

Honeydew - Questions and Answers

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding and applying God's word in our lives, particularly in areas such as authority in the church, divorce, and sin and faith.

Duration: 1:37:11

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 2:42, Romans 12:3, 1 Corinthians 12:7, Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Timothy 4:12

Topics: "Question Answer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of fellowship in the church. He emphasizes that when people come to a church, they should not only hear the message but also experience the spirit of fellowship. The speaker shares a story about a boy selling peanuts who cleverly entices people to buy by eating the peanuts himself. He uses this story to illustrate the idea that when people see the transformation and blessings in the lives of believers, they will be drawn to want that for themselves. The speaker concludes by praying for lasting fruit and blessing in the lives of the listeners and the church.

Transcript

There were a few questions that were sent to me earlier on. Do you have any more with you? No. OK.

If I'll answer the ones I have here and then if there are any other questions, I'd be glad to answer them. One of the questions here relates to authority in the church. And 1 Timothy 2:12 states clearly that authority in the church is male.

And it speaks in 1 Corinthians 11 again about orderly behavior that a woman is not to partake in public debates. But it states that a woman can pray or prophesy with her head covered. And the wife should have her head covered as a sign of subjection to her husband.

And some say the wedding ring is a sign of today. What does it mean here when it says because of the angels? OK. Now, as you know, among believers, there's a lot of difference of opinion on this.

But personally, this is how we have practiced it in our churches. And this is my conviction that Scripture teaches very clearly that because Adam was made first and he was made to be a helper to Adam. Therefore, that order in creation indicates that God intended authority to be with the man.

That's very clearly written in 1 Timothy 2.12 and 13. A woman should not exercise authority over a man because Adam was created first and then Eve. It's a very simple explanation.

And then the second thing is a woman should not teach because a woman was deceived and not Adam. That reason is also given there. So, there are two spheres of ministry which a woman is not called to do in a church.

One is being a leader and the other is doing the teaching in a church. Now, this is referring to the church because in the next chapter, he says, I'm writing all these things, chapter 3, verse 15, so that you can know how to conduct yourself in the church. So, this is not talking about ministry outside the church.

A woman can teach other women. Titus chapter 2 says a woman should teach other younger women. A woman can teach children, can share the gospel with unconverted people, men or women.

And that covers 90% of the world. So, she has a sphere of ministry in 90% of the world. And even within the church, she has a sphere of ministry within at least 50% of the church who are women.

And more than 50% because if you include the children as well. So, there's a very wide sphere of ministry open to all women. It's only a small sphere that's restricted of teaching in the church and leadership.

Now, that's God's order. It's just like, I mean, there's no use arguing about it. It's like God has not ordained that men should bear children.

What to do about it? God's given that privilege to women. Okay. We accept it.

We men accept it and say praise the Lord. We don't attempt to compete or any such thing in that area. We're glad to hand over that ministry completely to women.

And that's what it says here. You know, after it says about women should not teach. But it says a woman can bear children in 1 Timothy 2.15. That's also a ministry, you know, to bring up children in the fear of God.

And the covering over the head is a symbol. Like many symbols, the 1 Corinthians 11 deals with two symbols. The first half of the chapter deals with the head covering.

And the second half of the chapter deals with breaking of bread. Both are symbols. And I've noticed that people who seriously accept the last 12 verses of 1 Corinthians 11, the last 12 verses deal with breaking of bread.

They don't say that is a cultural thing. But they do have a controversy over the first 22 verses. But it's in the same chapter.

Both are symbols. The breaking of bread is a symbol of Christ's body being broken for us and of our union with Christ. And 1 Corinthians 11 speaks about a woman covering her head.

Symbolizing three things. First, it says a woman, verse 7, is the glory of man. And the head of a woman, verse 3, is the man.

So, therefore, a woman should cover her head because the glory of man has to be covered in the church. And woman is the glory of man. That's what it says here in verse 7. A woman must cover her head

because she is the glory of man.

Man should not cover his head because he is the glory of God. The glory of God should not be covered in the church. It's a symbol.

The second is a symbol of authority, verse 10. That a woman is taking the place of submission if she is a wife to her husband, if she is a daughter to her father, if she is a widow to the elder of the church. Signifying that she takes the spirit of submission.

And it says here, because of the angels. That was the question in this question. Because of the angels, 1 Corinthians 11.10 means, it's a sort of a warning, not only to women, but all who rebel against authority.

Remember how the first angels fell. The first angels fell through rebellion against authority. That's how Lucifer became the devil.

So, I believe that's the meaning of that. And I personally don't believe that we can replace what's written in God's word with a wedding ring or anything like that. And the third reason is, it says a woman's hair, verse 15, is given to her as a glory.

You know, a major part of a woman's attractiveness is her hair. And if she shaves off her hair, she's not going to be as attractive. And I believe the third reason why it says here a woman should cover her head is that she should cover her attractiveness in the church.

Perhaps to avoid distraction, I don't know. But anyway, that's what scripture says. It's a pretty long passage of 22 verses.

Sorry, not 22 verses, up to verse 16. It's actually divided into 16 verses and then the next 18 verses deal with the Lord's table. But at the end of this section, the first 16 verses, he says, if anyone is inclined to be contentious, Paul recognized that even in that time, there were going to be people who argue about this.

Like that's particularly in the last century. The last 50 years particularly. He says, if anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor the churches of God.

So he says, that's how we do it. And he leaves it at that. We're not going to get into an argument.

Personally, in our church, I would say I would teach this. But if some sister didn't have a conviction, I would say, well, it's up to you. You do it as the Lord leads you, as you are convicted about it.

Another question concerns divorce. If an unsaved man summons his saved wife for a divorce, because he wants to marry another woman. Is it right for that saved wife now to marry again? If she got saved after she was married to her husband.

Now, there are many people who feel that anything done prior to our conversion is blotted out by the blood of Christ. And all things, all things are passed away. All things are become new.

But we have to be careful. As far as God is concerned, that's right. But there are human responsibilities that we have that are not wiped out.

Just because we did it in our unconverted days. Supposing I borrowed a thousand dollars from somebody when I was unconverted. And then I got converted and I say, well, you know, God's blotted out all the past,

brother.

I'm sorry. I'm not going to return that money anymore, because it's all gone. That was the old man.

You know very well that that would be totally unchristian. Zacchaeus went back and returned all that he did in his old days. So, I mean, if you say that a man's marriage is annulled just because he got married as an unbeliever.

Well, then a lot of those people, you have to consider them as single. Then you can go and marry somebody else's wife as well. Because you say, well, that was when she was an unbeliever, she got married to this man.

But now she's not married because that happened in the unconverted days. No, I don't think it's true. It doesn't make a difference when we were married.

Because we must remember that marriage was not instituted by God for Christians. It was instituted for human beings, for society. Adam was not a Christian.

He was a man. And as a man, he needed a wife. And God gave him a wife, not because he was a child of God, but because he was a man.

And if a Hindu gets married to a Hindu woman in a temple, God recognizes that marriage. Those are two, what God has joined together, let no man put us under. If you say, well, because they got married in a Hindu temple, they are not husband and wife.

Would you say it's right to go and marry that woman who's married to that Hindu man? No, we would get into ridiculous situations if we ever went that way. It doesn't make a difference when we were married, even if we didn't have a proper marriage ceremony. It says about Isaac that he took Rebecca into his tent and she became his wife.

I don't know, they never probably signed any certificate or any such thing. They didn't have paper in those days in any case. So, whichever way people get married in different ways, in different cultures, but when they are married, God accepts them as husband and wife.

And it's a very sacred relationship which must never be broken. There may be situations where a woman is abused physically and probably sometimes very badly emotionally, where I would even recommend that she stays separately, but not divorce. Because the Bible says in Malachi, God hates divorce.

And we must take that position. And where a person has divorced already, when they come to the church, I would encourage them not to marry again. If they've already married and got children before they came to the church, then I have no command in Scripture.

In Scripture, Jesus only gave a command concerning a person who's considering divorce, he should not do it, and considering remarriage, he should not do it. But I don't see a command in Scripture for those who are already divorced and remarried, before they come to the church with their children. And so therefore, I would consider each case by the principles of Scripture, which say, let everything you do be done in love, in compassion, not making the poor children suffer for the sins of their parents, and with wisdom.

But one thing certainly, I would never give such a brother any responsibility in a church. Because the Bible says, an elder must be the husband of one wife. So if he's got two wives, the one he's forsaken and the one he's married to, he can never have responsibility in a church.

So these are the standards of God's word. We can't make a law concerning every situation. But to answer this question, it is not right for her to marry again.

If she should consider herself as one who's been forsaken by her husband, but as long as her husband is alive, it's not proper for her to marry again. That's my conviction. You know, it's interesting that in India, we don't have this problem at all.

It's one of the blessings of poverty. And I think my children went to a school where there were a thousand students, and not one of those students was from a divorced family. You can walk down a street with 200 houses and none of them will have divorce in their homes.

So Indian culture frowns against it. So we've had very little problem in this area at all, by God's grace. There are certain blessings that come with poverty.

And this is one of them. Another is a question about if I really desire godliness above all things, but I have to be honest and say that I'm still a mixed believer. I started to pray that God would remove the love of the world from my heart, the lust of the flesh, eyes and pride of life.

But I don't seem to be free from it. Now, first of all, we must be convinced. There are a couple of things we must be convinced about.

One is the seriousness of sin. You know, if I think of sin as a weakness, I won't take it seriously. I mean, if you got a little patch in your hand which you suspect is leprosy, you would not take it lightly.

And if it's spreading, you wouldn't say, I got a little bit of leprosy, it's okay. What to do? Is it spreading? Yeah, it's spreading a little bit. I mean, but that's the way people talk about anger.

Brother, do you still lose your temper? Yeah, I lose my temper once in a while. Does it happen more than once in a year? Sometimes it happens. Leprosy is spreading.

You see, we take it so lightly. And anything you take lightly, you'll never overcome. You know, you go to a village, people in the villages of India, they don't know what cancer is.

Because leprosy, you can see, people are scared of leprosy because there are visible evidences of it. But a person who got cancer in the stomach, he doesn't know. Okay, he lost his appetite a bit.

And the doctor examines that village woman and says, you got cancer. Oh, cancer, is it? They just go about their work and, I got cancer. It's not serious, but an educated person, boy, they are really scared.

They say, I've got to do something about this to get rid of this cancer. Now, I don't find that attitude among Christians to say things like anger, the lusting with the eyes. I don't find that attitude.

And then I say, I'm not surprised that such few folks don't get victory over sin. So the first thing we need to be convinced about is the seriousness of the sins that Jesus spoke about, particularly in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus spoke in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew chapter 5. You just take Matthew chapter 5. Anger, lusting with the eyes, sinning with the hands, telling lies with the mouth, the desire for revenge on

someone who's hurt me, Matthew chapter 6. Seeking the honor of men.

These things Jesus hated. He denounced it. But I find lots and lots of Christians don't seem to be taken up seriously with these sins.

When I see, the Bible says, it's another question here, it says about, it says faith is the thing that overcomes the world. How does this achieve daily? Does God remove the affections in our heart towards the world and things of the world one day? Or does this happen gradually as we exercise our faith? That's 1 John 5.4. It says, this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith. The world, according to 1 John 2.16, is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

And 1 John 5.4 says, the victory that overcomes this world is faith. So that's the second thing we need. One is to see the seriousness of sin.

The second thing is faith. Faith in God's promise. You know, faith doesn't come by imagination or by, like I said earlier, my bright ideas.

There's only one way that faith can come. Romans 10.17 says, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ. The word of Christ is the New Testament.

This is the word of God, the word of Christ is the New Testament. And faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ. So, I cannot have faith for whatever I want to have faith for.

No. It must be based on the word of Christ. Now, if I try to have faith for something which the New Testament does not promise me, it will be very difficult to have faith.

What I call faith will be just something I try to work up. See, faith must be based on God's promise. God told Abraham, you are going to have a son.

That's why he had to believe. And that's the basis of his faith was that God had told him. And Abraham said, yeah, Lord, I believe that.

So, without God having first told Abraham, you're going to have a son, however much he may have wanted to have a son, he couldn't have faith for it. There was no possibility of faith where God has not first spoken. Now, if you can understand this simple principle, if God has not first spoken, you have no basis for your faith.

I mean, you can pray for it, but that's not faith. Faith is based on what God has revealed. For example, I'd like to have hair on my head.

Some of you who are not bald don't realize what a tremendous advantage it is for you to have hair on your head. I don't mean just for good looks, I'm not bothered about that. I'm just thinking about protection when we go out in the sun.

You don't need a cap, I need one all the time. Now, however much I may desire this, I can't have faith for it, because I don't have a promise. In the New Testament it says, you ask for hair and you'll get it.

So, I can hear some preacher say, brother, trust God for hair on your head. I struggle to trust God for hair on my head, nothing happens. I lose a few more the next day.

But, I'll tell you what I can have faith for. Romans 6.14 says, sin shall not have dominion over you, for you're not under law but under grace. There I can put my foot down and say, Lord, this wretched sin is having dominion over me.

Anger, lust, telling lies, seeking the honor of men, desire for revenge, bitterness. These things are having power over me and your word says it will not have dominion over me. I'm going to have faith.

Based on what? A clear promise of scripture. As clear as God telling old Abraham, you're going to have a son. Your wife's going to bear a baby.

Okay, Lord, I believe it. So what if my wife is 90 years old? She's going to have a child. He believed it because God said it.

So, if you can understand this simple thing which says in Romans 10.17, Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ. It's not whatever you want. It's what God has promised.

And it's what God has promised clearly. Don't go to vague verses and imagine that that's what God's promised. You know, for example, it's a very common thing nowadays for people to... It's not nowadays, but the last 40-50 years people have been preaching on this verse.

You know what John wrote in his letter, in the third letter of John. Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health as your soul prospers. It's the sort of thing which anybody would write in a letter to anyone.

I would write that in a letter. Brother, I hope things are going well with you. I hope your business is prospering and I hope you're keeping healthy.

That's all John is saying. Now, people have gone into that verse and produced all types of doctrines on it. That God wants all believers to be prosperous and all believers forever to be healthy.

And have led people into tremendous bondage on it. Look for a clear promise in the word of God. Not John says, I wish this for you.

Paul once said, I wish all of you were single. Why don't people go for that? You know, there's a verse like that. 1 Corinthians 7. Paul clearly says, I wish all of you were single like me.

You know, we have this selective choosing of verses which suit our convenience. And leave out the other ones. No, no, no, no.

This is not the base of faith. Is there a clear promise in scripture? Why is it people choose that verse where John says, I wish you'll prosper and be in health. And not choose what Paul says, I wish you'll all be single.

It's the covetousness of man which draws him to something which satisfies his lust. The love of money is one of the greatest lusts in our flesh. The love of comfort.

The love of an easy life. Is a tremendous lust in us. And religion caters to that lust.

So, I'm just saying that we must be careful that we exercise faith based on what scripture says. So, the first thing, I must see sin as serious. And the second thing, I must have faith that in the new covenant.

It says in Romans 6.14, it's because you're under the new covenant. Romans 6.14 is a wonderful verse. You shall, sin shall not rule over you because you're not under the old covenant.

But under the new covenant. In other words, under the old covenant, you could not hope for victory over sin. You could get forgiveness.

David said in Psalm 103, bless the Lord O my soul who forgives all your sins. But he could not say, bless the Lord O my soul who gives me victory over sin. He could not say that.

Because he was under law, under the old covenant. But under the new covenant, you can. Do you know, it's like, you know, when man invented a cure for leprosy.

For years, there was no cure for leprosy. But over the last hundred years or so, there's been a cure for leprosy. In the last few years, very good cures for leprosy where now we can advertise.

It's advertised widely in India because a lot of people have leprosy in India. That if you get leprosy, go to a doctor immediately because it can be cured totally. You can become a perfectly healthy normal human being.

Think that we can proclaim that. And what would a leper who is living without hope feel when he sees such a notice? He'll be so excited. Boy, I thought I had to live with this for life.

And here I'm promised that I can be completely healed. What about looking at your anger like that? So often you lose your temper. Think of it as a leprosy and here you see the notice.

Anger will not rule over you. You can rule over it. You can finish with it.

So that it's under your feet, not sitting on your head like it is. Think of the bad testimony it brings in your home. Think of how it spoils the atmosphere in our home.

Don't you think you should seek for that more than for money and comfort? Do you think money will bring happiness in your home? If you get victory over anger, that'll be far better than if you get a little more money. Any day. Why don't you seek for it? Why don't you get excited? Boy.

Think of a man who is struggling with lust in his mind all the time. Plagued with dirty thoughts. And he sees one day the notice.

Sin shall not have dominion over you. This does not have to rule over you. Come into the new covenant.

Boy, it's a liberating message for him. He must have faith. God, you can do it.

You know, it says in Matthew 13, 58, that he could not do many mighty works in one place because of their unbelief. That means God says something and you don't believe it. It won't happen.

God says, this particular sin that's bothering you, it will not rule over you. You say, well, Lord, I'm not too sure. It's ruled over me for so long.

I can't get rid of it. Okay. And according to your faith, be it unto you, you won't get victory over it.

A lot of people who don't believe what God says, well, they say, I can't get rid of it. My dad had it. My grandfather had it.

And I'm going to have it. So what? Why should I have it? Just because my father and grandfather had a bad temper. I don't have to have it.

I'm in Christ. I can be filled with the Holy Spirit. I can experience things that my father and grandfather never experienced.

Not because I'm a better person, but because I believe God's word. So it's very important that we believe God's word in these areas. And seek to live the overcoming life that God wants us to have, wants us to live.

And here is another question about a lot of women nowadays who are concerned about how they look, the ideal figure and weight. I realize all this is vain, but it's real. My sisters and I spend a lot of time discussing these issues, which we know are not edifying, and yet there's a bondage in it.

As if we cannot do or don't want to accept ourselves the way we are. I know that God accepts me completely, loves me unconditionally, but I don't share those thoughts concerning myself. And I know He did not come to better or save the flesh in me.

But I find in me a desire to get the best of both worlds. I hate this. I wish it were not so.

I realize these things are like weights that pull us down to crush our faith. Now, I've realized one thing about this matter of being fat or slim. That part of it is hereditary, constitutional.

I've seen some people who eat such a lot and are still slim. And I've seen some people who eat so little and they still get so fat. So I realize this has got to do with heredity and genes.

It's not our duty to judge anyone. We must be comfortable with the way God made us physically, our appearance, our height, our constitution, and not constantly wish that God makes me in some other way. Gluttony is a sin to eat beyond what we need.

We're not talking about that. We're talking about being fat, which is not always related to gluttony. There are a lot of people who are not gluttonous, who are fat.

I remember once I was in a place where in a question-answer time, somebody asked me this question. Brother Zach, why are some people fat? So I said, I'll answer that question. I said, God has allowed some people to be fat on earth to find out whether the thin people will judge them or not.

So it's the thin people who are failing because they judge someone. You know like the Pharisee said, Lord I thank you I'm not like other men. And here's this person, thin person saying, Lord I thank you I'm not fat like all these other people.

I'm slim and attractive, am I not? And it's that haughtiness that comes forth. I believe it's very important in a world where everybody's talking about this ideal figure and being attractive and all that. Well what can I do? What can you do if your constitution and your figure is certain? Just say, Lord I thank you.

Man looks on the outward appearance. I've got a continuous grouse against God, which they don't express sometimes. But why did you make me like this? I want to say to you, you must get rid of it.

If you haven't got rid of it till today, get rid of it today. Say, Lord I accept myself exactly as I am. You know we live in a, I live in a country where there are people who are very rich and very poor.

We have a thousand different standards of living. We have Christians who are rich and extremely poor. And a whole range in between.

And it's not due to lack of faith or anything that they are poor. And it's not due to faith that these people are rich. It's the circumstances in which they were born.

In some cases they worked and earned and had some good fortune in life, made money. But, you know to accept one's circumstances. Even if one is poor or rich and say, Lord I thank you.

If I can make things better, fine. You know the Lord, there is a verse in 1 Corinthians chapter 7 which explains this very clearly. Which could apply to many many situations.

In 1 Corinthians 7 it says, Were you called as a slave? You know a slave was worse than a servant. There were people who were bought like furniture. People would go and buy slaves.

Were you called while a slave? Verse 21, did you get converted? And when you were converted were you a slave? Don't worry about it. If you are able to become free, do it. But if you are not able to become free, don't worry.

Just accept it. Because even if you are a slave in the Lord, you are free from sin. And the other person who is not a slave, he has to be a slave of the Lord.

So that's what it says here in verse 22. So, I would apply that to whatever circumstance you are in. I mean, I would say to people in my country.

Okay brother, despite all your best efforts are you still poor? Accept it. If you can be better off, by all means, be free, like it says here. But if not, remember, real wealth is not in these things.

Like it says in the book of James, Let not the rich man glory in his wealth. It says here, God has chosen, verse 5, the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which God has promised to those who love Him. So, it may be poverty or wealth.

It may be being fat or slim. It may be intelligence. Some people are born intelligent, very intelligent.

And some people, they struggle with trying to get their children to do well in school. Well, what can they do if the children are not so intelligent? Emphasize to them the important thing is the heart. But this acceptance of ourselves in the way God has made us is very, very important.

The parents God chose for you were the right ones for you. The home you grew up is the right one for you. To me, that's fundamental.

It's from that point that we grow spiritually. There was a question about the health and wealth gospel or the prosperity gospel. Now, I come from a country which is very, very poor.

It's the third world, India. And I have proved the reality of Matthew 6.33, where it says, Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things. All these things means? Eating and drinking and clothing, all the necessities of life.

Not the luxuries. The necessities of life is what he has spoken of earlier. He says, don't look for these things.

These things that are necessary for you. Your Heavenly Father knows that you need them. They will be added to you.

So, I believe that a true disciple of Jesus must spend his life seeking God's kingdom. That must be his goal in life. To get more and more of God's kingdom, to promote God's kingdom.

To see that God's name is glorified in the country or town you live in. And the other things are not things you are supposed to pursue. God will add them according to your need.

And I have seen in every single case. You know, when we started our ministry 27 years ago. And I realized that God called me to work in India.

Which is not the poorest, but one of the poorest countries in the world. The villages of India are extremely poor. And we have people sleeping on the streets.

Not believers, but I mean poverty is so widespread. Many, many slums. And I felt in this country.

If I can prove that in any country in any century Matthew 6.33 is true. The best place to prove it is in a poor country. I mean to prove it in America where they have a social security system.

Or to prove it in England where they have national health service and so many other things free. That's not such a great thing. They have food stamps for the poor in America and so many advantages.

In India there is nothing. If you are poor, you are poor. There is no social security.

You won't even get free treatment. Because the government hospitals which do give treatment are so pathetically poor. In standards of hygiene and there is so much bribery and corruption.

That you cannot get free medical treatment. And there is so much of corruption in so many areas. So, so, so difficult to get employment.

Such congested quarters we live in. I live in a city 6.5 million people. In the city I live in and the size of the city is 20 km by 20 km.

6.5 million. And India has an increase of population of 1.5 million every month. 18 million in a year.

Now that's not births. That's births minus deaths. It's increase of population.

18 million a year. Which means 18 million more mouths to feed. 18 million more jobs one must have every year.

18 million more people need to find transportation by trains and buses. Can you imagine the congestion there is? Can you imagine the amount of unemployment there is? The corruption this type of thing breeds. The shortage of food.

Everything. And it's just increasing. They say in another 10 or 15 years we will overtake China.

And become the largest, most populated nation in the world. Is Matthew 6.33, does it still work in such a country? It does. We proved it in 27 years.

Now I want to say, I have never seen a single case. This is a 100% success rate. I have never seen a single case in any village church of ours or any church.

Where a person has honored God and starved. Never. I have never seen a case where a person has given himself to Christ and been born again.

Without his standard of living going up. Every single case. Their standard of living goes up.

If they are in a slum. We had a sister like that, who was in a slum. Got converted.

And I tell you, those slums are really filthy. It's like these shanty squatter towns you have here. Extremely poor.

She was converted and came to our church. In a few months she was out of the slum. And not because we paid her anything.

If we start giving money to people, we will have the whole of India at our door in no time. So we don't do that. Because we wouldn't know who is coming for the gospel and who is coming for money.

We never did that. We just taught her to seek God's kingdom first. And we have seen it again and again and again and again.

So many times. I could write umpteen stories about the number of people who have honored God. And found themselves improving in their living standard.

Every single case, without exception. And when you have a 100% success rate in something, you know it's a law. It's a law.

It's like they study in chemistry. Two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen will always produce water. In any country, in any generation, in any place.

Two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen is always water. Matthew 6.33 is like that. I believe that with all my heart.

But I have also seen that what is proclaimed today as the prosperity gospel is not of God. I don't have any doubt in my mind about it. It's a doctrine invented by covetous preachers to justify the amount of wealth that they have got.

You see, I have followed the charismatic movement very closely right from its beginning. And I have been in close touch with some of the top leaders of the charismatic movement. In England, in America.

And I have seen a lot of it. Been to charismatic conventions and everything. And seen the development of this doctrine through the years.

And let me tell you something of what has happened. In the beginning, there were so many people who were fed up with the deadness of their churches. And they had a genuine touch from the Holy Spirit.

And then there was a great need of teaching. And people came up with gifted teachers in the charismatic movements. And they began to teach typing.

It became a very strong thing. And a whole lot of people began to give tithes to their leaders. And those leaders, preachers, became enormously wealthy.

And they began to feel little guilty about this wealth. Because the people who were giving them were not so rich. They were wealthy.

And then they had to find some justification for this wealth. And where could they find it? They couldn't find it anywhere in the New Testament. So they went to the Old Testament.

They went to Deuteronomy and picked up verses there which says, There are many verses under the Old Covenant. That you will get plenty of money and plenty of children. They left out the second part.

They just took the first part of plenty of money. It's in the same chapter though, by the way. Deuteronomy 28.

Plenty of money and plenty of children. Both come together. But the selective way which man has of selecting what is convenient for them.

They are not men of integrity. If you are a man of integrity, you will take scripture as it is. And found a verse to justify their increase of wealth and said, This is the mark of God's blessing.

It was in the Old Testament. I don't question it. But in the Old Testament, you also got to offer sacrifice and do many other things.

In the New Testament, it's never mentioned as a mark of God's blessing. And the end result is, many of these preachers have become immensely wealthy and now they command such a high price if they are to come and speak anywhere. That's why none of them come to the poor villages in India and preach this doctrine because they can't get a good enough collection there of money.

This is not the spirit of Christ. Can you imagine Jesus living like this? Jesus is the perfect example of a spiritual man. An example.

He was not wealthy. If ever there was a man who deserved to be wealthy, blessed by God, it was Jesus and he was not. People say, well, he became poor that we might be rich.

Well, what about Peter? Did Peter also become poor that I might be rich? No. What about Paul? They were some of the poorest people on earth. In fact, in 2 Corinthians 11, Paul says, there were times when he didn't have enough food to eat.

It says fastings and hungerings, which is different. Fasting is deliberately giving up food. Hunger is when you didn't have food.

And he says there in the same chapter that he was shivering in the cold. That means he didn't have enough money to get a blanket. This is God's greatest apostle.

Paul says, God's place as an apostle is lost of all, the scum of the earth. But what a lot he accomplished for God. He didn't starve to death.

God gave him enough. Now I've discovered this through the years in India. That if a man really honors God, he will never be rich.

God will give him much, but he will obey the exhortations in Scripture for rich people, particularly in 1 Timothy 6, to share what he has with the poor. And then what will happen? He won't remain rich much longer. One of the finest teachings I ever read on money was written by John Wesley, 250 years ago.

He said, he gave three laws for the use of money. Excellent. He said, first of all, earn all that you can.

Law number one. That means he said, no more laziness. Use everything in your power, with all the gifts God's given you, all the capabilities, all the intelligence, to make and earn as much money as possible, without sacrificing your soul, and without neglecting God's kingdom.

And that's important. Not the way businessmen in the world do it, where they neglect God's kingdom, neglect their soul. Earn all you can, no more laziness.

Rule number two was, save all that you can, no more wastage. Yeah. Rule number two was, save all that you can, no more wastage.

Which meant that, we should not buy unnecessary luxuries. Now, we have to leave it to each individual to decide what is an unnecessary luxury. It's not for me to decide what's unnecessary for another person.

It's different in different cases. In India, even a second car can be a luxury. In countries like the United States, even four cars are not a luxury.

So, it's different in different places, and it's true. I mean, I've ridden a scooter, a two-wheel scooter, because the price of petrol is so high in India, for forty years, and I say, I don't need anything else. I'm okay.

So, we are not here to judge, what is a luxury for another person, but don't waste money on that which is unnecessary. You got to decide before God what is unnecessary. And, thirdly, he said, give all that you can.

Earn all that you can, save all that you can, give all that you can, no more laziness, no more wastage, and no more stinginess. A true disciple of Jesus is not a miser. He's not tight-fisted.

He's not stingy. His palm is open, he's learned to give to the Lord, and to his work, and he never lacks anything. I believe that's the right way, and I believe that a person who seeks to do that, will be tremendously blessed by God, and I've seen people who have been so much in debt.

Debt is a very big thing in India among poor people. They tend to borrow money for their needs, and then they never get out of that cycle of debt. We have at least two or three people in our church who were on the verge of suicide, because they were so much in debt, and they did not know how in the world they could ever pay off that debt in their lifetime.

You see, these are people who go and borrow money from unscrupulous moneylenders, who lend money to them at a 120% interest, and they never get to paying their capital. They are just paying interest all the time. Every year they are paying more than their capital in interest, and two or three such cases I know in our church, who were on the verge of suicide.

You see, that's what a lot of people do in India when they are in debt, and they know there is no way out of it. They gather their family together, and they eat poison together, and all die. And the man cannot get his money back, because there is no way to get out of debt.

And we have these three brothers who come to our church, and we decided we are not going to pay them their money to clear their debt, because if we do that, as I said, the whole of India will be at our door. But we taught them to seek God's kingdom first. And I remember one of the first time I had this experience, I told this man, I said, go to that covetous and evil money lender, pray.

In Jesus' name we will pray together. You go with another brother, and go to that money lender, and tell him straight, I am a poor man. I don't have money to keep.

I have got children to look after. I don't have enough money to keep on paying your enormous interest rate. I want you to write off my loan.

I want you to cancel my loan, because I have already paid you the capital so many times in interest. And no money lender would ever do it. I said, go and do it.

Tell him. And this man went and told the money lender. The money lender said, OK.

That was unbelievable. God is a God of miracles. Now once that happened, I had more faith to tell the second person to do the same.

And here those three brothers, they didn't commit suicide, they are totally free from debt today. They were in enormous debt. So, it's wonders that God can do when we have faith.

Seek his kingdom first, and his righteousness. One of the things I seek to do in all our village churches, no matter how poor people are, I say, you must be free from debt. I tell the elder brothers in our churches, we have about 40 churches, more than 30 of them are in the villages.

When I started serving the Lord, I told the Lord, I said, Lord, all the great preachers go to the cities in India. I'll go to the villages. Those poor believers have every right to hear a good preacher, not just the people in the cities.

So, I decided to go to the villages, and I've been tremendously blessed. We've seen so many Hindus, so many poor people come to the Lord, and who understood the principles of God's kingdom, and found that Matthew 6.33 works. Their needs are met.

They've never suffered a lack in all of our churches. And then of course, we follow the principle that once a person is, we would help a person financially, like the Bible says, we must help our brothers, only after a person has proved himself to be a brother or a sister. In the church for, say, two or three years, we know that the person is really a believer, then we would help the person financially.

If we do it before, we'd find a lot of people come in just for financial benefit. But we've seen that we share and care for one another, and just like in the early church, it says nobody had any lack. They didn't have all a common purse, and have a common bank account, but nobody had any lack.

That means not a single person in any of our churches would ever have to starve, or be unable to educate his children, or shiver in the cold. Everybody would have a blanket in the cold. We make sure of that.

To me, that's Christianity. It's not everybody becoming rich. Jesus said, the poor you will always have with you.

He said that in John chapter 12. The poor you'll always have with you. So they will be there, and that's the opportunity we have as Christians to demonstrate our love and care for those who are not as well off as we are.

The other thing is about healing. Now, the wealth and the health, the health part. You know, it's a very interesting fact.

I don't know whether you've noticed it, as I've studied this subject in the Gospels, that Jesus and the apostles never preached a single sermon on physical healing. If you don't believe me, find one, and show it to me. You look through the entire New Testament, Jesus and the apostles, this is the first five books of the New Testament, the Gospels and the Acts, never preached a single sermon on physical healing.

The Sermon on the Mount, it's not a single word about physical healing. It's not a single word about becoming wealthy. The words about don't love money, and in the Acts of the apostles too, the apostles never preached it.

There are a lot of sermons on humility, faith, purity, holiness, repentance, all the subjects concerning character and life and godliness, but not a single one on physical healing. But he actually healed thousands. Now, today we have thousands of sermons and hardly anybody healed.

It's the exact opposite of what we find in the Gospels. I say, there's something wrong somewhere. So many books and sermons, but Jesus never did that.

So I'm not against healing. The apostles healed the sick. And I believe that if a man's got the gift of healing, he'll exercise it exactly like the apostles did it.

He won't preach sermons on healing, he'll heal the sick. That's what the apostles did. And I say, if you've got the gift of healing, go ahead and heal the sick.

Don't preach sermons on healing. I mean, if somebody comes to me and says, Brother Zak, why don't we have healing in our church? I say, go ahead and heal the sick. We're not stopping any of you from healing the sick.

But don't talk about it. There's far too much talk in Christendom. We need less talk and more action.

I say, if you've got faith for healing, brother, go and lay your hands on the sick and heal them. You think any of those sick people will object if you heal them? But talk is worthless. I've often told people this.

Don't ever go to a person and tell him he's demon-possessed. Jesus never told a person he was demon-possessed. Have you noticed that? Jesus never once told a person he was demon-possessed.

He cast out the demon. I never go and tell a person you're demon-possessed. I cast out the demon.

If a person is demon-possessed, in Jesus' name we cast out the demon. That's what we do. There's so many things that Christians are doing today, which are not according to the New Testament.

For example, these long, drawn-out sessions that people have about casting out demons. I have never in my life seen a demon that won't go out in one minute. If it takes longer than that, something's wrong with you.

That's what I'd say. Don't waste your time. These long, drawn-out sessions that go for hours and hours and yelling and screaming and shouting and all.

Do you see that in the Gospels? Do you see Paul doing it? Do you see Jesus doing it? Where did they learn this? This is a tradition where the devil makes fools of Christians. Jesus always spoke with dignity. He didn't have to yell or scream.

Do you know once, Jesus sat in a room and cast out a demon miles away? You don't know that instance? Some mother came to Jesus and said, my daughter is demon possessed. The daughter wasn't with her. The daughter was at home.

I don't know how many miles away. This is in Tyre, in Syrophenicia. It's one of the few times Jesus went outside Israel.

And that's the woman who said, that's the one to whom Jesus said, I can't give the children's bread to the dogs. And she said, at least give me the crumbs. And Jesus said, for this saying, the demon has gone out of your daughter.

Where was the demon? Miles away. And they heard. I was speaking in the Pentecostal Bible school once.

And at the end of the meeting, I said, let's pray. And this is the moment when we were getting all the students to respond to the message I had given. And just at that moment, way down at the end of the hall, 35 feet down, boys started getting up and dancing in a demon possessed type of way.

And I knew it was a demon. And I knew that if I rebuked that person publicly, everybody would lift up their heads, look around, and the whole message would be, they'd be distracted from what they had just heard. And that's exactly what the devil wanted.

And I said, we're not going to let the devil get an advantage here. So I, there was no mic there. I turned away from the mic so that there'd be no, my voice wouldn't be heard.

And I whispered in such a way the person sitting behind me wouldn't hear. In Jesus' name. He came out.

He went and sat down immediately. And that's the day I heard that those demons have got good hearing. Now, you may say that was a coincidence.

I didn't talk to that boy. I had to go off immediately after the meeting and went off somewhere. Six months later, I get a letter from Mauritius, from the island of Mauritius.

And this chap, I've never met him. He says, Brother Zak, you don't know me. I've never talked to you, you've never talked to me.

But I am the young man whom you commanded to sit down that day in the meeting. I said, how did he know I commanded him to sit down? How did he hear that? That confirmed to me. Demons have good hearing.

You don't have to yell and scream at them. If you don't have authority, you try to make up for that by yelling and screaming. When you have authority, you can speak quietly.

You know the difference between authority and power? In India, in many places, we don't have traffic lights. We have the old system of a policeman. I don't know whether any of you older people remember that in South Africa perhaps too.

Stand up and hold his hand. And that one tiny little man makes all those massive trucks stop. That's authority.

Those trucks can run him down anytime. But when he lifts up his hand, they stop. Jesus said, I give you authority over all the power of the enemy.

So, I believe that demons should be cast out wherever we encounter them. We don't go looking around for demons. Jesus didn't.

And the apostles didn't. But when they came across their way, they always dealt with them. We don't allow the devil to interfere with our lives.

I remember once in a meeting, we were having a Bible study in a conference. I don't remember if somewhere, we just started the Bible study, 10-15 minutes into the study, suddenly a man came through the aisle, crawling on the floor like a snake. And, we just rebuked the demon and told the man to lie down there and he just slept.

Immediately. So, we are not going to let the devil come and disrupt our Bible study. The next one hour is for Bible study and the devil is not going to change our program.

We finished the Bible study and we prayed and said Amen and he got up. So, God has given us authority. We must exercise it.

I believe in casting out demons. I believe in seeking God for something even better than healing. That's health.

As long as we live in this world, we live in a world which is under the curse. Please remember that. We cannot expect perfect physical healing and health in this world.

Thorns will still poke your feet. You may still get the flu. You may get a cough and a cold.

You'll get headaches, tummy aches. These things will be there because we live in the world. But they need not hinder your service for God.

That's the thing I've discovered. It's the Lord's business. And He'll do it.

In His own time, in His own way. I remember when we started in 1975. For seven years, the Lord did not allow us to go outside Bangalore.

We started as four families and after about seven years, we were about 60. Okay? We were still meeting in our house for most of those seven years. And the Lord didn't allow us to go out.

It was a period of learning to consolidate the work the Lord had begun. To learn to love one another. And to become a body, a functioning body.

Then, for the next 20 years after that, the Lord took us to different places and raised up churches all over. 40 churches at least and many others. And in every place, emphasizing discipleship.

And if we had not emphasized discipleship, we're just interested in converts, we'd probably have 400. But we're not interested in 400 churches of converts. We'd rather have 40 churches of disciples.

Most of them starting in homes. Little homes, starts with 3-4 people, then become 10, 40, 50, like that. Fellowships where people seek to follow the principles of God's Word.

But, because the Lord had done a work of consolidation first in our place, we could tell these people to come and see what the Lord had done. You know, the great difference between Old Testament and New Testament is this. In the Old Testament, it was come and hear.

In the New Testament, it is come and see. In the Old Testament, it is come and hear what Moses has brought down as a message from the Lord. In the New Testament, it is come and see what the Lord has done in our midst.

And I believe that the Lord wants to build a church where He can... You remember those two disciples in John chapter 1 who came to Jesus and said, where are you living? And He said, come and see. And today, people come to Jesus and say, Lord, where are you living? And the Lord says, come and see in this place. This is where I'm living.

That should be your church. That should be my church. Where people can come and see what the Lord has done in families, in lives, in homes, in the way the children grow up.

I believe that even in the way the children sit in our meetings, in our church, that itself is a testimony to somebody who comes to our Sunday meeting. The way they sit respectfully, reverentially in fear of God, and the relationships in the home, and the way the believers care for one another. We have conferences, 7 or 8 of them in a year in different places.

2 in Bangalore and 5 or 6 in other places in other languages. And when people come to us, what they see is not just the message, but the spirit of fellowship. And I believe that's what they should see in a church.

And then they'll want that themselves. I'll close with a little story. You know, in our Indian trains, we have little boys sometimes going around selling peanuts down the trains through the compartments.

There was this boy who was trying to sell peanuts and nobody wanted to buy it. And he's trying to get his living off these peanuts. So he did a very clever thing.

He sat on a bench and started eating the peanuts. And you know what happens when people start eating peanuts? The smell of it pervades. And all of a sudden, one after the other, people started buying peanuts.

And I feel sometimes it's like that. We go around preaching, preaching, preaching, preaching and nothing happens. Nobody wants what we have.

But when they see that the Lord has done something in us and they come into our midst, they'll want that. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for our fellowship together this day and for your word.

We pray that what we have spoken will bring lasting fruit and blessing in each of our lives. And in this church as well in the days to come. In Jesus' name we pray.

Thank you very much. He went all by himself. 14 kilometers, took the train, took the bus, found his way, groped around and ended up in a Catholic church first and then found his way, finally he came to the

meeting.

I wish somebody would open his eyes. All are welcome to come and try. How would I be against healing? What shall I tell this person who is sincerely seeking to follow the Lord? You don't have faith? The Bible says, if any man is sick, let the elders of the church pray for him and the prayer of faith will save the sick.

That's supposed to be my faith. So what I would go to him and say is, Brother, I don't have faith. It's not you.

I don't have faith. Here is a brother who really longs to be healed. We have another young sister in our church who walks on crutches.

She has been walking on crutches because of polio for many years. I long to see her throw away her crutches and walk. I don't want to taunt her by saying you don't have faith.

I say, I don't have faith. I won't put the blame on her. It's easy to always quote that verse that Jesus couldn't heal somebody because they don't have faith.

But to the best of my knowledge, here is a person who has trusted Jesus for salvation, for something far more important than healing. And if they got faith for salvation, how is it that they don't have faith for something less? No. I don't think we have the final answer in this.

And I don't believe that that is the gospel in any case. To me the gospel is that sin shall not rule over you. That God can do a work in us where we not only overcome sin, but God can bring a number of us together and do that tremendous miracle of making us one body.

That is the greatest miracle in the New Testament. Far greater than prosperity or healing. Do you know how difficult it is to make two people one? Go and ask any husband and wife.

Any husband and wife. It's very very difficult to make two people one. Imagine making twenty people one in a church.

That is the greatest miracle. That is what Jesus meant when he said, greater works than I have done, shall you do. John 14.12 What is the greater work than Jesus did that we can do? Jesus raised a man who was dead for three days.

Am I going to go and raise a man who was dead for seven days? I've never seen anyone do it. Jesus fed five thousand with five loaves. Am I going to feed ten thousand with five loaves? I've never seen anyone do it.

What is the greater thing than Jesus did that I can do? It is what Jesus could never do in his lifetime. Make two people one. Even at the last supper they were all arguing as to who is going to be the leader after Jesus dies.

Can you imagine? They were not one. This is the great thing. And why couldn't Jesus do it? Not because of any limitation in him.

But because the Holy Spirit had not yet come to dwell in these twelve disciples. That's why. And after the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came to dwell in people, then we can do what even Jesus could not do.

That's like saying, here was this great one of the great scientists of our century of the last hundred years was Albert Einstein. But I can do some things that Albert Einstein cannot do. Some calculations I can do which Albert Einstein cannot do because I've got a computer which he didn't have.

And I can do some calculations much faster than he could do. Is it because I'm cleverer than Albert Einstein? No. I've got more facilities than he had.

Is it because I'm better than Jesus that I can do what he could not do? No. We are living in the day of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has come and dwelt people.

It was not true on the day of the Last Supper. So therefore this is the greatest miracle that we should long to see. A local church functioning as a body.

And I want to say my brothers and sisters this is the burden. I carried this burden in my heart for ten years. From 1965 to 1975.

I was a young man of about 25 years old when this burden first came to my heart. I wanted to see a New Testament church. A church where people love one another.

Where they love Jesus more than anything else on earth. Where they live together as a family. Not all perfect people.

No. No church has got perfect people. But where they have a love and a care and a concern for people.

There will be the odd fox here and there. We can't avoid that. Wolves.

The odd wolf who gets into the flock. Okay. I mean that will happen.

But that there would be a flock of people who love one another. And I took ten years before we began to see the beginnings of that in Bangalore. And through the years how God has raised up other churches too.

But to me this is the greatest thing I have longed to see in India. We keep on praying for it. That God will raise up apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, teachers across our country.

So that little assemblies of God's people can manifest like a light shining in different parts of this country. Manifesting that perfect unity and love that Jesus said would be the identifying mark of his disciples. And I believe that's the same need in South Africa.

There are lots of people wondering where can I go to find a good fellowship? Where they are not off on this extreme or off on that extreme. You know Christianity has always suffered from a disease called Pendulumitis. For number of years people will go off on an extreme in one thing.

And then people react against that and go to the opposite extreme. Shall I join the church which is at that extreme or the church which is at this extreme? I don't want to be in either. I want to be in a church that's walking the narrow path which is believing this and believing that but not off on a tangent.

This is the trouble in so many areas. You know we have people who emphasize the fruit of the Spirit and emphasize the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I say which should we emphasize? The Bible says let's run the race looking unto Jesus.

What did Jesus have? Which of the two? Both. So which should I have? I should have both. Our church should have the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Our church should have the fruit of the Holy Spirit. It's the same. Jesus had grace and truth.

Which should we have? Grace and truth. God is kind. God is strict.

What should we be? Kind and strict. What should a father be? Kind and strict. There's always a balance.

The trouble in Christendom I find in a lot of churches is imbalance. It's not that some churches have got unscriptural doctrines. But some churches it's not unscriptural doctrines.

Now take the matter of tongues. I've spoken in tongues for 27 years and I thank God for it. It's the love language between me and my heavenly bridegroom.

But to me tongues is like a little finger. It's not the heart of my Christian life. The heart of my Christian life is love, humility, purity.

These are much more important to me than speaking in tongues. But when you take speaking in tongues and you make this little finger 12 feet long, you know you'll be a nuisance wherever you go. Try getting into a car with a 12 foot long finger.

You won't be able to shut the door. Or if you do shut the door, your finger will be sticking out of the window all the time, hurting everybody else along the way. And you see how people are going to hang up on tongues? They are a nuisance wherever they go.

And so you see these people with these big 12 foot long fingers and then you have another group saying, Hey, this is all heresy. We don't want tongues at all. They cut it off altogether.

So what should we do? Cut off the little finger? I say no. Keep it the proper size and everything is okay. That's what I mean by balance.

You know, truth is like this human body. You know the beauty of this human body is in balance. Think if you had one big eye and one the right size.

You can say you've got two eyes. That's the way a lot of Christians are. They say we preach this doctrine and this doctrine, but they are not balanced.

They over emphasize some doctrine and under emphasize another. It's like having one small eye and one big eye. Okay, you've got two eyes, brother, but they should be the same size.

Otherwise, you're ugly. This is the trouble with a lot of Christians. They say we preach this, we preach this, but I said you preach it in the same proportion that scripture preaches it.

For example, I told you that Jesus never preached a sermon on healing. The apostles never preached a sermon on healing. They actually healed the sick.

That's what we should do. Or you go to the New Testament episodes right from Romans to Jude. Do a little homework on this and find out.

From Romans to Jude, there are umpteen verses, hundreds of verses on humility, faith, goodness, holiness, love, forgiveness, so many things. You know how many verses on physical healing? Two. If you think I'm wrong, just prove me wrong.

I'm not wrong. It's absolutely true. Why is it then we have such an emphasis on physical healing? It's like having a big huge year and then we say we've got two years.

Yeah, you've got two years, but one is out of proportion to the other. Everything should be the correct size. I have longed to build a church where we preach truth and give emphasis to it in the proportion in which the Bible gives emphasis to it.

That means if the New Testament places tremendous amount of emphasis on faith, I want to speak about faith a lot. If the Bible gives little bit of importance to speaking in tongues, I give little importance to that. And if the Bible gives even less importance to say a woman wailing her head, okay, I give even less importance to that.

And if the Bible gives a lot of importance to humility and love and goodness, I give a lot of importance to that. I say the great lack today is balanced teaching with the emphasis on balanced. There's a lot of teaching, but balanced teaching of the word of God.

And part of the problem is because a lot of today's Bible teachers and evangelists are not related to a local church. We have a whole lot of teachers today who are teachers. They conduct teaching meetings.

You go and ask them, brother, have you built a church somewhere? No. They go for interdenominational conventions and preach and teach but they've never built a single church anywhere. And I say so that teaching ministry is not related to building a local church.

Now Paul's teaching ministry was related to building a local church and many churches. And it's only in that context that you can have a balanced teaching ministry. That's what I discovered for the first nine years of my life after I quit my job in the Navy.

I traveled around as a teacher, Bible teacher. I was traveling for deeper life conventions in England and Australia and here and there. I didn't have any local church.

And I didn't know where I was in balance. But when you start building a local church then you begin to see the problems there are. It's like raising children.

And a lot of people don't want that problem of trying to build a local church so they're just determined to be interdenominational Bible teachers. To me they are like single people giving lectures on how to raise up children. And they may be teaching all the right theories but you ask that person brother, how many children have you raised up? No, I'm not married.

There are a lot of people like that. So I've taught people in our church Before you listen to all these wandering American preachers who come to India, just go and ask them a question. What's your family life like? Are your children born again? Are your children following the Lord? If they are not born again and not following the Lord I'd say brother, please go back home and bring them up properly first before you come here and teach people in our country.

Why have you traveled half way around the world to teach us what? You haven't brought up your home right. That's the number one question I tell people to ask. Secondly, I ask them have you built a church where people love one another? No.

Then what are you coming half way around the world to teach us? You can't teach us anything. I would respect a man who has brought up a godly home and has built a church where people love one another. That's what gives that man authority to speak to me when he teaches.

Because he's labored. He's worked. You know how difficult it is in this day and age to bring up children in a God fearing way.

In this evil world. I respect a man who's done it. You know how difficult it is in this day of confusion and false teaching and deception to build a church.

Not a perfect church. There is no perfect church. But a church where people love one another and are balanced in their understanding of truth.

So, that's the great lack. And I believe that's what we need to pray much more for that God will raise up such churches. Here's a question on inner healing and psychology.

Now, there's a lot of teaching on inner healing. I've been in meetings in charismatic circles. I remember years ago going for a charismatic convention in England 27 years ago.

And there was this session on inner healing. And they were some of the top, world's top speakers on inner healing. One was the sister of President Carter.

She was also there. And another Roman Catholic priest. And they were... And I sat there.

I was a young Christian. This was the first time I was listening to this. And they took us back into our mother's womb and asked whether there could have been your mother may have rejected you and forgive her.

And all this went all the way right up. And I felt this is it's amazing that psychology has come right into the Christian church. Jesus spoke about forgiving people but he didn't take us through this process.

You know, you know in your heart if you've got anything against anyone. You don't need time. If I ask you right now, in fact whenever I pray for people who are sick I always ask them one question.

Only one question. Do you have anything against anyone? That's the only question I ask because I say there are a lot of sicknesses that are on people because they've got a bitterness against someone. They haven't forgiven somebody.

I say it's no use my praying for you. You will not be healed if you have got some bitterness in your heart against anyone. So I say if I were to ask you right now.

You won't even need one minute. You don't have to go and scratch and dig to find out. You'll know immediately.

Is there somebody who did some harm to you anytime in your life whom you have not forgiven? I always say forgive that person right now unless you want to destroy yourself. You're not going to destroy that

person. You're going to destroy yourself.

So I believe in forgiving people whether it's that I have. It's not a healing of my memory. It's clearing my conscience.

That's what I call it. Your conscience convicts you because you have not forgiven someone. You must forgive that person otherwise God your father will not forgive you and your prayers will not be heard.

That the Bible teaches. I believe we need to be free from fears that we have had. Jesus always came with the message fear not.

And I believe that that there's only one thing that drives fear out of our heart and that's faith. Faith in a loving heavenly father who cares for me. So one of the major points of my preaching throughout the years has been God loves you as a father.

He's a good God. He's a father who cares for us. And we need to find our security in the love of God as a father.

I believe a lot of people who live in our day and age don't know the security of God as a loving heavenly father. And that's why there's so many inner tensions which they can't express to anyone. I believe there's a great need for preaching on that.

So once we preach these things that Jesus spoke about. Use the language of scripture. The reason I don't use words like inner healing and all is because it's not in the Bible.

I believe the Bible is the complete inspired word of God. I don't need anything outside of it to become a spiritual man. And so I would prefer to use the language of scripture which speaks about the love of a father for me and forgiveness forgiving other people.

Psychology. I believe there's a lot of as I said earlier in the session that a lot of things that people do today are psychological manipulation of people to get them to do something. Conditioning their thinking.

You know for example you get people into a large stadium or hall and work them up with music and you know either loud music or soft music and it's all a psychological technique and get them to be excited and come into a certain frame of mind and then get them to speak in tongues or get them to trust the Lord for healing or whatever it is. See these are all psychological tricks. The Lord did all this.

Can you imagine Peter doing it? How much music did Peter have on the day of Pentecost? Nothing. He had no choir, no body playing any instruments, no drums nothing. It was genuine power of the Holy Spirit.

When Paul saw a man lame on the streets of Lystra he didn't try to work up his faith with a choir and so many things. He just said get up in Jesus name. When Peter and John saw the lame man it was always like that.

I say just be careful in this area. Music is a I'm sorry to say that I believe in music. We have drums, we have keyboards, we have everything in our church.

But I never believed that that's a substitute for the Holy Spirit's power and unfortunately music is gradually in the church today becoming a substitute for genuine Holy Spirit power. The other thing that's becoming a substitute for genuine Holy Spirit power is money. Music, money and soul power in the pulpit, manipulation

you know stirring people up in emotional way.

I remember when I was a young Christian and I started preaching. I said Lord in everything in my life I want to do it as far as possible the way Jesus did it. That's the best way.

You know if I were to live my life or spend my money or spend my time, I want to try and understand how Jesus would spend his time, how Jesus would spend his money, how Jesus treated people, how Jesus looked at women, how Jesus looked at his enemies, everything Jesus is the example. So I studied the Gospels to see how Jesus preached and I said Lord as far as possible I want to try and preach the way Jesus preached. I found that Jesus spoke in a very simple way.

He spoke in a way that even children could understand. He used a lot of illustrations and he spoke in a way that people's hearts were touched. Their hearts would burn listening to him.

He was never boring. Not even for one second was Jesus boring. All boring sermons are because you don't seek to follow Jesus' example.

You are not filled with the Holy Spirit. And the other thing was I can't imagine if he, of course he didn't have a mic in those days but even if he did have a mic I don't picture Jesus running around up and down a platform with a mic. I can't picture that in Jesus.

And that's American. I want to follow Jesus. But I see so many people in India who blindly follow these techniques to try and work up people.

You know we have some Pentecostal denominations in India where they gradually build up the tempo and the drums get faster and faster and the people start bouncing on their knees faster and faster and when it reaches a certain decibel level they say, oh, now the Holy Spirit has come. This is all psychology. Genuine Holy Spirit power does not need any of these things.

I remember when I first was seeking for the baptism of the Holy Spirit and I went to a Pentecostal pastor and I asked him to pray for me. I was young, 23 years old. I didn't know anything.

I was born again, I was baptized, but I was not baptized in the Holy Spirit. And he said, well, keep on saying hallelujah. Keep on saying hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

This is the technique in India. The techniques are different in different places. Anyway, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

If I keep on doing it for about half an hour, finally my tongue will trip. He said, that's tongues. I said, I'm not going to do that.

I said, the apostles didn't do that. There's a lot of coaching people to speak in tongues these days. I don't believe in it.

If somebody coached you into it, it's definitely not genuine. I remember when God finally gave me tongues, I didn't even expect it. I was praying in English, all of a sudden I found myself uttering syllables I had no intention to utter.

That's how I knew it was genuine. So, this is all psychological manipulation of people. So much of it is going on in the world today.

It's not making people holier, it's not making people more effective for God's kingdom, not making people better disciples, but so many Christians blindly seem to accept it. I believe the great need is for God's people to go back to the Bible, to understand the balance that is found there in Scripture, to make Jesus your example, to make Paul, who said, follow me as I follow Christ. These are wonderful examples to follow.

For example, take the matter of money. When we started building our churches in India 27 years ago, one of the things we saw in India was, as I said, all these people sending reports, which you decided not to do. The other thing we saw was that Christian workers were making a lot of money in the name of Jesus.

People who, if they were doing a secular job, would have earned very little, came into Christian work and are earning ten times more in Christian work than they would have got in a secular job. It should actually be ten times less, not ten times more. When Jesus came from heaven to earth to serve us, did he get more or less? He got less.

Paul could have made much more money as a businessman in Tarsus than he made as an apostle. So we decided right from the beginning that all our workers would be tent makers, including myself. I've served in the church in Bangalore 27 years.

I have not received one cent from that church. I've supported myself. And that's been true of all our 40 churches, all the elders.

We're not against people being given a gift when they serve the Lord. That's okay. The laborer is worthy of his hire.

The Bible says that if somebody teaches you spiritually, it's right to reward him materially. All that is true. But we found that if we make people dependent on money being given from the church, it leads to a lot of abuse.

And for the same reasons that Paul decided to make tents and to support himself, we did that and we found it works. And we found it's protected us from a lot of professional people who would join us. Professional preachers, I mean, who join us just for the sake of material gain and profit.

I mean, these are principles that we got from Scripture. From the example of the Apostle Paul. So I'd say, follow the example of Jesus.

Follow the example of Paul. Paul wasn't a wandering Bible teacher. He established churches.

So we decided we're going to establish churches. We're going to appoint elders in churches. Just like the New Testament says.

We're going to encourage them to seek for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. And exercise the gifts. And prophesy in the meetings.

That means share God's word in the meetings, not just a one man show, etc. Everything we got from Scripture. And what Scripture, we followed this rule, that what Scripture spoke a lot about, we would speak a lot about.

The New Testament particularly. What the New Testament spoke very little about, we would speak very little about. And what the New Testament was silent about.

We would be silent about, we'd have our opinions, but we'd give perfect freedom to another person to have his own opinion. The New Testament speaks nothing about birth control, family planning. So we don't talk about it.

You see, you can have your own view on that. You can have freedom. Whatever the New Testament is totally silent about, we're totally silent about.

We give one another freedom. So that's how we found that the Lord encouraged us through the years in our churches. Another prayer that we have taught all our churches to pray is this.

Lord, lead us to those who are seeking for a godly life in this town so that we can bless them. Lead them to us or lead us to them. And if you don't do either of these, tell us what's wrong with us.

Why can't you, Lord, recommend our church to somebody? And the Lord will speak to us and say, well, you're a bunch of Pharisees and that's why I can't recommend you. Okay, Lord, forgive us. Show us our Pharisees.

I'll tell you, the Lord has shown us a lot of legalism and Phariseeism in our church through the years and we have repented of it. We have tried to be loving like Jesus instead of legalistic and Pharisee. People who came to our church 10 years ago will see a big difference when they see our church today.

And we have seen that the Lord leads us to godly people. And then we begin to pray, Lord, lead us to people who are seeking for a godly life in our country and around the world. And God does that and I believe that we should pray for that.

Lord, lead us to those who are seeking a godly life. See, there are two ways of doing evangelism. Let me close with that.

Evangelism is like trying to find needles in a haystack. You know that expression in English to find a needle in a haystack. Let's assume that in this huge haystack, there are a hundred needles and you've got to find them.

You've got to find the people who are seeking after godliness in this haystack of one billion people. Or if you take our university, six million people. Now, one way to do it is to go into the haystack and separate each bit of hay and see if there's a needle there.

And that'll take ages. In my lifetime, I may cover one percent of that haystack. And find a few needles in the process.

Another, more efficient way would be to have a very powerful magnet outside the haystack and pull out those needles one by one. That's what a church is supposed to be, you know. A church is supposed to be a very powerful magnet of people who love Jesus with all their heart and love one another fervently.

That God is able to, the Bible says, God is able to add, the Lord added to the church. Acts 2. Those who should be saved. That's a wonderful verse.

I think it's Acts 2, 47. It's one of the last verses in Acts 2. The Lord added to the church. And what the Lord has told me is this.

Your job is...

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