

Men Who are Rooted in the Love of God

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being rooted and grounded in God's love, understanding the depth of Christ's love, and being filled with the Holy Spirit to act like men in love, forgiveness, and encouragement. It highlights the need to encourage others daily, correct with love, and be strong in faith and love, rooted in the assurance of God's care and provision. The speaker stresses the significance of being secure in God's love, forgiving others, and living a life of love and forgiveness, even towards enemies and those who harm us.

Scripture: Matthew 24:11, Ephesians 5:18, Hebrews 3:13, John 17:23, Isaiah 46:3, Psalms 139:14, 2 Corinthians 1:20

Topics: "God's Love", "Forgiveness and Encouragement"

Description

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Transcript

For this session, let's turn to a word in Matthew's gospel in chapter 24. Speaking here about the last days, Matthew 24, you know, we hear a lot of things about the last days and it's usually related to wars and rumors of wars and earthquakes and famines. But there's some other things which are more important.

We can't do anything about the wars and earthquakes and famines. But there's something else that Jesus said here in Matthew 24 that we can take heed to in the last days. It says in Matthew 24 in verse 11, many false prophets will arise and will mislead many.

That means mislead many, very often we think only of false doctrine that Jesus is not God or something. We won't get deceived by that. But into some doctrine that allows us to live in sin and not be convicted about it.

You know, a doctrine which says, well, you keep on sinning. There's no way out from that. And which never enforces Romans 6, 14 strongly, act like men, stand up for the truth.

Don't be weak minded, be strong, even if you have to suffer for it, even if you're rejected by people, proclaim the truth. That is a mark of love. So I believe these are the false prophets that's abounding in

Christendom today who tell people you're filled with the Holy Spirit just because you speak in tongues.

You know, the Corinthians spoke in tongues more than anybody else. And Paul tells them, you're carnal, you're babies, I can't speak to you like spiritual men. I mean, that should be enough to make anybody come to their senses and say, you can speak in tongues and be the most carnal person of all.

That was the guy who spoke in tongues who slipped into adulterous sin in 1 Corinthians 5 and was handed over to the devil. So we have to see what is the false teaching we can be misled by. Anything that does not lead you to godliness, the truth according to godliness.

The Bible has been given to us when it says men are to teach, women are not to teach. Act like men. You may not be a teacher of the word, but stand up for the word of God and what it stands for, even if you're not called to be a teacher.

Let me read to you 2 Timothy and chapter 3. Here it says, why God has given us scripture, 2 Timothy 3.16 says, all scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, used for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God, speaking of the man of God, and that's what each of us should be, may be adequate, complete, equipped for every good work. So if you neglect the word of God, you're not going to be a man of God. It says your scripture is given so that we might be the type of men that we should be.

And so if you neglect the study of the scriptures and all of scripture, you won't be equipped for the last days. So women are not allowed to teach, the men should be the ones who are teaching. And this must begin in our home, first of all.

You know, the Bible, the New Testament gives a great emphasis on the home, which is not found in the old covenant. In the old covenant, how a man lived with his wife was unimportant. How he brought up his children was also unimportant.

Moses' family life, we read that he was fighting with his wife on his way to Egypt to speak to Pharaoh. And he had not obeyed in circumcising his son, he had listened to his Gentile wife and not circumcised his son until God almost tried to kill him. You read that in Exodus 4. You read that Eli, a high priest, his children were wayward, committing adultery.

And Samuel, who rebuked Eli, Samuel's own sons, wayward, until the Israelites came to him and said, Samuel, we don't want your sons here. What you've given them positions, you've done some nepotism here in giving your sons positions, even though they're not fit to be there. So in the Old Testament, that is not important.

But when you come to the New Covenant, 1 Timothy 3 says, you must not make an elder, an elder, he's not brought up his children properly. He must be living with one wife, presumably, peacefully, happily. It's not a question of his wife being spiritual.

Forget about whether his wife is spiritual or not. He must have a good family life, very, very important. So how shall we obey the command to act like men? Let's begin at home.

Ephesians chapter 5, let's look at Ephesians 5. Beginning at verse 18, Ephesians 5, 18, be filled with the Holy Spirit. Very, very important. Be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And what would be the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit? There are a number of things mentioned there. And one of it is, be subject, verse 21, to one another in the fear of Christ. And husbands, love your wives, verse 25, as Christ loved the church.

It all follows on from being filled with the Holy Spirit. So people ask, what is the mark of being filled with the Holy Spirit? I say, okay, let's go to the teaching sections of scripture, where being filled with the Spirit is mentioned in Ephesians 5, 18. It should result in exalting one another, speaking in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, and giving thanks for all things, and being subject to one another, verse 21, in the fear of Christ.

And if you're a man, verse 25, loving your wife, trying to love her as Christ loved the church. That's how you act like a man. Be strong.

And don't say, but my wife is not submitting to me. That is none of your business. You know, we say you shouldn't read letters that are not addressed to you.

Do you open somebody else's letters? You open somebody else's envelope and add letter address to somebody, open it and read it? No. Well, here's a letter addressed to your wife. You're not supposed to read it, unless you're a teacher of the word.

Ephesians 5, 22, Wives, be subject to your husbands. That's for a wife to listen and follow. It's not for a husband to open that letter and say, hey, God's written a letter to you, my wife, that you should be subject to me.

No, the letter God wrote to you, husband, is in verse 25. Love your wife as Christ loved the church. And if she doesn't listen to what God has told her, let God deal with her.

You got to be patient and you got to love. Christ loved us, even though we have rebelled against him so much. He didn't give up on us.

So to act like a man must begin at home, where I learned to love, no matter how strong the temptation is to not love. And one very important part of love is forgiving others. This is so important.

In Matthew 24, I was pointing out this passage to you. I want to pursue there. Many false prophets will arise, and you read in verse 11, misleading many.

Sin will increase and many people's love will grow cold. That's the point here. The love of many people will grow cold.

That is the false doctrine into which false teaching is leading people. Love for Christ is growing cold. Love for money is increasing.

And love for one another is growing cold. They will fight with somebody who doesn't agree with them in doctrine. We must avoid strife at any cost.

I refuse to argue with a person, even if he disagrees with me on doctrine. God bless you. I'm not going to argue with you.

If you want to know the truth, I'll share it with you. But I'm not going to argue with you about scripture. I'll point out scripture to you.

That's all. We are called to pursue love. And it says here, because of sin, verse 12, many people's love is going to grow cold.

And verse 13, but the one who endures in love to the end will be saved. So let's take the home. I was talking about the home in Ephesians 5. Supposing you find that the love of your wife is growing cold.

She ignores you, argues with you, despises you perhaps, creates a lot of problems. The love of many is going to grow cold because he sees sin everywhere in his house. But he who endures to the end in love will not only save himself, he'd save others as well.

For that, we need to begin at Ephesians 5.18, be filled with the Holy Spirit. You have no excuse for not loving under any circumstance because of one verse. 1 Corinthians 10.13 says, God will never allow you, if you're a wholehearted disciple of Jesus Christ, God will never allow you to be tested beyond your ability.

So how are you going to act as a man in your house? Not just by Ephesians 5.22, which says, the husband is the head of the wife. Yeah, you can misunderstand that. Who is to be subject to whom? It says in Ephesians, before it says the husband is the head of the wife, and before it says the wife must submit to the husband, it says in Ephesians 5.21, be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

So, the wife must be subject to the husband, and the husband must be subject to the wife in their own sphere. Nothing the husband has got to obey his wife. But for example, God has given all of us a sphere of responsibility, and I must not tread into that sphere.

A woman who's your wife is also not a sphere. I must allow God to work in her life in that sphere and not tread into that. I must not be a busybody in an area which God has allotted to her.

Say, in the kitchen, for example, let's take one example. I must give her a little freedom, not be dictatorial. I'm not making a law here.

There's a good loving relationship between husband and wife. You don't need these rules. But rules are needed where people don't live in love, and the vast majority of Christians don't know how to live in love.

So, love means I give freedom, I give space to that other person to move in that sphere. Very often, the conflict comes when a husband thinks I've got total authority to do whatever I like in my home. Do you know that even your little children have got a little sphere into which you must not tread? I'll give you one example.

If your children misbehave while guests are present, you must not discipline them publicly, because then you're not only disciplining them, you're humiliating them before those others. Either postpone the discipline to a later time, or take them to another room, and they discipline them. That is respecting the boundary of the child.

I have four sons, and if I had to discipline one of them, I would send the other three out of the room, and talk to that son alone, and discipline him in private. Because he has a sphere of respectability, I must respect. God has not given absolute authority, even over my children.

I have to respect their dignity as a human being. So, be a man means I respect the dignity of my wife, respect the dignity of my children, and there I exercise my headship in a wise way. See, God Almighty, for example, He's given man freedom, and so He doesn't force man even to go to heaven.

The most blessed thing that a man could experience when he dies is to go to heaven. But think of the millions of people who died in one day, who die in one day. God doesn't force any of them to go to heaven, because He's given man freedom of will.

So, when it says husbands are the head of their wives, I must recognize her sphere and my sphere, and not tread into her sphere. So, in this matter of love, I want to mention one area where it's very easy for the devil to get advantage of us. In 2 Corinthians chapter 2, it speaks about forgiveness.

2 Corinthians 2 and verse 10, he's speaking about forgiving a brother in the church in Corinth. He says, whom you forgive anyone, I also forgive. And if I have forgiven anyone, I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ.

2 Corinthians 2, verse 10. And then it says in verse 11, why? So that no advantage be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes. You know that one scheme of Satan to take advantage of a believer, listen carefully, according to this verse, is to keep an unforgiving attitude in him towards somebody who has harmed him.

And that's very easy for the devil to play up in your mind, the evil that somebody did, somebody did to your family or to your children or to yourself, or in your place of work, your boss or somebody, and there's a little bit of a wrong attitude you have towards that person, and you haven't forgiven that person. And God will sometimes give you evidence of that. Something bad happens to that person and you inwardly rejoice.

Ah, the Holy Spirit says, you see that? Why did you rejoice over that person's misery or that person running into a problem? Because you did not forgive him, which proves you don't love him. The Bible says, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, pray for those who spitefully use you, be a man, act like men, be strong and obey those commands. Can't do it without the power of the Holy Spirit, I agree, but seek for the power of the Holy Spirit.

And whenever a thought comes into your mind, which makes you happy at somebody else's misfortune or unhappy when something good happens to that person, there the Holy Spirit is trying to tell you, you got a wrong attitude, judge yourself. Now, initially, all of us have to admit that we have failed in this area, but you'll keep on failing in this area if you don't judge yourself. I failed in this area.

I remember years ago when someone did some harm and then later on something bad happened to him, I was happy and the Lord immediately convicted me. Why are you happy? You say you've forgiven him, but you haven't. And I said, Lord, right now, in Jesus name, I forgive that person completely.

I will not wish any evil for him and I will not rejoice if any evil happens to that person. I will be happy when something good happens to him. Now, we cannot remove from our minds the memory of wrong that other people have done.

That's not possible because we have no control over our memory. So don't condemn yourself if you remember the things that other people did that were wrong. But live in your will.

This is what's helped me. Lord, in my will, I have decided I forgive that person and I forgive that other person and the other person. Think of all the people who have done, it's good to take a little time, who have done harm to you in your entire life.

Take a little time someday. This is an exercise that you should go through seriously at one time and then keep it there. Keep yourself in that place where you have forgiven everybody.

But take time to think back to your entire life as far back as you can remember and think of people who have hurt you and ask yourself, have you forgiven that person? Have you forgiven that person? Be strong. Act like a man and follow Jesus who forgave even those who were crucifying him. Father, forgive them.

See, whatever evil other people may have done to you, the greatest evil that was ever done on this earth, the greatest sin that was ever committed on this earth was the crucifixion of the son of God. Nobody has ever done any evil to you or me that's greater than that, not even one millionth of that. And that greatest sin, Jesus as a man forgave him as an example for us to follow.

Let no one say that he's a disciple of Jesus if he does not follow Jesus in this primary area of forgiveness. I believe this is the reason why many people do not remain filled with the Holy Spirit. You know how you can fill a vessel with water and there's one hole in it and you go back for a little while and you find the vessel is empty.

How is that? One hole, not 25 holes, one hole. One person you've not forgiven and you're no longer filled with the Holy Spirit. I've seen numerous cases like that.

Whenever I pray for people who are sick who come to me for prayer, I don't go around praying for people who don't ask for it. But the Bible says if someone is sick, they should go to the elder and ask for prayer. And when people come to me and ask for prayer, I pray for them.

But I always ask one question. I don't care if it's my closest friend or colleague or somebody I don't know. I ask this question.

I say, I don't want to know what all sins you've committed in your life. I ask you one question. Have you forgiven everybody that you know of? I'm not asking whether you remember the evil people did to you.

But have you forgiven everyone? There are cases where some people say, well, I'm not so sure. And I say, let's wait a minute. You can do it right now.

Within the next one minute, you can do it. Who is that person you have not forgiven? I don't want you to know the name. I don't want to know the name.

But in your mind, say to God, Lord, I forgive that person. And I will not hold any grudge against that person. Is there another one? Forgive him also.

And just say to God, Lord, I forgive this person and this person and this person. In fact, right now, if somebody comes to your mind, say to the Lord in your mind, Lord, I forgive that person. Very, very important.

This is what it means to be strong and to act like a man. This is what's hindering your faith. This is what's hindering your growth in Christ.

This is what's hindering you from being filled with the Holy Spirit. This is what's hindering you from being a powerful instrument in God's hands to build this church. Satan has taken advantage of you because you have not forgiven somebody.

Jesus said in Matthew chapter 5, sorry, Matthew chapter 6 and verse 15. If you do not forgive others, your father will not forgive your sins. This is so serious a matter that if you don't forgive somebody and die like that, I don't have any doubt you go straight to hell.

I have no doubt about it. I'll tell you why. Because I believe Jesus' word, heaven and earth will pass away, but this word will not pass away.

Which word? If you do not forgive others, your father will not forgive your father. I'm not talking about God. You're a believer.

Your father, not your God. Then it could be referred to unbelievers. Your father, he's speaking to believers, will not forgive your sin.

Now here's a believer. God is his father and he hasn't forgiven somebody. According to that word of Jesus, his heavenly father has not forgiven him and he dies.

Where does he go? Is there some sort of purgatory afterwards where he can forgive that person? Is there someplace after he dies where he can say, Lord, please forgive me. I'll forgive that person now. No, it is appointed unto men once to die, Hebrews 9, 27, 28.

After that, the judgment. That's why I believe there are people who are once born again who are in hell today. You can say that's a false doctrine, believe what you like, but don't end up in hell yourself and don't lead other people to hell, please.

Even if you go there, don't lead other people there. Proclaim what Jesus said, if you do not forgive men their transgressions, your heavenly father will not, will not, will not forgive your transgressions. You know, in the Lord's Prayer, which immediately precedes that, there are six requests, three concerning God, three concerning ourselves.

Number one, hallowed be your name, our father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Three requests concerning God and three concerning ourselves.

Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive others. Not just forgive us our sins, forgive us exactly as we forgive others.

And the sixth one, deliver us from all evil. So lead us not in temptation, but deliver us from evil. So the second one concerning ourselves is forgive us exactly as we have forgiven others.

What does that mean? Lord, I have forgiven that person, but I've got a grudge against him. Father, you forgive me in the same way. Keep a grudge against me.

Is that how you want God to forgive you? God, I've forgiven him, but I wish some evil upon him. Lord, forgive me like that. Forgive me, but wish some evil for me.

You're praying, forgive me as I have forgiven others. Read that carefully. You don't just pray, Lord, forgive my sins.

Many people pray like that, but that's not what Jesus taught us to pray. Lord, forgive me. No, he said, forgive me exactly as I have forgiven others.

Did you commit a sin this morning? I ask the Lord to forgive you exactly like you forgive others. Whatever sin you confess. Now, if you're forgiving everybody and you're living in that, then you don't have to repeat that last phrase every time.

But if you're not careful to forgive others, then you need to repeat that last phrase every time to remind yourself that God will not forgive you if you don't forgive others. And you say, that's really tough. Well, it certainly is.

I agree it's tough. In fact, you can't do it if you're not filled with the Holy Spirit. You have to be filled with the Holy Spirit to love.

Because it says in Romans in chapter 5, what is the mark of being filled with the Holy Spirit? To me, it is not Acts 2.4, because I do not get a doctrine from the teaching, from the historical sections of Scripture. It's dangerous, not even the historical sections of the New Testament. I get my doctrines from the teaching sections of Scripture.

Romans 5.5, when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, the love of God is shed abroad, as it's poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who fills our hearts. So when the Holy Spirit fills my heart, He fills my heart with love. To me, this is the New Testament verse that tells me what is the mark of a person being filled with the Holy Spirit.

And that grows. You see, there's a growth in being filled with the Holy Spirit. We read in the Acts of the Apostles itself that the apostles were filled with the Spirit a number of times.

We read in Ephesians 5.18, be being filled with the Spirit. It's not just once for all. The word there is a present continuous, keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit.

And that means our capacity increases. For example, when we are born again, we have a cup. I will lift up a cup of salvation, we read in the Psalms.

Lord, fill me, and my cup is filled with the Holy Spirit. I have a certain amount of love, love for Jesus and love for others, based on a certain understanding of God's love for me. That's the foundation.

But it's like a cup. My understanding of God's love is like a little cup of water. My love for Jesus is like a little cup of water.

My love for others is like a little cup of water. But from that point, if I take up the cross every day, deny myself, take up the cross, take up the cross, take up the cross. After a while, this cup becomes a bucket.

The cup was full, I was filled with the Spirit. The cup has now become a bucket. So when I pour the water of this cup into this bucket, it's only about 10% full.

Lord, fill me with the Spirit again. And the bucket gets full. Now I have a greater understanding of God's love for me.

I have a greater love for Jesus Christ and a greater love for others. But I'm not satisfied because I haven't become like Jesus yet. Lord, expand me.

As I take up the cross more and more, gradually the bucket expands and becomes like a tub. And I pour the bucket of water into the tub, it's so little. Lord, fill me again.

God fills the tub. And then I continue to take up the cross every day and deny myself and follow. The tub becomes, believe it or not, a lake.

You pour a bucket of water into a lake, you can hardly see it. Lord, fill me again. And the lake in my heart is filled with the Holy Spirit.

And my understanding of God's love is enlarged. How much God loves me, I don't doubt it anymore. And my love for Jesus becomes correspondingly great, intense.

I'm willing to sacrifice anything for Him, deny anything, myself, anything for Him. And my love for others, difficult people, enemies, becomes large. But it doesn't stop there.

As I deny myself and take up the cross and follow Jesus again, this lake becomes a river. Wow. You empty the lake into a river, and the river looks pretty dry.

Lord, fill me again. God fills that river, which is now flowing out to bless others. In the lake, other people had to come and dip their buckets to get water.

But now I've become a river where I'm just blessing others. It's just flowing out of me without their having to come and dip inside me. It's flowing out.

And then I'm not satisfied still. I deny myself, take up the cross, and follow Jesus more. This river becomes many rivers.

Then the scripture is fulfilled, John 7, 37. He who believes in me from his innermost being will flow rivers, not one river, not a cup, not a bucket, not a tub, not a lake, not one river, but rivers of living water in many directions. That is not just for a few people.

That is for every single believer. It says there in John 7, 37 to 39. This lake he of the Holy Spirit, which those who believe in him would receive.

Do you believe in him? That's for you. This river of love that can flow out from your heart. But remember, the foundation is your understanding that God loves you perfectly.

And that you discover when you meditate on how patient God has been with you. How long-suffering. The word long-suffering has to be spelled with many, many O's.

L-O-O-O-O-N-G. Long-suffering of God has been with you. And the longer that word long is, long-suffering in you, the easier it will be for you to be long-suffering with others.

So we got to be founded in the fact that God loves me intensely. We must meditate much on how much Jesus loved me. How long-suffering he was.

That's what it means to be a man in leadership in the house. That people must see you as the head of the house, as one forgiving, long-suffering, firm in your leadership. You won't tolerate anything contrary to the word of God in your house.

You will not allow your children to play music in the house, which is ungodly. You will not allow anything to be seen on television, which is ungodly. Anything that will pollute the minds of people.

You'll be careful with what your children, if they are growing up, watch on their computers. You'll be very strict. But you'll be long-suffering.

It's a love which is based on God's love for you. It's a love which will not hesitate to rebuke in order to help. Do you know that Jesus rebuked Peter, calling him Satan? We read in Matthew 16.

There are two things I see there, which are both the marks of love. Turn with me to Matthew 16. Jesus was praying for Peter.

He wanted Peter to get a revelation about who he was, which the Pharisees did not have. The Pharisees thought he was Bilezebub. They studied the Old Testament scriptures, which all spoke about Jesus, and they still thought he was a devil.

But he prayed for Peter. And then we read here in Matthew 16, Jesus said, who do people say that I am? Matthew 16, verse 13. And they said, well, some people call you the devil, of course, but there are some others who appreciate you.

They say you're John the Baptist or Elijah. That sounds good, but that's not good enough. Elijah, et cetera.

Then he asked, what do you say? Who do you say that I am? And Peter said, none of these. You're the Christ, the son of the living God. Peter didn't have a full understanding of the Trinity there, but he expressed something by revelation.

Here is the second person of the Trinity who has come down to earth. And Jesus said, look at these words of encouragement. Imagine if you heard these words from Jesus' own mouth.

Simon, Barjona, flesh and blood did not reveal this to you. Matthew 16, 17. But my Father in heaven.

Boy, if I had heard those words from Jesus, I'd be so encouraged. Lord, you mean I got that as a revelation from heaven? And then Jesus says, Simon, on this rock that you have just confessed, the Christ, the son of the living God, I will build my church. I'm going to use you to build my church, such a church against which the gates of hell will not be able to prevail.

Well, Simon was excited, and Jesus went on. I want to tell you, Simon, Peter, Matthew 16, 19. I give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

Whatever you bind on earth will be bound, and whatever you lose on earth will be loosed. What authority he gave to Peter. And Peter was so encouraged.

One mark of love is that you encourage your children. You encourage your wife. Hebrews 3, 13 says, encourage one another daily, lest you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

That's a very important verse for believers to recognize and remember. Hebrews 3, 13. Encourage one another daily.

King James Version says, exhort. Well, it's a word which has multiple meanings, the Greek word there. Encourage, I believe, is a better word than exhort, because exhort can give you the impression that you have to rebuke and correct people, whereas I can encourage a person to live a godly life.

I'm challenging that person. So it's challenge and encourage. Encourage one another daily, every day.

And I ask you this question, you men, who do you see every day, daily? You don't see the other brothers in the church every day. You don't see other people around the world every day. The one person you see daily, normally, is your wife.

So that's where you must begin. The Holy Spirit will come upon you, Jesus said, and you shall be witnesses, first of all, in Jerusalem. That's where you are right now.

And for you, Jerusalem is your home. Then Judea, then Samaria, then the outermost parts of Europe. So it goes in concentric circles, beginning in Jerusalem, which is your home.

That's where the disciples were at that time. So encourage one another daily. You begin in your home.

I want to prove myself to be a man at home, a man of God. I want to be strong in love as a man of God in my home. It's not always saying words to encourage.

It's your whole attitude towards your wife by which you encourage her, by your way of life, by your merciful attitude, by your never murmuring, never complaining, never grumbling. Things can go wrong. In every house, things can go wrong.

The food can be overcooked, or maybe there was too little salt or too much salt or whatever it is. These things are unimportant. And you don't complain.

You don't get upset. You don't get angry. That is encouragement or words to encourage, appreciation, words of appreciation.

When you first got married, maybe you were in love with your wife and encouraged her by words of appreciation. Can you stop doing that now? Do you have to stop telling your wife that you love her or that you're thankful for the cup of tea she brings you in the morning? Or anything else? Why do we lose all that? Encourage one another daily. Very often, people have unsubmitive wives because the husbands themselves have failed miserably in encouraging their wives.

Be, act like a man and be strong in encouraging your wife by your life, by your behavior, by your words. Otherwise, what will happen? Hebrews 3.13 says she will be discouraged and then she'll grumble and complain and fight with you. You ask yourself whether you encourage her.

How often should you do it? Once a year? No, daily. Hebrews 3.13 is clear. And as I said, not necessarily with words.

You deny yourself and you take up the cross and your life itself, your way of life will be an encouragement to people in your home, even if you don't open your mouth. And occasionally, you get the opportunity to open your mouth, express appreciation, just like Jesus did. You know, Jesus was a master at expressing appreciation.

Think of that Roman centurion who said, my servant is ill at home. Lord, please come and heal him. Jesus said, I'll come.

And he said, no, no, no, you don't have to come. He asked for healing for his servant and Jesus said, I'll come home and heal him. And he said, no, Lord, you don't have to come home.

I am a captain of soldiers and I tell a soldier to go, he goes. And if you stand right here and tell that sickness to go, it'll go. And Jesus looked around at all the Jewish people standing there and he praised this Gentile man who was not even converted, saying, I've never seen such faith.

Among all these Jewish people in Israel who know the Bible better than him. Can you imagine how that Roman centurion felt when he went home that day? Boy, Jesus, the greatest man walking on earth, said he saw faith in me. I'm so encouraged.

Jesus was a master at encouragement. He encouraged a Syrophenician woman when Jesus said, the dogs can eat all the crumbs she said, okay, give me the crumbs Lord. My daughter will be healed with that.

And Jesus said, woman, great is your faith. Your daughter is healed. Can you imagine how encouraged she was? Jesus was always encouraging people all the time.

Peter, I give you the keys of the kingdom. A man who is strong in love will encourage his wife, will encourage his children, will encourage the brothers in the church, not just in sermons, but by his way of life. Supposing you're working together with people.

You've asked one of them to do a job while you're away. This happens to me often. I work with brothers in the CFC office in Bangalore.

And sometimes I tell them, can you please do this? I'm going to be away for a few days and come back. And then I tell them this also. If by the time I come back, it is not done.

Don't be disturbed. Because sometimes we can't finish everything in time. Sometimes some things go wrong.

Forget it. Just avoid sin. Because the only thing serious in life is sin.

That's an expression I'd like to keep on using and telling people. The only thing serious in life is sin. The fact that you couldn't meet the deadline, that the fact that you couldn't get a job done on time, as far as I'm concerned, can be overlooked, forgiven.

We'll do better next time. There's always a next time where I can do better. We can encourage one another like that.

When your children come to you and say, dad, I messed up this thing. Don't tell them, I told you not to do that. Don't ever, those words should never come out of your mouth.

I told you, don't talk to your wife like that. Don't talk to your children like that. You know, maybe you wanted to help your children fix their bike or fix some little child picking a toy.

And the child said, no, no, no. And they messed it up. You knew they would mess it up because they don't know how to do it.

And they come back to you and say, dad, I couldn't do it. Don't let these words come out of your mouth. I told you so.

That's the language of the expert. Never, never use it to your children or to your wife. Say, son, let's fix it.

My girl, let's fix it. Don't remind them of the past. Be an encourager.

That's what it means to say, be strong and be a man in your home. So often we've got a wrong understanding of what it means to be strong. We think it just means to be assertive and to push my opinion down on people and force myself on.

No, it's to encourage people. It is to act in such a way that they become strong. And is there a place for correction? Sure.

After the Lord encouraged Peter, two minutes later, two minutes later, see what he said to the same Peter. Just two minutes later. In Matthew 16, again, he says in verse 23 to Peter, get behind me, Satan.

And not even two minutes, I think less than a minute. This person to whom he said, blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, my father is revealed to you to heaven. One minute later, get behind me, Satan.

You're only interested in the things of men and not the things of God. What a balance there was in Jesus' life. Grace and truth.

But first learn to encourage before you correct. Have you encouraged your children sufficiently? Then you're qualified to correct them. Otherwise you are not qualified to correct them.

Have you encouraged your wife sufficiently and she knows it? Then correct her. Have you encouraged some brother in the church sufficiently? Then correct him. I always say encouragement is the blackboard on which you can take the white chalk of correction and write.

But if you haven't built the blackboard and you take the chalk and write, correction, correction, correction, you're writing in the air. They can't read a thing that you're writing. Don't blame them if they don't do it or they get upset with you eternally.

So what does it mean to be strong in your home or with others? Encouragement followed by correction. But not correction first. I always say in a church, if you've never encouraged a brother, don't try to correct him.

No, wait. Let somebody who has encouraged him go and correct him. I'm not talking about serious sin in a church which needs to be disciplined.

I'm talking about in a normal situation. It says in Ephesians four, how the body is built up. I want to show you Ephesians chapter four.

Ephesians four, it says in verse 15, speaking the truth in love, we grow up in all aspects to the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body is fitted together and by the proper working of each part causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. But that is by speaking the truth in love, not by speaking the truth. The body is built up when you speak the truth in love.

For example, in getting up to preach God's word, act like a man and be strong, which means I will never preach something from the pulpit, which I have not first judged in my own flesh. Do you know that everybody sitting in front of you in a congregation, in a church, has the same flesh as you? I'm always conscious of that. Every group or church that I preach to, all those people have the same flesh as me.

So when I expose a sin, I'm not a prophet to expose it. I just tell them what I discovered in my own flesh, which I've judged myself. I've used the word of God like a two-edged sword, like it says in Hebrews 4, and one edge has first cut my flesh.

I've judged myself there and cleansed myself. Then I can use that sword, the other edge of it, to cut somebody else, not to hurt that person, but to heal that person. The two-edged sword we use is not the sword of a murderer.

It's the knife of a surgeon. The knife of a surgeon is different from the knife of a murderer. A murderer uses knife to kill.

A surgeon uses knife to cut a person, to heal, to remove the cancer. So that is how we are to encourage and correct people. So if you have not learned to love like that, if you have not learned to forgive people like that, we're not going to build the church.

Be strong. Act like men. Turn with me to Ephesians in chapter three.

Ephesians chapter three, it speaks here about verse 17, that Christ may dwell in your hearts. Through faith, that you being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to understand with all the saints, the length and breadth and height and depth of know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge. The love of Christ has got four dimensions.

Length, breadth, height, depth, and you cannot understand it. Knowledge says three dimensions, but here it says it is beyond knowledge. And that's why he talks about four dimensions, length, breadth, height, and depth.

And the only way we can know it is along with all the saints. That's what it says here. Along with all the saints, verse 18.

If I cut off some genuine child of God from my fellowship, I've cut off some knowledge of the love of God that I could have got through that person. Now we cannot possibly physically fellowship with every believer in the world, but the ones whom God brings across us, I mustn't cut them off because they're different from me. They're lower social level than me.

They're not educated. Perhaps they're different from me. Their temperament, everything is different.

I've got to be patient. I can learn something of the love of Christ through that person, which I did not know. I've just adopted that attitude toward the different believers God has brought me in touch with.

And I've become such a rich man in knowing about God's love for me, being more founded in God's love for me. Because along with all the saints, I'm seeing this four-dimensional love of Christ. And he goes on to say here, rooted and grounded in love, verse 17.

I read that as you're rooted means like a tree. Even the storm cannot uproot it. Grounded means like a foundation of a building.

It's permanently there. It's hidden under the ground. The roots are hidden under the ground.

I have to have a hidden root is under the ground. Foundation is under the ground. Rooted and grounded in love.

Rooted in the love of God within me. In other words, what I'm saying is to use another expression. My permanent address is the love of my heavenly father for me.

And from that foundation, I can build a house by which I love my family and by which I can love everybody, even if they don't love me. I can love the people who disagree with me. I can love non-Christians.

I can love my enemies. I can love my neighbor who irritates me perhaps day and night. Sure.

Without the Holy Spirit's power, impossible. What does it mean when it says be strong? Act like men, be strong. You cannot be strong without being filled with the Holy Spirit.

So that's what I would say. It's only the Holy Spirit who can shed the love of God in my heart. Make me rooted and grounded in love so that my permanent address, where you'll always find me.

You want to find me? Here's my permanent address. God's love for me. He loves me as he loved Jesus Christ.

John 17, 23. That is my permanent address. I live there.

I live in John 17, 23. I remember God opened my eyes to that truth when I was a very insecure Christian and I could not act like a man. You know, we hit back when people are trying to attack us or criticize us.

All that will disappear when I'm rooted and grounded in the fact that God loves me as he loved Jesus. It's when I understood that, that I began to overcome sins like anger, murmuring, complaining. It all begins with being rooted and grounded in knowing God loves you.

If you're a disciple of Jesus, it's not for everybody. John 17 was a prayer for disciples only. If you're a disciple of Jesus, if you love him more than you love money, more than you love your parents, more than you love anybody on earth, more than you love your property and you're willing to take up the cross and follow him, that's a disciple, then here's the promise to you.

God loves you as much as he loved Jesus Christ. He will care for you as he cared for Jesus Christ. And when I'm rooted and grounded in that, I'm free from insecurity.

I remember when I was seeking God as I was growing older in age. I'm 80 years old now. God's been very good to me through the years.

And I remember years ago, many, many years ago, as I was growing older and the Lord said to me, you don't have to be worried when you grow older. Isaiah 46, verse 3 and 4. Isaiah 46, verse 3 and 4. Jesus, the Lord said to me personally, I was the one who carried you when you were inside your mother's womb. Wow.

When I was in my mother's womb, you carried me there. I thought it was just my mother carrying me. No.

The Lord said, I carried you. And when you were born, I carried you there. Oh, I thought somebody, a doctor or someone delivered me.

No, I carried you there. And to your old age, even if you lived up to 100 years, verse 5, sorry, Isaiah 46, 4. I'm going to be the same. Same as what? As the one who carried you in your mother's womb, the one who carried you when you were born to your graying hairs.

And the Lord said that to me when my hair was black. Your graying hairs, I'll bear you. I have done it.

I will carry you. I will bear you. And I will deliver you from every temptation.

I will deliver you from every harm that other people seem to do to you. I will deliver you. You don't have to depend on man.

Because I love you like I love my son, Jesus. Boy, do I need anything in my life, even if I have to live up to 100 years of age? No. Dear brothers, there's no need for insecurity.

It's when we are insecure that we're not strong. When you're insecure in the love of God, when you're insecure whether he'll take care of you when there's a plague going on around the earth. What happened in this time of plague? Will that teeny weeny virus get into me? I'm insecure.

Well, he knows the number of hair on my head. The hair, one hair on my head is far less important than my physical health. And he knows even that.

And how much more of my physical health? We do not live in fear. We do not live in insecurity. He has carried us from our mother's womb.

He's numbered the hair on my head. And in Psalm 139, verse 14 to 17, he's even the number of the days I have to live on this earth. I don't know it, but it's written in God's mind already.

It says about Jesus, they could not even catch him till his hour had come. And if you really walk in the will of God, you can say this. I cannot die until God's time for me has come.

Until my hour has come. Now, if you're living on earth to make money, that promise is not for you. If you're living on earth for yourself, in your own selfish way, then I don't know what promise is for you.

But if you're wanting to live like Jesus, saying not my will, I came from heaven not to do my will, but the will of him who sent me, then all these promises are yours. Every promise in the Bible, 2 Corinthians 1, 20 is amen in Christ. What's security? That is how we can be strong and act like men who will love when people don't love us, who will forgive even when people harm us, who will pray when people spitefully use us and persecute us.

And at top of it all, we will not do this to show off to others how spiritual we are. We will not make anybody feel small. We will respect people's boundaries.

We will give people the dignity and respect that every human being deserves. Even a beggar or a tramp or a homeless person, we will treat with dignity. That's the mark of a man of God.

Brothers, be strong, act like men, be alert, stand strong in your faith. May God bless you all. Let's pray.

There are many things you have heard today. You may not remember all of them, but you can ask the Holy Spirit right now. Lord, please remind me in the days to come of the things I heard today at the appropriate time.

When I'm tempted in my home, when I'm tempted with my wife, with my children, with my neighbors, with other brothers in the church, remind me of what I heard today. And Lord, above all, fill me with the Holy Spirit. I'm willing to pay any price for it.

I want to be continuously filled with the Holy Spirit until you come again. I want my life to be useful to you on earth. I want to be strong and act like you acted on this earth.

To walk as you walk, fill me with the Holy Spirit. For that, Lord, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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