

On The Church And On Women

by Zac Poonen

This sermon addresses questions related to the church, sisters' roles, church leadership, handling church funds, and overcoming discouragement. It emphasizes the church's calling to do good and deliver people from oppression, the importance of making disciples, and the need to follow Christ-like principles in ministry. It also discusses the various roles of women in the church, the significance of quality leadership, faithful handling of church funds, and prioritizing oneness with one's spouse over attachment to children. Additionally, it provides advice for mothers with young children and encourages seeking encouragement through the ministry of becoming more like Christ to overcome discouragement.

Scripture: Acts 10:38, Matthew 28:19, 2 Corinthians 4:1, Romans 8:28, 1 Corinthians 11:3, Proverbs 3:5, Jeremiah 17:5

Topics: "Church Leadership", "Women's Roles in Ministry"

Description

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Transcript

I'm going to answer a few questions that we have received. These are mainly related to the church and to sisters. So we'll answer them one by one.

Okay. Could you kindly share a little about our specific calling as a church? The general calling for all believers is to be witnesses for Christ. And the church is called the body of Christ, meaning that it should do the same thing that the earthly body of Christ did for the thirty three and a half years when he was on earth.

Everything that Jesus did, the body of Christ must do. Acts 10.38 says that Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and he went around doing good. And delivered people who were oppressed by the devil.

So that is our basic calling. Do good, deliver people who are oppressed by Satan. That is a very wide ministry.

Jesus told us to go and make disciples of all nations. And so it's not enough just to bring them to Christ. Matthew 28.19 and 20 says make disciples and teach them to do every single thing that I have taught you.

Matthew 28.19 says make disciples and teach them to do every single thing that I have taught you. Now unfortunately most of the Christian work in the world is only bringing people to just forgiveness of sins. They are not making them disciples and teaching them to do everything that Jesus taught.

So if I were to use an example. Supposing Jesus in his carpenter shop is employing many carpenters because there are many orders he gets. And he appoints many carpenters to work for him in Nazareth.

And supposing the order is for 100 tables to be made. Say he has got 5 carpenters. And 4 of them are only making the legs of the tables.

So they work and work and work and make these 400 legs for 100 tables. So these tables are required urgently. What will the other carpenters do? No, there are 5 carpenters, 4 of them are making legs.

He will make a table top. So that at least one table is ready. Then he will make another table top.

One more table will be ready. But if he also joins the others making legs, then no table will be ready for a long long time. That is how we see our calling.

So many people have gone around India bringing people to forgiveness of sins. We thank God for that. Just like this one carpenter thanks all these people who have made all these legs.

They are necessary. So we are not against people who have done that. But it is an incomplete job.

So then we have to complete that job. And not go around doing more of the same thing. So that is why we have emphasized making disciples.

Now some people think that means we are against evangelism. If this one carpenter makes only table tops, does it mean he is against making the legs of the tables? Why doesn't he make some legs? Because there are so many legs already made lying around which are not completed tables. In today's work it is not just 4 out of 5 but 99 out of 100 who are doing only the legs.

That means they are only bringing people to forgiveness of sins. So we want to complete the job. And not spend our time ignoring this vast ministry.

Which is to bring people to discipleship and to teach them to obey everything that Jesus commanded. But if we meet an unbeliever we will definitely seek to evangelize him. And we have done that.

We have planted churches where there was no church for 2000 years. That is evangelism. The only thing we don't boast about it, we don't talk about it.

Many people do evangelism only among other Christian churches. We have sought to spread the gospel to all people. And we don't want to advertise statistics and all because that can cause problems for many people.

There are so many groups boasting about how many non-Christians they have brought to Christ and all that. They unnecessarily create problems for those people. We live before God and do our work before God.

Everything we do is geared towards making people disciples and building them into the body of Christ. That is our calling. We fellowship with everybody, all believers.

But we can't work together with people who don't have the same calling. I personally have an appreciation for what Mother Teresa has done. In the name of Christ, picking up dying people from the streets.

I think Jesus would have done it. And she is manifesting one aspect of Christ there. That's not my calling.

And so, I don't do that. That doesn't mean I am against what she is doing. Some people think that anything you don't do, you are against it.

No. We support a lot of things, but we don't feel that is our specific calling. Our calling is to make disciples.

That depends on the gift God has given to each person. I cannot be an evangelist if God hasn't given me that gift. I can be a witness for Christ like everybody else.

That everybody must be. But my calling is not as an evangelist. We have brothers in our church who are evangelists.

They do that. And then, I do the rest of the job. So, to use an illustration, Evangelism is to make someone who is not a part of the body of Christ, the part of the body of Christ.

Body of Christ. So, here is an example. Here is one potato on this table.

A curry. Now, I have to make, that is a picture of an unbeliever. I have to make that a part of this body, which is a picture of the body of Christ.

How can this potato become blood, flesh and bones of my body? I can't do it. God can do it. But God uses me.

So, first my hand goes out and reaches and takes that potato. Puts it into the mouth. This is the ministry of evangelism.

You take that unbeliever and put him inside. But, the potato has still not become a part of my body. Then another ministry takes over.

The hand has finished its job. After that, the teeth have to start their job. Chews that and the throat has to swallow it.

Still not a part of my body. Then it goes to the stomach. And all types of acids and all are poured on it.

From inside the stomach, all types of acids and all are poured on it. That is like a prophetic ministry in the church. Many other things happen inside the body.

After some weeks. That potato has now become a part of my body. Blood and flesh have become a part of my body.

So, the ministry of evangelism was not the only ministry required there. And the stomach can never do what the hand does to reach out and take that. And the hand cannot do what the stomach does.

So, God gives different ministries to different people in the body. So, we must know what is the gift God has given us. We work together with other people in the church.

But no church has got all the ministries. Some are called to emphasize one more than the other. So, each person must see what God has given them.

The third question is this. When we work together with other churches and ministries, we must not compromise the principles of Jesus Christ in any ministry. There are some people who say the end justifies the means.

That means you can use any means as long as you reach the correct end. That means it doesn't matter what means you use. So long as you convert people, it's enough.

So long as you convert people, it's enough. Now, if that is correct, then we can give money to people and convert them. Or we can tell lies and convert them.

That is not correct. All the means we must use must be Christ-like. So we must see the Bible and see how Jesus did it and follow that.

For example, a lot of money is used in God's work. It's not enough only to be faithful with the money given. It's not enough to say, I'm faithful, I don't take any money.

It's not enough to say, I'm faithful, I don't take any money. But it's also important to say, how did you raise that money to do God's work? Is it the same way Jesus did it? You read in Luke 8, verse 2 and 3, that Jesus received money from different people who gave him. Because he certainly needed money because there were 13 people there, some of them who had families, he had to support.

So, including him. 12 disciples. And he had to support some of their families.

But he never sent a report about his work to get money. The apostles also never sent any report of their work to get money. So where did this idea come up in Christian work of sending reports to get money? That is from the political world.

They go around canvassing to get money for the political party. So, just like David put the ark on a bullock cart and God judged them, today people are also imitating the world and adopting these methods of political parties. They say, provided our ultimate goal is to convert, it doesn't matter how we raise the money.

That means, the end justifies the means. Once you adopt that method, you can do every worldly thing. There was one group where they taught the girls to give their bodies to men to bring those men to Christ.

Can you imagine such an evil thing? So, we always have to ask ourselves, do you believe the end justifies the means? So, no. It's not only enough the end is right, the means must also be right. The means must be Christ-like.

What Jesus and the apostles did not do, you must not do. So, that is very important we must bear in mind. That's why we cannot work with certain churches.

For example, they have big crusades for evangelism in different cities. And I never joined them because they go collecting money from the unbelievers before the meeting. The Bible says, you must never take

money from unbelievers for God's work.

Because of all these worldly methods that 99% of Christians use, I cannot work with any of them. I cannot work with any of them because they use un-Christian methods that are not found in the Bible. I cannot work with any of them because they use un-Christian methods that are not found in the Bible.

So, that is where we have to be careful. It's better to do less work in a Christ-like way than to do a lot of work in a non-Christ-like way. That means, we must do our work exactly like Jesus and the apostles did it.

And we work with all churches that are willing to follow that principle. And we will not change that just for the sake of the expansion of the work. Could you share briefly about church leadership? Every leader must be able to say, like Paul, follow me as I follow Christ.

In other words, his life must be an example. His attitude to money must be an example. His family, the way he has brought up his children must be an example.

And his co-workers, with whom he is closest, must also be an example. Then, he can be a leader. But if his life is not an example and his family is not an example, he must go and do something else.

But then you say, then there will be hardly anybody left to do Christian work. Yeah, that's enough. There will be good quality leadership then.

Jesus did his whole work with eleven people. But they were quality people. And that is a great tragedy today.

You have got hundreds of people who don't have that quality of life. So, leaders must be able to say, like Paul, follow me as I follow Christ. His life must back up what he preaches.

And his family and the church he has built must back up what he preaches. He must not be like a politician trying to canvass votes to support him in any local church. He must not be like a politician trying to canvass votes to support him in any local church.

I have seen elders like that, who go around just trying to get people to support them. Such people are politicians, they should go to politics and not be leaders in churches. Such people are politicians, they should go to politics and not be leaders in churches.

How can we be faithful in handling church funds? We must be careful that money given for the church, we must not touch one paisa of that ourselves. If somebody gives you a gift, you can take it. You may even give a birthday gift to a rich man, you can take it.

A Christian worker is just an ordinary brother. Not a Christian worker. That is what we believe.

That is what we practice. Church money must never be handled only by one person, at least by two people. That is for a good testimony.

That accounts must be kept perfectly. There are laws in the country concerning auditing and all. We must follow those laws.

What do you think are the various roles of women in the church? See, in most places, 50% of the people are women, churches. And in most countries, 50% of the human beings are women. And in countries like

India, women are able to reach women in a better way.

So, women can be great personal evangelists. So, women can be great personal evangelists. They meet so many women and neighbors and all that, they can evangelize them.

The only thing forbidden to women in 1 Timothy 2 The only thing forbidden to women in 1 Timothy 2 is leadership in the church and a teaching ministry. is leadership in the church and a teaching ministry. Other than that, they can evangelize.

They can share the word. Sharing whatever in a small way, not like a teacher. Like a testimony as to what God has spoken to them from His word.

Like a testimony as to what God has spoken to them from His word. And then, of course, they can have a great ministry as mothers And then, of course, they can have a great ministry as mothers and Sunday school teachers and children. As women, we can show by our lives, more than by our words.

As women, we can show by our lives, more than by our words. There are so many books written about how women can do this There are so many books written about how women can do this and women can teach and a lot of psychology books are there. And there is a lot of movement towards freedom for women.

Women get jobs which even men can do. They get the same kind of jobs. And so, there are lot of worldly ideas for women now.

And so, there are lot of worldly ideas for women now. And that's good for us as women to come back to what the scripture teaches And that's good for us as women to come back to what the scripture teaches God made us below our husbands. We should remember that.

First is Christ, then the husband, then the wife. Even if our husband is not converted, we should realize what is the place God has put us in. So we can have the wrong idea that we have to correct our husband and show them what is God's word as a teacher.

We should remember that in God's word, in 1 Peter and in Titus, there are many verses for us as women. And the Lord says that by our respectful behavior and our pure life, our husbands can be one. That's why I said that more than our words, our life can speak.

If we are respectful, then our children will learn to be respectful too. And by our lives, many people will be drawn to the Lord. The order of Christ, husband, wife in that one below the other is found in 1 Corinthians 11 verse 3. Christ is the head of the man, man is the head of the woman.

And there is almost every job that a woman does, a man can do better. Even cooking, the best cooks in the world are men. You go to these 5 star hotels, it's not women, but men who are doing all the first class cooking.

But there is one job that men are hopeless at and that is to bear children. But there is one job that men are hopeless at and that is to bear children. That God is given entirely to women.

When the children grow up, a mother knows immediately what the child is crying for. So that is a tremendous ministry to bring up children. So that is a tremendous ministry to bring up children.

I remember a brother saying, I asked him what his wife is doing. She said she is making disciples of all the children in my house. What a fantastic ministry that is.

What a fantastic ministry that is. It is a very important ministry. Timothy became an apostle because his mother trained him like that.

Could you give a few words of advice to mothers with young children? Could you give a few words of advice to mothers with young children? I can give from my testimony when my children were small. First of all, I decided I will stop working outside the home. I gave up my job.

And I realized that there was such a lot to be done at home that I couldn't take up a job outside. That meant that I had to be frugal in my life. That meant that I had to be frugal in my life.

And that was good because now I see my children also have learnt not to waste money, even if they have got good jobs, not to waste money unnecessarily. And whenever I could, I would talk to my children about godly things and godly principles. And whenever I could, I would talk to my children about godly things and godly principles.

I found that I could not spend so much time sitting and talking with other sisters because I had to cook food for my children and get the home ready for my children. I found that I could not spend so much time sitting and talking with other sisters because I had to cook food for my children and get the home ready for my children. If anybody wanted to see me, I would tell them to come between 2 and 4. I am a little free at that time.

If anybody wanted to see me, I would tell them to come between 2 and 4. I am a little free at that time. And before the children woke up, I tried to do all my cooking and get things ready for them, so that I won't be stressed out when my children are with me. And before the children woke up, I tried to do all my cooking and get things ready for them, so that I won't be stressed out when my children are with me.

And every month they had monthly tests, so then I had to check the smaller ones in their studies. And every month they had monthly tests, so then I had to check the smaller ones in their studies. So I used to advise them, talk to them about God's word, pray with them, sing with them.

And sometimes when they saw I was getting angry, I would tell them, Mummy is really sorry I got angry, pray for me that I won't do like that. So that they could realize that I am a normal person and I too was wanting to follow the Lord. So that they could realize that I am a normal person and I too was wanting to follow the Lord.

And I tried to show them Godly goals, not earthly ambitions. And I tried to show them Godly goals, not earthly ambitions. Even though they were interested in playing cricket in the evenings, I had some restrictions.

What else was there? After some years of marriage I find that I get much attached to my children and in the process cool off in my love towards my husband. How can I handle this situation? All of us mothers have the tendency to love our children very much. But that's not God's order.

We should love our husband more than our children. But that's not God's order. We should love our husband more than our children.

That's why I used to pray to God to help me do these things in the right order. I used to pray for that and God has been helping me in that area. Now all my children are married and I can leave them alone.

I mean I pray for them but I am not so attached to them. But if I was holding on to them, I would have been a problem in their married life. Their wife would have found me a difficult person if I was hanging on to my children.

So that's why it's good to let go of our children and ask God to help us to be more and more attached to our husband. At the same time, if our children are in any trouble or difficulty, we can run and help them. And then our daughters-in-law will realize the correct order.

They too will love their husbands. I feel that my relatives are negatively influencing my oneness with my husband. How can I address this problem? We should tell our relatives, please leave us alone.

My husband and I are one unit and I want to run my family with him, not with you all. Even if they tell us, they should realize that we are not going to listen to them or try to influence us even through our children. They'll get the message when they realize that we are not doing what they tell us.

I get easily discouraged when faced with tough situations. Could you give some advice? Discouragement can come to all of us, but the Lord is the one who can lift us up. Sometimes as women, we run to our mothers or some friend for comfort if we are in some trouble.

That's not the strong, I mean that's not the correct way I feel. Because in Jeremiah 5 it says, Cursed is the man who depends on man and trusts in man for anything. And blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord.

So any discouragement comes, we say, Lord, I want to look to you and you can encourage me. And God will encourage us from his word and by his mighty power. There is one verse that really we need to understand if we want to overcome discouragement.

This applies to men, women, everybody. 2 Corinthians 4 verse 1 Therefore, since we have received this ministry, as we have received mercy, we just don't get discouraged. It means we never get discouraged.

Which ministry is the thing that prevents us from getting discouraged? This is a ministry all believers get. When he says, therefore, since we have received this ministry. What is this ministry? That is mentioned in the previous verse.

That is the ministry of being changed into the image of Christ by the Holy Spirit. Into the likeness of Christ. From glory to glory.

If that is the ministry we want. Lord, I want the Holy Spirit to make me more and more like Jesus. We will never get discouraged.

Because everything that happens is going to work for my good to make me like Jesus. Romans 8 verse 28 says, God makes everything work for our good. If we love God.

In the next verse it says, that good is not more money or anything like that. But more likeness to Christ. So discouragement comes when I have got some other earthly goals.

You want to marry somebody, it didn't work out, you get discouraged. Or you want a particular job, you didn't get that, you get discouraged. You want to get admission in a college, you didn't get it, you get

discouraged.

You want to get admission in a college, you didn't get it, you get discouraged. These are all worldly things. Or you lost some money, you get discouraged.

That is because you are having 101 other ministries. But if you have this ministry, mentioned here, of becoming like Christ more and more and more. You will never get discouraged no matter what happens.

Because you will say praise the Lord, this thing is also going to make me more like Jesus. Things that look good and things that look bad in human eyes. If you love God, God makes it work all for good.

If you love God, God makes it work all for good. There is a water purifier that they sell to purify water. It is called Aquaguard.

They will come and demonstrate it to you. If you put dirty water or clean water on top, you get clean water underneath. Romans 8.28 is like that.

People do good, people do bad, it all works out for my good. How can you be discouraged if everything is working for your good? If you get a promotion in your job and your salary becomes double, do you get discouraged? No. That is for your good.

When you have this ministry of becoming like Christ, everything will work for your good. That is why Paul says, I never get discouraged. I found that in my life too.

I used to be so discouraged in the early part of my Christian life. Because I had so many other ambitions. Now I have only one.

Only one. To become a little more like Christ everyday. Like Paul says, you never get discouraged.

Man or woman. Anybody. In sickness or in health.

In loss or in gain. If you can become more like Christ, you never get discouraged. That is the fundamental problem with so many believers.

Is that the last question? Okay, that is a good note on which to close. So, let us pray. Heavenly Father.

Help us to refocus and see what our goal in life should be. To be like Jesus Christ. And to recognize that everything in life, you plan to make us like Christ.

So, help us we pray. To see this clearly. We pray in Jesus name.

Amen.

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