

Needed, a Second Reformation

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the need for a second reformation in the Church today, where people are deceived by false teachings and corruption, and calls for a return to the truth of the Bible.

Duration: 51:19

Scripture: Deuteronomy 28:1, 1 Corinthians 14:3

Topics: "Church Reformation", "Spiritual Renewal"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking the Lord for the appropriate message for a specific time, drawing parallels between Old Testament prophets and the need for modern-day prophecy in churches. It highlights the call to repentance that was common to all prophets and addresses the prevalent issue of idolatry. The speaker discusses the need for a reformation in the church to combat false teachings related to money, healing, and prosperity, emphasizing the spiritual blessings in the New Testament. The sermon also stresses the importance of forgiveness, the dangers of being busy, and the need to listen to God's voice amidst distractions.

Transcript

Always seek the Lord, to find out what is the most appropriate message for a particular people at a particular time. I believe that is what the New Testament calls prophecy. In the Old Testament the prophets spoke about the future.

But that is a very small part of their ministry. Because some of the greatest prophets never spoke about the future at all. Like Elijah and Elisha.

They never predicted anything about the future. Like Isaiah and Jeremiah did. And John the Baptist, the greatest prophet of all.

He never said one word about the future. But one thing was common about every single prophet throughout the Old Testament. And that was they gave the message that the people of Israel needed or the people of Judah at that particular time.

And their call was always to repent. There is one message that was common to every prophet. It was turn back to God, usually turn back to God from idols.

In fact one of the greatest sins that you read in the Old Testament was the frequent idolatry of Israel. And so many, many of the prophets God sent them to turn the people back from idolatry to worship the true God. And you know particularly about Elisha how that was his main ministry.

And when you come to the New Testament I believe in that sense that third of the prophet must be found in every church. In 1 Corinthians 14 it speaks about the prophets speaking. Not predicting the future but in every meeting of the church.

It says in 1 Corinthians 14 that the prophets speak. So when we hear that word prophet we think of some man who is dressed abnormally and eats peculiar food and lives in a hut or something like that. That's not the mark of a prophet.

It's nothing external. It's a man commissioned by God to give a particular message for the people of God at a particular time. So I've been a Christian for 58 years now and 51 of those years in full time Christian work.

So I've seen a lot of the way Christendom has developed over the last half century. And I've observed very many, many different denominations. I've preached in many, many denominations and I have close friends in many, many groups.

I'm not here to despise anybody who is a child of God. I would consider my brother in Christ. But I don't agree with many, many things that go on in Christendom today.

Because as I've studied the scriptures, I see that there's a phrase that comes frequently in the New Testament called the body of Christ. The church is called the body of Christ. Now I would say that 90% of people who call themselves Christians today do not know that.

They think if you ask them what is a church, they'll talk of a building or a denomination like the Methodist Church or Presbyterian Church. It's either a building or a denomination. But never in the New Testament is the word church used for a building, not a denomination.

It's always for the body of Jesus Christ which consists of people. People who are united to Christ as their head. And it has only one head.

That head is Jesus Christ. In the body people can have different functions, but there's only one head. And in the early church, no leader was elected to be a head.

That type of election that you see in many churches today, you never find in the New Testament. That's one indication of how Christendom has drifted so far away from the faith of the apostles. So even though many people say the Bible is the word of God, and they accept what Jesus said, that heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

They don't seem to follow the scripture which they call the word of God. And that's because we live in a generation now which doesn't have time to study the scriptures. Because there are so many other distractions.

First of all, a lot of people spend 10 or 11 hours nowadays commuting to work and coming back to their place of work. It's very common. It's common here.

It's common in India. Time is very short at home. And then even when they come home, there are distractions like television, movies on the weekend, and all types of things to keep Christians occupied.

And then they have to go on vacations. And the whole purpose of sin is if he can't lead you into sin, then if he can only succeed in keeping you busy the whole time, thus he succeeded. He doesn't have to lead you into sin.

A lot of Christians find the satisfaction that I'm not committing any gross sin. I'm not cheating or committing adultery. But the devil still succeeded because he's kept you so busy with so many things that you don't have time to hear what God is saying.

And yet the message of the Bible in the very first chapter is, what is it? On the first day, God said something with every life. On the second day, God said something. On the third day, God said something.

Like that all the way until the sixth day, finally God said everything is very good. But what the message of the Bible conveys to us there in the very first chapter is, every day God spoke. God is a speaking God.

It's not like an idol that is dumb. It's a speaking God in the very first chapter of the Bible teaches that God speaks every single day. And he has not stopped speaking.

People have stopped listening. And that's because there's a deafness, a spiritual deafness. I've heard so many people say, I can't seem to hear God.

Well, there's usually only one reason why we can't hear God. And that's because we're not really serious about wanting to hear him. We're so busy, first of all.

Or we have a conscience which is not being cleansed. Something not set right. To become deaf to the voice of God, there's only one thing you have to do.

Don't forgive somebody. You'll be deaf to God's voice. You can imagine God is speaking to you.

You can hear a message in a church or in a YouTube or something like that. Or you can read the Bible. But you won't hear God speaking to you in a living way in your heart if you haven't forgiven anybody, somebody.

If there's one human being somewhere in the world whom you have not forgiven, that blocks your spiritual ears, that you won't hear God. You become religious. You're going to be very religious.

But you won't hear God. This is very, very important. And I'm just mentioning one little thing.

Let's talk about busyness. There is this unforgiving attitude. So, as I have tried to steer clear of this, I mean all of us have experienced people who have harmed us.

I think anybody who is over the age of six or seven has experienced somebody or the other has harmed them, even little children. And so there's not a single, I can be bold enough to say there's not a single person sitting here who has not been harmed by somebody else maybe physically, maybe financially, maybe by spreading a scandal about you or telling a lie about you or hurting you in some way or the other. Whatever it is.

And so every one of us here has somebody you have to forgive. And I want to tell you that if you do not forgive that person, it's not just that you will be deaf to the voice of God. But Jesus said if you don't forgive others, your heavenly father will not forgive you.

That's a message which is not preached much. But I preach it everywhere I go because I know that that person who hurt me will not enter the kingdom of heaven in eternity if he hasn't forgiven somebody. So I make sure that his blood is not on my hands in the final day by telling him, hey listen, forgive that person, release him.

You don't have to fellowship with him, but you've got to forgive him. When Jesus forgave the people who committed the worst crime that has ever committed on this earth, you know that the worst crime that has ever committed on this earth was the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. There was never a sin worse than that.

And immediately, just before he died, he said, Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing. They don't know what a serious sin they've committed.

But he didn't have fellowship with them. No. But he forgave them.

So I'm not saying you've got to fellowship with those people who hurt you or harmed you. No. We follow Jesus' example.

You can't have fellowship with a person if the guy himself doesn't repent of his sin. But you can forgive him. You don't have to wait for him to repent to forgive him.

Those guys, he's never repented. I don't know if most of them repented even to their death yet. But Jesus forgave them.

There are some things God does not allow us to have. One is worship. We are not permitted to let anybody worship us.

Even the angel, when John tried to worship him in Revelation, he said, Get up. Only worship God. And Isaiah 42.8, God says, I will never give my glory to another.

That's another thing we're not supposed to take. We're never supposed to take glory to ourselves. We're always supposed to give the credit to God for whatever good he does through us.

We cannot touch worship. We cannot receive worship. We cannot touch the glory of God.

And there's another thing which we are never supposed to do. Let me read it to you. I'm sure you already know it.

In Romans chapter 12 and verse 19. Romans 12, 19, it says, Never take your own revenge. Never.

Because leave that to God. Let God's anger deal with that. Because it is written, Vengeance is mine.

I will repay. So that's another thing we are not supposed to do. We can't accept worship.

We can't touch the glory of God. These are all God's business. Worship is God's business.

Glory is 100% God's. Vengeance, taking revenge is 100% God's. We must not even desire vengeance on people who have harmed us.

But on the other hand, it says, If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him a drink. Does that mean God will not judge them? God will judge them in the final day.

That's up to him. We hope that they repent before that day comes. We don't wish evil on anybody.

You know, if you wish evil on any human being, if you wish evil on any human being or on his family or his children, at that moment you are in fellowship with Satan. Because God never wishes evil on anyone. God always wishes that he wants everybody to be saved.

He wants everybody to repent. The devil doesn't want anybody to repent. The devil wants evil.

And so whenever I wish evil on someone, even if he's my enemy, at that moment I'm in fellowship with Satan. So I'm just giving you these little warnings. So when we clear our ears, spiritual ears I mean, we hear what God is saying, what is God saying to us at this particular time in the state of Christendom as it is today? I see it like this.

When I look over church history, there was a period which is called the Dark Ages, right up to about 1580, which is 500 years ago. But a period of a thousand years before that, Christendom went through, if you read church history, the Dark Ages, almost from 300 to 1500, about 1200 years ago. Because in the first 300 years there was such a lot of persecution of Christians.

There were some... There were a lot of Christians who were persecuted in those days. And at that time Christianity was pure. But once the persecution stopped, Christianity became an acceptable religion, and corruption started.

And the sad thing was in all those periods from 300 to 1500 AD, what was missing was a printed Bible. There was no printed Bible. There were a few copies, handwritten copies of the letters of Paul in the Gospels.

But very few people had it. And it was mostly by word of mouth that people heard the truths of the Bible. And the result was when the Bible was not available, darkness spread over all of Christendom.

We don't realize what a tremendous blessing it is to have a printed Bible in our own language. It's the greatest source of light we have in the world today. But in those Dark Ages, all types of teachings went on.

And the most prominent church in that time, worldwide, was the Roman Catholic Church. There was also the Orthodox Church, but the Roman Catholic Church was much more worldwide. I think there's been a certain amount of Reformation in the Roman Catholic Church.

Now we're in those days, it's really dark. And if you read church history, we read that a time came when they wanted a lot of money to build St. Peter's Church in Rome, or to repair it, or restore its beauty. The way they decided, some of the monks in those days decided, was to tell people that if you give money, your sins will be forgiven.

And you know, everybody knows they are sinners. There was no Bible to tell them how the sins would be forgiven, remember that. And if you didn't have a Bible, and you had some priest who was recognized to be the minister of God who came and told you, the only way your sins can be forgiven is if you give money to God.

You would believe it, because this priest is supposed to be a representative of God. I mean, today that sounds so ridiculous. It's because you haven't had a Bible for so long.

But think, if you could yourself imagine, you're living in a time when nobody had a Bible for hundreds of years. And this priest is supposed to be the representative of God. You just believe him, and you go out and give your money.

And you know, there's no visible evidence of your sins being forgiven. It's all invisible, so the priest says you're forgiven, and you assume it's forgiven. So, at that time there was a Roman Catholic monk called Martin Luther.

He had somehow read the scriptures we know from his handwritten writings. And he read in Romans that salvation is forgiveness of sins, and salvation is by grace, through faith, in the crucifying Christ and the death and resurrection of Christ. And he knew this is wrong, what is being taught.

And when people came to him and said, hey, Martin Luther, we're not worried about our sins anymore, because we paid the money to the church. It made him so angry, so angry that these poor sinful people were being deceived, robbed of their money, and they were finally still going to hell. Because they were never told about repentance, they were never told about faith in Jesus Christ.

It really made him angry. He was a God-fearing man. And he decided to expose this false teaching of that Roman Catholic church at that time.

And you know, that brought the anger and the fury of the Pope and all the others who were the leaders of the churches in those days of the Roman Catholic church. And they wanted to kill him. First they tried to tell him to stop preaching that, and he said no.

I'm going to expose this false teaching. And he had to run for his life. And the thing is, in those days, all the emperors in Europe, rulers of the countries who were all in league with the Pope, were appointed by the Pope, and so they all supported the Roman Catholic system.

It was the only church there was in every country in Europe. And he had to flee for his life, and there was one emperor of a small area who said, I don't go long now, I'm going to support Luther. That was God's way of preserving that man's life.

So when he heard all this, he decided to make a list of all the things that were wrong in the Roman Catholic church. And he wrote 95 of them. It's called the 95 Theses of Martin Luther.

He wrote them all up and pinned it to the door of the Roman Catholic church in Wittenberg, in Germany, 500 years ago. On October 31st, 1517. That's why they celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation this month.

That is what started the Protestant movement. Almost all of you are from Protestant churches. The origin of those churches, that's what I've told you about just now.

Whichever Protestant church you come from, the origin was there 500 years ago when a man had the guts and the courage to stand against false teachings. And the issue was money. Money was the way to God.

Now 500 years later, we are living in 2017 now. See, when Luther put this up, now we know it as the Reformation. It was the great Reformation that took place in the Protestant, it's called the Protestant Reformation.

It began 500 years ago. Now what has happened today to the followers of Luther? Every movement, over a period of time, gets corrupt. It's like anything on this earth gets corrupt.

You keep meat or fish outside and in a few days it gets corrupt. Christianity has been like that. Every Christian group, over a period of time, declines and becomes corrupt.

And so, today, no Protestant church will preach today that you get forgiveness of sins through giving money. No. There's not a single Protestant church today that will preach, or does preach in that name as Martin Luther fought against, that if you give money, God will forgive your sin.

In fact, if some Protestant church, if any preacher, priest preached that in a Protestant church, they'd throw him out. But, the message has changed slightly. But the root cause is still money.

Today the message is, if you want healing, you must give money to my ministry. Or put money in the offering box today. Give a donation.

That is being preached not only in big congregations and so-called healing meetings. It's spreading all over the world through television. And it has spread so widely that there's hardly a country in the world beginning with that.

Africa, Australia, Europe, India, America, you go anywhere. These preachings are there because television has become worldwide. If you want, God will heal you.

Give money. And there are so many poor people who are desperate for their sick child to be healed of cancer. And they don't know the Bible, just like 500 years ago, most people didn't know the Bible.

Of course, today there's no excuse because the Bible is printed if you want to know the truth, it's written there. But they pick up some words from somewhere, and they call it sowing a seed. They mis-sow scripture.

And they say, if you want to get a harvest, you must sow a seed first. So if you want God to heal you, you must give money. You must give money to my ministry.

And what is the result? People are, poor people are, some of them are borrowing money because they want their poor child to be healed of cancer. Some of them are using their credit cards and getting into tremendous credit card debt. See, I have a number of messages on YouTube, at least 1,000 messages on YouTube.

And they're all freely accessible. Any of you can access any of my messages if you go to YouTube and just put my name there. So the result of this is I get numerous mails from many parts of the world.

And that's how I know how some of these people are getting into debt. Some are on the verge of suicide. Just last week I got a mail from a young man like that.

He doesn't know what to do. He says, I've been cheated by these pastors who told me that I would be healed if I gave money. And also, I was so much in debt.

And then the other message I heard from these preachers was, if you want God to clear your debt, give money. Then God will clear your debt. You give and God will give you a hundred times.

But you have to sow a seed first. You can't get a harvest without a seed. And with all these clever illustrations, so many people have been swindled and cheated.

And there is a need for another reformation. There is a need for the Church of Jesus Christ in this time to be like another Martin Luther. Not just one man.

To stand up against this type of corruption. Will you be opposed? Sure. Martin Luther was opposed.

I admire that man that he had the courage to stand against the entire system of Christendom in that time. Risk his life because he wanted people to know the truth. So where are the preachers today who know that this is false? That you can't give money to God.

You can't give a bribe to God to get healing. He's not a businessman where you give him money and he gives you so much more back. But where are the preachers who will expose that? They're always afraid that people are told.

I've been told this myself. Don't touch the anointed of God. Don't speak against the Holy Spirit.

I said I know the Bible well enough and I'm not scared of all these verses that you quote to me. I know God and I know his word. The Bible says also don't believe every spirit.

1 John 4 onward. But test the spirits to see whether they are from God. For many false spirits have gone out into the world.

So I say that's what I want to do. I don't want to believe every spirit. But many people don't know this and they're scared to even expose error.

Because this Old Testament verse is quoted. Touch not my anointed. I see that guy who claims to be anointed.

He's certainly not anointed if he's swindling people of money. You know in the first century, as I said, there were no printed Bibles. Very few copies of the original letters of Paul and Peter and James were available.

But there were so many false prophets and false preachers going around even in the first century. And the apostles did not know how to warn all the people. They had no way to circulate copies of the New Testament letters to everybody.

How to protect the simple poor people of the first century from all these false preachers going around the countryside collecting people's money, fooling them. And there were simple people who were ready to give. So they taught some things.

And you can go to the internet and look for a little booklet called, it's only a few pages. It's one of the first writings after the Bible. It's called the Didache.

D-I-D-A-C-H-E. D-I-D-A-C-H-E. Or subtitled, The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles.

I've gone there and I've downloaded it and read it. It's just about 14 or 15 pages. And this is one of the earliest Christian writings after the Book of Revelation.

And this was one of the things, there are a number of wonderful things written there. One of the things written was this. If any preacher comes to you and asks for money, he is a false prophet.

It's written there. Go and see it for yourself. That's what the early apostles preached.

To protect people in a time when they didn't have the Bible. I wish that were preached all over the world today. Any preacher who comes to you and asks you for money is a false prophet.

Don't entertain him. Don't let him come into your house. Don't listen to him.

Don't be afraid of him. There would be a few lesser suicides in Christendom due to debt. Many Christians would get out of debt if they heard that.

I believe God heals. I've seen it also in my life and ministry, even in my personal life. But I also believe that not every Christian is healed.

That's a plain fact. You've got to shut your eyes and live in an imaginary world to imagine that every Christian is healed. Or that everyone who has faith is healed.

And I want to tell you honestly, everyone who has faith is not healed. And it's not because of a lack of faith. And you say, why? I say, I don't know.

I don't think we have all the answers. But I want to live in a world of reality. Not imagine.

An imaginary world where I imagine things which are not really true. And I believe, as I said, I've taught this also that any time a person is sick, a Christian is sick, we must pray for healing. I do that.

At home, whenever my children were sick, anything, even a cough or a cold or a fever, I'd always lay my hands on that child and pray for healing. I've done that all my life. And I'm never in a church in Bangalore, anyone who comes to me for prayer for healing, I always pray.

I don't always guarantee that I have faith that they will be healed, but I do pray. Sometimes I see healings. Some which are almost miraculous.

And many other times, however much I pray, a person dies. I don't know. I don't have the answer, but I want to live in a world of reality.

But it's got nothing to do with money. That is for sure. Nothing to do with money.

And the same thing with clearing your debts. It's not by giving money that you clear your debts. I teach very strongly in all the churches I have responsibility for that we must not be in debt as far as possible.

The Bible never says don't be in debt. But the Bible does say in Romans 13 and verse 8, don't owe anybody anything. Now there's a difference between don't owe anybody anything and don't be in debt.

Don't owe anybody anything means if you are in debt, please clear it as soon as possible. Don't remain in debt. Try your best to clear it.

Because God realizes, the Bible is very realistic and the Holy Spirit realizes there can be emergencies where a poor man, a sudden emergency, could be a medical emergency, could be some other thing. Sometimes he's got to pay in advance for a house in India, and he doesn't have money and he can't sleep

on the street. He has to borrow something from someone, or a bank perhaps.

And the Holy Spirit recognizes that, and that's why he never says don't borrow. But he does say pay it back as soon as possible. Don't remain in debt.

Owe no man anything. So that's what I also teach, that of course the best thing is, if you're wise from the beginning itself, I always tell people who work, you must always try and save some money. There's nothing wrong in saving money.

The Bible says don't lay out treasure for yourselves, that's chapter 6. But it also says in 2 Corinthians 12 verse 14, lay out something for your children. You know that verse? 2 Corinthians 12 verse 14 says, parents must lay out something for their children. So how can you do that unless you save some money? So I teach the whole Bible.

You know the devil once quoted one scripture to Jesus, and Jesus quoted another scripture and said you've got to balance that one scripture with this scripture. So I say you must save some money. Jesus had a savings account, and the bank was a corrupt one, it was a scavenger, but Jesus did save some money for the coming days.

He didn't spend everything the same day prior. So there's nothing wrong with having a savings account, because that way you save yourself from debt in a time of emergency. There's nothing wrong with that.

But you must realize that you can't come to God and say I'm going to give you money to clear my debt, because God's not a businessman. And there are so many people who are being swindled out of that, healing and prosperity by giving money to God. It's an absolute deception.

In the Old Testament, the gospel was a gospel of health and wealth. Not only a gospel of health and wealth. If you read Deuteronomy chapter 28, it's very clear.

God said if you obey me, I'll give you plenty of money. You will never be in debt. I'll give you good health.

I'll give you many children. That's the one nobody preaches nowadays. You only preach the first two.

But the Old Testament gospel included plenty of money, good health, plenty of children, and your business, your farms and your fields prosper. But that is an Old Testament gospel. There's not a single verse in the Old Testament that speaks about how to go to heaven.

You read from Genesis to Malachi. Nobody there had a hope that when I die, I'm going to be with the Lord in heaven. That comes in the New Testament.

Every blessing promised in the Old Testament was earthly. The Lord promised, I'll give you a land on this earth. What about heaven, Lord? No.

No promise about heaven. But I'll give you a land on the earth. I'll defeat all your enemies.

And I'll give you, you'll be the number one nation on the earth if you obey me. If you don't obey me, you'll be crushed. And you know that was fulfilled.

But I'll give you plenty of money, plenty of health, and plenty of children. And God kept his word. But when they disobeyed, they lost everything.

But in the New Testament, everything in the Old Testament becomes spiritual. If there was a sacrifice, a goat or a lamb or a bullock that they offered as a sacrifice to God, today our sacrifices are spiritual, inward. And not these physical things.

In the Old Testament, there was a temple, which is the place where God would be met today. But it's not a church. God is in the body of Christ in the church, which is a body.

So everything there in the Old Testament, which is physical, has been replaced by something spiritual. Very important to understand this. So, they had a physical lamb.

They had to kill the Passover lamb every year. Today we believe the lamb of God died on Calvary. And it's a spiritual relationship with Christ that brings us to salvation.

In the same way, that physical wealth that was promised in the Old Testament, today it becomes spiritual wealth. I can be spiritually an extremely wealthy person, which means I overcome sin in my life. I partake of God's nature of love and joy and peace.

I become rich with love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, self-control, all through the spirit. And I get spiritual help, freedom from sin. And I get spiritual children.

All those Old Testament blessings become spiritual. And it comes through faith and obedience, like we sing in that song, trust in the way, for there is no other way. But it's got nothing to do with giving money to God.

That is so very important to understand. And that's why I say there is a need for another reformation in our time, to deliver people from thinking that God wants money. He's not a businessman.

He's not a beggar. Very often God is portrayed as a beggar. And that's an absolute disgrace.

That's the thing which I want to expose. I believe some of you face these type of things and you don't take a stand against it. Why don't you take a stand against it? Why aren't you angry? Do you know what Jesus felt like when he saw people making money in the temple and he saw those poor people being cheated by the - they're selling the lambs and the goats and the doves at an exorbitant rate because they knew these poor people had to come, had to make sacrifices, and some of them came all the way from Galilee.

They couldn't bring the lambs and goats from there. So he said, we'll give it to you here, but the price is high, especially at sacrifice time. Now, if people were selling all those things in the marketplaces, there was no - Jesus never disturbed them.

But when they did it in the temple, that's the only time you see Jesus violent. He didn't go out and preach a sermon to them. He didn't go out and say to them, will you gentlemen please move out from here.

It says he made a whip in John chapter 2. Can you picture this? I don't know if you've ever seen a painting of this. But Jesus taking a whip and chasing all the animals and turning the tables of the money changers. And he says, get out of here, you fellows.

You'll make my house a den of robbers. Robbing the poor people of their money. You know, if Jesus were to come into Christendom today, I'm talking about Protestant Christendom.

Then because of charismatic Christendom, he would do exactly the same thing today. Drive out these people who are exploiting the poor people of their money and fulfilling their own pockets. That's what those merchants were doing in the temple.

Where did that money go? You think that money went into building the temple? No. It went into the pockets of those business people and little commission to the priests, the high priests and all. But he used to get his commission if he wanted to do these things in the temple.

And Jesus was the only one who had the courage to chase them out. He'd do the same thing today. He was angry when he saw people exploiting the poor and taking money from them in the name of God.

What I want to ask you, some of you say you're spirit filled, some of you say you're devoted to Jesus. Why aren't you angry when you see this happening all around you? If God's people would take a stand against this, this thing would stop. But so many of God's people support these crooked preachers by selling money to them.

But they hope they'll get some blessing. Well, it's not my duty to change their ways, but I have to tell you the truth so that in the day of judgment, God will tell you, I sent my servant to tell you the truth, and why did you still continue supporting these crooks? I believe he'll ask you that. I don't have the slightest doubt about it.

God's work must be done in God's way. Why is the church called the body of Jesus Christ? Because God demonstrated to the world by sending his son in a bodily form. That was the first body of Jesus Christ, his physical body.

He walked on the earth. And the church is called the body of Christ because we are supposed to carry on the same work that Jesus did in his body by the same principles. Do you know that Jesus never asked anybody for money? Never.

He didn't receive gifts, you read. When some people gave him gifts, he accepted it. You read that in Luke chapter 8, verse 3. That when people gave, he received a gift because he had the support from disciples and some of them were married.

But he never asked anybody for money. He never told anybody that God can heal you if you give money to him. God will heal you of your debt if you give money to him.

He never sent a report of his work to anybody. And so many of these so-called prayer letters are begging letters asking for money. You know that.

And the apostles who followed Jesus, Paul, Peter, they also never sent a report of their work to anybody. They never asked anybody for money. Let me tell you this.

There are two or three chapters in the Bible where Paul urges the Christians in the Corinth to collect some money. 1 Corinthians 16, 2 Corinthians chapter 8 and chapter 9. And if you read carefully, he is asking them to collect money to give to the poor believers in Jerusalem who are in dire straits, not having enough money, give to the poor. Never did Paul say, I'm doing a work for God, support my ministry.

Not even once. He never did the collection for himself. He never asked anybody to send money to him.

Sometimes the Philippian Christians would send some money to Paul, he would receive it, but he never asked anybody. Those apostles and Jesus Christ believed that their Heavenly Father would take care of them. That if they sought the kingdom of God first and His righteousness, all that they needed would be added to them.

That's how they did it. That is how the first body of Christ lived on this earth for 33 1/2 years. Never asking anybody for money.

Of course, in the early days he worked as a doctor and earned his money. And then when he was in full-time work for 3 1/2 years, he just trusted his father to provide him. Prompting different people to give.

But never advertising his needs, never telling people to give or asking for money. Now people say, that cannot happen now. Why not? Has God changed? You see, that cannot happen.

Things are different nowadays. You know, when I started serving the Lord, this is a message I heard everywhere. Everybody would ask for some money.

And I said, Lord, I don't want to do it that way. I want to do the body of Christ. It must be exactly like Jesus did it.

So, let me tell you my honest testimony. Paul once, more than once, wrote, you know, he wrote to the Corinthians, I never took money from you. He wrote to the Ephesians in Acts 20.

He told them, I never took money from you. He told the Thessalonians in 2 Thessalonians 3, I never took money from you. He said, I worked and supported myself so that I can not be a burden to any of you.

That's the word he used in 2 Corinthians 12. I will not be a burden to any of you. That's why they did a work that pleased God.

It's rare to find that type of work today. Anyway, we decided when we started our churches that we try to go back to the way the apostles did it. We never want to do what Jesus never did.

So, we now have many, many churches, at least 80 of them in different countries over the last 42 years. Let me tell you something. Some of them are in the poorest villages in Germany.

We have never, ever sent a report of our work to anybody in the world in these 42 years. Why? Because Jesus never did it. The apostles never did it.

We never asked anybody in all these years to support our work. Why? Because Jesus never did it. The apostles never did it.

And our Heavenly Fathers always provided our needs. We have a lot of expenses because we have many, we have at least 200 conferences in these 40 years and we always give free food and accommodation to all of them. And here's the other thing.

In all of our churches in 42 years, we have never taken a collection, we have never passed an offering bag to any of our churches in 42 years. Why? Because Jesus said, when you give, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. When you put money, when you put an offering bag in front of you, not only your left hand, but everybody around you knows what's happening.

We don't believe that. We read in the Bible that Jesus sat next to an offering box and a widow came and put some money in the offering box. I said, that's the way to do it.

That's the way Jesus has shown us. But we keep an offering box because we don't want to get hit, because we don't want to get hit on the head. And I'll tell you something.

We've never had a lack in 42 years. Because I wanted to prove, he wanted to prove, God is the same, even today, as in the first century. And in the poorest of villages of India, he is the same as he is in any other part of the world.

I want to encourage you and challenge you. Remember what Jesus said. There are only two monsters.

God and money. The right one. I want to share a little more about that, but we'll sing a song about it.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/IFDM3yjCx8k.mp4>

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