Your children want you to get something. They may cry.

Sorry we can't afford it. You can cry as much as you like but we can't afford it. And I'm not going to get that.

Do you have the boldness to say that? Are you serious about building the church? Or you want to build the church without paying a price? It's not possible. Look at the price Jesus paid. He always stayed within his boundary.

He never had a demand on others. He was never discontent. Let me show you this example in John chapter 7. In John chapter 7 we read about Jesus preaching a fiery sermon.

It says he raised his voice. It's one of those rare times where Jesus raised his voice and preached. Most of the time he'd speak very gently and softly.

But in John 7.37 he raised his voice. He cried out if any man is thirsty come to me. And people listened to him and said in verse 20.

I've never heard a man speak like this man does. The people who came to capture him. So he couldn't capture him because he speaks so powerfully.

And at the end of that powerful day of preaching in Jerusalem. Remember he was living in Capernaum in Galilee. And he walked all those 70-80 miles or 100 miles down to Jerusalem.

And he was preaching there the whole day. And at the end of the day, listen to these sad words. John 7 verse 53.

Everyone went to his own home. But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Next chapter.

Verse 1. Did you read that? Everyone went to his own home. And there was not one of those people who were blessed by that message. Who came to him and said Lord we know you're from Capernaum.

Where are you staying tonight? Not one. It's never happened to me. People are always very good to me.

But it happened to Jesus. They were blessed by that sermon. They were never bothered to ask him where are you going to stay tonight.

He had no demands. He had no complaints. He was content.

He said well it's not raining. I can go and sleep under the trees. In the Mount of Olives.

No question. No complaint. He came back the next morning.

Early in the morning. Verse 2. And all the people again sat down. And he sat down and began to teach them.

And nobody asked him. Where were you last night Lord? Amazing. But he never sort of hinted sooner last night as I was sleeping under the trees.

Or any type of hint like that. You know how we like to give a little hint to people. To let them know how they hurt us or how they ignored us.

There was nothing of that in Jesus. Nothing of that. And when you give those little hints you can see how you were a bit discontent.

With the way people treated you. Those are the areas where we need to judge ourselves my brothers. Don't blame others.

The first thing that happened when the devil came to Adam. Was he started blaming his wife. He is called the accuser of the brothers.

In Revelation 12. That's another characteristic of Satan. Find something wrong in somebody.

Even if you are to blame. Try and put as much blame on somebody else. And God comes to Adam and says have you eaten of the tree? It's a multiple choice question with only two options.

Yes or no. You can take either one you like. But he doesn't take yes.

He doesn't take no. He writes underneath. Actually my wife took the fruit and gave it to me.

And I ate it. Why all this explanation? Just say yes. This is man.

Try and put the blame on somebody else. Do you have anything of that? I told you yesterday that we must never tell somebody. I told you so.

That's the voice of the expert. Maybe you gave some advice to somebody. And he didn't follow it.

He messed up his life. I've had examples like that. Because I never tell people what to do.

I'm not an Old Testament prophet. I'm an elder of a church. I give them advice because I want them to be connected to Christ.

You seek the Lord. Maybe he got his guidance wrong and he did something wrong. I've done a lot of wrong things in my life in my younger days.

Why can't I be merciful to him? He comes back to me. And the devil will tempt you to say, Tell him I told you so. Shut your mouth.

Love him. And tell him how he can rectify the situation now. It's like you know when your children are trying to build a toy or do something with Lego or something like that.

And they won't let you help them because you say, No, no, no, dad. I know how to do it. And they mess up the whole thing.

And they come to you and say, Dad, I'm sorry we messed up. What are you going to tell them? I told you so. I hope you'll never say that to your children.

You want to lose your children? Say that. Never, never say to your children, I told you so. Take that messed up thing and build it again.

You'll build a bond with your children. I'm not saying as one who's never made mistakes. I made a lot of mistakes.

But I've repented. I used to punish my children sometimes in anger. But I always used to repent of it and go to God and say, Lord, forgive me.

I want to eliminate the anger. I keep the discipline. Eliminate the anger.

So, it's like that you know. If we are repenting and judging ourselves all the time, we'll come to a place where we'll never say these un-Christ like things. Who is the one who keeps on saying it year after year? The one who is not judging himself.

The church of Jesus Christ. We must build a church. What's Christ looking for in the church? He's looking for a church where people are taught to judge themselves first.

Where the characteristics of Satan are pride, discontentment, accusation. I told you so. I told you so many times.

I told you a thousand times not to do that. It's like the guy who said, I told you a thousand times not to exaggerate. Maybe you told him three or four times.

We're so careless in the words we use sometimes. We have to be very careful. It says, let your speech always be with grace when we speak.

So, we have to be very careful in this area. Not allow Satan to get a foothold in any of these areas when he comes through pride or accusation or discontentment or accusation. Turn to 1 Peter 4.17. I always call this one of the marks of a new covenant church.

It's called the household of God, the family of God. 1 Peter 4.17. The time has come for judgment to begin in the household of God. That's another phrase for the church.

In the household of God, judgment must begin with us first. Have you ever heard this expression, me first? It's a bad word in cultured society. Me first.

Because in the world, they do put themselves first even though they act as though they don't. We put ourselves first in every area except in judgment. When it comes to judgment, it is the others first.

Judge everybody else around me and me is last or never at all. I don't even figure in that list. But in every other area, me first.

In judgment, others first. That's because the world is upside down. When Christ comes and we are born again, he straightens us up.

Makes us stand on our feet now and not on our heads. And he says, in every area, put others first now. Except in judgment.

There you put yourself first. Judge yourself first, not your wife, not your husband. Judge yourself first.

This is the household of God. This is what Christ is looking for. A church where everybody is judging himself first.

But how? When I spoke about this in the early days, people thought, Brother Zak is always looking inward. Do you know I never look inward? Never in my life. I know in my flesh dwells no good thing.

I don't want to look inside and see more and more of that. That's not how I judge myself. Not at all.

Do you know how I judge myself? The way Isaiah did it. Isaiah chapter 6. We heard about it yesterday. He saw the Lord sitting on a throne.

He wasn't looking inside at all. He was looking at the Lord on the throne. And as he saw the Lord on the throne, he saw his need.

That's when he judged himself. And that's the way to do it. Looking unto Jesus, I see his life, his perfect life.

And as I read the scriptures, I see how he lived on earth. And my meditation on scripture is not to preach a sermon or take a Bible study. I'm sorry to say, there are many people who study the Bible and think of, Ah, that's a good point for my sermon or Bible study.

Boy, that's not why God gave us the Bible. God didn't give us the Bible to get points for a Bible study or points for a sermon. He gave us the scriptures like a mirror to see ourselves.

To see the glory of Jesus. And when he saw the glory of the Lord, he suddenly saw himself. And he primarily was convicted about his tongue.

Oh Lord, the way I've used my tongue. I'm a man of unclean lips and now I see how everybody around me, the careless way they use their tongues, have mercy on me. And it says, the fire from the altar, a burning coal came and touched his lips and he was cleansed.

And he said, okay, now you can go and preach. This is how I sought to judge myself. By constantly looking at Jesus in the scriptures.

And seeing, for example, just one example I gave you right now. People ignored him. He had no demand that you must make it more convenient for me and nothing.

Just go and find some convenient place to sleep and come back and not even hint or make anyone feel uncomfortable that they didn't consider where he would be sleeping the previous night. Think of seeing the glory of Jesus there and say, Lord, I want to be like that. I want to be like that in my home.

I want to be like that in my home. If your wife ignores you or your husband ignores you, say, Lord, I don't even want to make her or him feel that I've been ignored. It's wonderful.

Are you becoming a little more like Jesus every year? God wants a church where it's becoming more and more like Christ. We don't get there overnight. That's the message of the first chapter of Genesis.

That ruined earth. God could have made it perfect in one moment, but he didn't. He took one day, another day, another day, another day, until one day finally said, it's very good.

And that's how it's going to be. Your ruined, messed up life, one day at a time. Our outer man decays, but the inward man is being renewed day by day.

Till one day we become like Christ. This is the church that Jesus wants. And this is the direction in which we should be leading our churches.

And this is the type of church, the only type of church that's worth building, and the devil will have no power over it. Demons will be cast out. There's mighty authority in the name of Jesus.

We are fighting a foe who was defeated on the cross. You don't have to be afraid of him. I've seen that sometimes in casting out demons, and we have to do that often in India, casting out demons from people.

In the name of Jesus, I'll tell you my testimony. I have never seen a single case till today of demon-possessed people. And I've cast out a number of demons where I've had to say it more than once.

In the name of Jesus, get out. And the demon is gone. If it doesn't go, then like Jesus said, you better go and pray and fast.

Something's wrong with you. Because he was defeated on the cross. But he doesn't listen to you.

Because he says, Jesus I know, and Paul I know. But who do you think you are? I know all about your life. You don't have any power over me.

You want the devil to say that to you? You try to build a church? No. I'd be ashamed of myself if the devil dared to say to me, Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who do you think you are? You have no power over me because you've got something of me in you. You've got my pride.

You've got my discontent. You've got this habit of getting offended and getting upset. You're trying to cast me out? Dear brothers, let's count for Jesus Christ in these days.

Be wholehearted. The time is short. Christ is coming soon.

Don't have any regret when he comes again. God's speaking to you one more time in this conference. To count for God.

And wherever you are, be a part of a church. Either build a church that glorifies Christ or be a part of one that glorifies Christ. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, as we bow before you, help us to be gripped by the truths we have heard. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Okay, so we've got one more session. We'd like to try to start and end that as soon as possible. So if I can ask you guys to be as quick as possible to get some fresh air, come in so we can start I'd say by about ten.

If we can give it five to seven minutes to do a quick bathroom break for everybody or not, that would be great. One notice is that the bathrooms out there where we used to do it yesterday, there's going to be an event at 11.30. So rather than going down further to the second aisle or whatever corridor, the first corridor if you go down there, there are toilets there. You can use the toilets in there for the session.

We'll try and start with a song around 10.42 or so.

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/rkw6roERqRA.mp4>

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