

Planted by God Himself (Video)

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of building a New Covenant church, highlighting the need for believers to understand and live by the principles of the New Covenant. It stresses the significance of being under grace, having victory over sin, and progressively becoming sanctified to be more like Christ. The sermon also addresses the need for humility, brokenness, and reliance on the Holy Spirit in building the body of Christ, even in the face of potential shame and ridicule.

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Scripture: Matthew 7:24, Luke 1:35, John 15:5, Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 53:3

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Description

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Transcript

Praise the Lord. We're going to consider, God willing, starting today in the next six Sundays, except for next Sunday, a study on building a New Covenant church. Now, if you've been attending this church or listening to me regularly, you probably noticed that I speak a lot about the New Covenant, the New Covenant life, New Covenant home, New Covenant church, and the New Covenant in general.

One reason is because I feel, after having observed Christians for 50 years in many parts of the world, that the biggest area of a lack of understanding is in this matter of the New Covenant, how the New Covenant has replaced the Old Covenant. I would say that 90% of believers I have met are living under the Old Covenant, even those who claim to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues. Number one proof of it is they have no victory over sin.

It's one of the clearest marks of being under the law. Romans 6, 14, sin shall not rule over you for you are under grace and not under law, which proves that if you're under law, sin rules over you. If you're under grace, sin does not rule over you.

In your conscious life, God wants you to have victory over all conscious sin and gradually, progressively discover the unconscious areas of your life, which is 90% in the beginning, progressively through life. And that's how we increasingly become sanctified and more and more like Christ. But most Christians are only interested in ministry, in doing something for God like Martha, and they are rightly rebuked by Jesus.

Very few understand what Jesus said, that one thing is needful to sit at his feet and listen to his word and do what he tells us to do. Very few understand that. Most of Christian work today is done on the principle of the big corporations like Coca-Cola and other companies like that, with a CEO on top who's got various people working under him at different levels and he earns the highest salary.

It's absolute nonsense to call that the Church of Jesus Christ. That's an organization. It's Babylon from top to bottom.

So building a new covenant church is not easy. If you want to know how difficult it is, it's like a virgin having a baby. You want to know how difficult it is? It's impossible, humanly speaking.

That's why the church is called the body of Christ. The first body of Christ was born supernaturally, the body of Jesus. And there is an example for every subsequent body of Christ that was really the body of Christ, where the church is born.

It's never the result of human planning. It's not that Joseph decided, we're going to produce the son of God. He has to be as conceited as the devil himself to think like that.

And when human beings, even believers say, I'm going to go there and plant a new covenant church, you've got to be just as crazy. Can you imagine Mary saying, I'm going to produce the son of God. Yeah.

There's a great example for us in Genesis, which you read carefully. You see all scriptures given by inspiration of God and is given to us to lead us, to make us perfect, to make our homes perfect, to make our churches perfect. That's why we press on to perfection.

Many people accuse us saying, hey, you guys think you're perfect. I say, come and see what's written in front of our pulpit that is press on to perfection, which is the clearest proof that we acknowledge we're not perfect. I said, it's you people who never preach on pressing on to perfection.

You imagine that you're perfect because you never preach on pressing on to perfection. I suppose you imagine that you are perfect. We keep preaching and pressing on to perfection because we publicly acknowledge all the time.

We're not perfect. So many misconceptions the devil seeks to circulate so as to prevent people from listening to the truth that can change their lives and deliver them from his grip. This is a tactic that Satan is employed right from the Old Testament days.

He would accuse the true prophets of being false prophets and the false prophets who got their degrees from the Bible schools would be exalted as the true prophets and blind Israelites believe that. And throughout the centuries, Jesus was called a false prophet. Most Paul was called a false prophet.

They all said, no, this is not this guy is not teaching what Moses and the Old Testament prophets taught. And throughout history, any man who has dared to speak the whole counsel of God and quoting only scripture and demolishing human traditions would be called a false prophet. And the reason is because

the devil doesn't want people to hear the whole truth of God because Jesus said, when you know the truth, it'll set you free.

Why is there so much bondage in the lives of many believers? They don't know the truth. Why is there so much, so many problems in Christian homes? They don't know the truth. Why is it so-called believers in many Western countries divorce when there are non-Christians in this country? There are millions of non-Christians in this country who don't divorce.

And some of those divorced people are pastors. Are they going to come and teach these non-Christians about Christianity? What Christianity? This is the pathetic state Christianity has come to today and people accept it. Look at the money-loving preachers and pastors on television.

Which of them can say, I represent Jesus Christ who never took an offering once in his life, who never asked anybody for money at any time. Some of them say, I've got a greater ministry than Jesus Christ. Really? You have a greater ministry than Jesus Christ? That shows the height of their blindness, stupidity, and conceit.

So there's a great need in our days to see new covenant living, new covenant homes, new covenant churches. It's far more glorious than what we see among normal believers. In Genesis chapter three, you know, when Adam sinned, God told him, see God is so compassionate.

He's already made a provision for Adam's sin. And he told him before he punished him saying that the earth will be cursed, he made a promise. And that is before he even spoke to Eve or Adam, he said to the serpent something which is a promise for our redemption.

I will put enmity, verse 15, Genesis 3, 15, between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. And her seed will bruise you on the head, you'll bruise him on the heel. Portraying, it is a prophecy of the cross.

The first prophecy of the cross was given to the devil in the garden of Eden. The Lord said to the serpent, verse 14 and 15, you are going to be crushed before he punished even Adam. Teaching us once and for all that God is always on man's side against the devil.

Even when man sinned, God rebukes the devil first and prophesies that he's going to be crushed. It's a wonderful truth to learn right from Genesis 3 that God is always on my side against Satan. Even when I have sinned, he tells Satan you're going to be crushed.

It's wonderful to know that. Gives hope to all those who have fallen. God is on your side, not to leave you in your fallen condition, not to leave you in your sin, but to lift you up and make you stand and make you a man and a woman of God.

So the Lord said, I'm going to send a seed through the woman. And in some way, I think Adam and Eve understood. I don't know how they were very intelligent.

Remember, it was man, the height of his creation, the beginning of his creation, absolutely brilliant. I mean, the very fact that he couldn't give names to all the animals in the world. By the time I've come to animal number 100, I would forget all the other names which I've given to the 99 and I wouldn't be able to invent new names.

And imagine a man who gave names to thousands and thousands of animals. His brilliance must be supreme. So he understood that somehow this was going to be a supernatural birth and it would probably be God himself.

So in Genesis 4, it says here that a man had relations with his wife, Eve, and Eve conceived, verse 1, and she gave birth to Cain. And in the Living Bible, it reads like this. She gave birth to Cain, meaning I have created.

And she said, with the Lord's help, I have created a man. In the margin of some of our Bibles, it also says, I've gotten a man, even Jehovah, even the Lord. That means this child is the one who God promised, who's going to crush Satan's head.

I've created a man. You know, remember, this is the first time a child was born. It was absolutely phenomenal for a woman to think that out of my body, I could get a human being.

She really thought this was Jehovah come as a human being. Of course, with a little bit of God's help, I have created a man. And says, anyway, the Living Bible paraphrases like that.

Cain, meaning I've created. What do we learn from that? The conceit of a woman who thinks I can create something. Or the conceit of a man today who thinks I can go and build the body of Christ.

It's following in the footsteps of Eve. Was Cain somebody who crushed Satan's head? No. He crushed his brother Abel's head and Satan crushed his head.

It was the exact opposite of what Eve thought that little boy was. And when man goes out to say, I am going to build the body of Christ, he produces a Cain. That's the first thing we've got to learn that you can't do it.

It's a lesson which God tried to teach people throughout the Old Testament. Abraham. God said to Abraham, okay, through you, I'm going to produce a child who is going to be through which all the families of the earth will be blessed.

And Abraham thought, oh boy, this is it. He remembers the old promise to Adam. Abraham was not an evil man.

He was just a misguided man. And a lot of Christians are not evil. They're just misguided.

He said, oh, God's going to use me to produce a seed that's going to bless the whole world. I'm going to do it. Let me get Hagar.

Sarah is sort of a failure. So let me, that's like saying I couldn't build a church here, but this place, I'm going to build a church here. Let me get Hagar.

And he produces Ishmael. And he says to God, oh, that Ishmael might live before you. And God says, no, what's wrong with Ishmael? He's muscular, strong, handsome.

What's wrong with your church? It's got so many people. The singing is wonderful. The music is wonderful.

Lord, this is your body. And God says, no, it isn't. It's an Ishmael.

Why is it not your body? Because it is built by human strength and ability, human wisdom, human cleverness, Abraham's brilliant brain, thinking up how to help God do his work. Like Eve said, with God's help, I've created a man. This has been the failure throughout human history.

And that is why we need to recognize the importance of two verses that Jesus spoke. Let me show you them. Very, very important.

Matthew 15 and verse 13. It's a very, very important principle. And I would read it like this.

Every church, which my heavenly father did not plant, will be uprooted. Every plant, whatever it is. Every church, which my heavenly father did not plant, will be uprooted.

These people are trying to do it. Verse 14. Let them try to do it.

They are blind guides of the blind. And when a blind man tries to build a church, the body of Christ, he will lead other blind men and they'll both fall into a pit. The question is not whether your music in your church is good, whether there are 30,000 people in it.

The question is, has God planted it or did you plant it? Not only did God plant it, is he the one who is sustaining it? Or is it human psychology? Do you attract people with music? Do you attract people with psychology? Do you attract people with money? It's not of God then. The early apostles, they had no money, no music, no psychology. That's how they built the body of Christ.

Today, they built it with the power of the Holy Spirit. And when the power of the Holy Spirit is gone, they have to replace it. When the fire is gone, they have to replace it with painted fires.

And those painted fires are money, music, and psychology. And that's why we don't have the body of Christ in many places. It's Babylon.

The second verse I want to show you, which I believe is perhaps the greatest truth, that is John 15, verse 5, that Jesus wanted to teach his disciples. In all his miracles, I think this is the truth that Jesus wanted to teach. In John 15, verse 5, the last part, apart from me, you can do nothing.

Verse 4, as the branch middle cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. Can a branch produce fruit by itself, cut off the branch from the tree and keep it somewhere, see if it'll produce fruit? No. Even if it's borne fruit for 50 years, it's immediately dead.

50 years of experience of bearing fruit, it's no use. It's as useless, as helpless as a new branch. A new branch which started bearing fruit last year and a branch that's borne fruit for 50 years, both are equally dependent on the wine.

One is not more. One can't say, I've had 50 years experience now. I don't need to be so dependent on the wine like this new one.

No, sir. You need to be as dependent as the other one. God makes us equal in this area.

And that's why a believer who thinks I'm superior to somebody else is another conceited person who will only produce Ishmael's all his life. Who makes you superior to somebody else? Examine your own heart, my brothers and sisters. When God blesses you and you begin to think that makes you superior, that's the reason why God cannot use you anymore.

Think of the wonderful blessings God did in your life in the past. Why did it stop? Because it's very easy for God to bless a man. It's very difficult for God to keep a man humble after he has blessed him.

Has it gone well with your family? Your children are all believers. Praise the Lord. Has it puffed you up? Is it going to be the end of God's blessing upon your life and your children's life? Be careful.

Has God blessed you with some ministry? Have you gained honor in the church because of something you have done or some ability you have? And that makes you feel in your heart, oh, I'm superior to somebody. That moment, the blessing of God dries up. The greatest lesson we need to learn is verse 5, the last part, without me, you can do nothing.

Let me put it another way from that same sentence. Whatever you do apart from me will amount to nothing finally. Got it? Whatever you try to do apart from me will finally amount to zero.

Not now. In the eyes of man, it'll be great. But one day when God tests everything by fire, you'll discover it's zero.

So don't try to do things apart from Christ. It's all right in the world. In the world, you don't need Christ to advance in business and science and politics.

You don't need Jesus Christ. The greatest people in business and politics and science are not Christians. The human ability can accomplish a lot.

You don't need Christ's help to be an Olympic athlete, gold medal winner or anything. You don't need Christ's help to be the richest man in the world. And that's the folly of the prosperity gospel.

But if you want to build something that's going to last for eternity, like the body of Christ, not only you can't build it, you can't even initiate it. And I'll tell you another thing. The one who thinks I'm going to build the body of Christ is probably never going to build it.

Because God picks up the most unlikely person. Who everybody rejects. And picks him up and uses him.

That's how it is. Do you think people in Nazareth for 30 years who didn't know who Jesus was, you think God, they even thought he was the son of God? I mean, the Pharisees, great scholars thought he was the devil, prince of devils, Beelzebub. That's how blind you can be to what God thinks of a man.

Do you think when Peter was catching fish there by the way, by the seaside, people, all the other fishermen thought this man is going to be the greatest apostle. No. God picks ordinary people.

I mean, maybe somebody in the seminary of that Gamaliel ran in Jerusalem, people may have thought this man is going to be great man of God. But a lot of those guys went to hell. The one who became an apostle was this unknown fisherman.

And so, dear brothers and sisters, if you think that you have got the capabilities to build the church, I can assure you God will never use you. I can give it to you in writing. Or if you feel that you are going to be a blessing in the church, I can assure you, you will not be.

Let me show you in 1 Corinthians 1, the type of people whom God uses to do his work and to build his church. Verse 26, 1 Corinthians 1, 26. 1 Corinthians 1, 26.

Consider your calling, brethren. There are not many clever people in your midst, according to this flesh. I don't see the brightest and best in society in your church.

Are the brightest and best in society sitting here? Are the richest people in Bangalore sitting here? Are the cleverest people in Bangalore sitting here? Not many influential, not many high society families here. Hardly one. Isn't it obvious, I'm reading from the Message Bible, that God deliberately chose, now that's important, God deliberately chose men and women that their culture overlooks and that their society exploits and abuses.

God chooses these nobodies, nobodies, to expose the hollow pretensions of those who think they are somebodies. I like that. There's a song of Frederick Faber's which says, Lord, I like it best when you bring to naught the plans of clever men.

I like it too. God brings to nothing the plans of clever men when they try to do something, either to do God's work or to hurt God's service. God brings it to nothing.

That makes it quite clear that none of you can get by by blowing your own trumpet before God. Everything we have, whether it's right thinking or right linear, clean slur, state of fresh heart, everything comes from God. And so that's why we have the saying, if you're going to blow a trumpet, blow a trumpet for God, not for yourself.

That's great. If you want to blow a trumpet, blow it for God, blow it for Jesus Christ. Not to show off what a great person you are or what a wonderful family you have or what a wonderful church you have.

The whole principle, verse 29, is so that no man may boast before God. That's the principle. If we do a work, whether it's building a home or building a church, and we want some honor for it, you can be pretty sure God didn't plan it.

Or you're a thief, taking the honor that doesn't belong to you. And therefore, it's good to recognize that, Lord, apart from you, I can do nothing. I don't even want to try to produce an Ishmael.

I had a great burden. To have a burden is okay. You know, like Mary carried Jesus in her womb.

That's a burden. God needs a womb, which is a man's heart with a burden. That's what I call a womb, a spiritual womb.

God needed a womb for Jesus to be born in. And that first body of Christ needed a human vessel. God could have produced Jesus from nothing, the body of Jesus, I mean, into which the Son of God could have come.

I mean, Jesus himself is God. He could have created a body from nothing on the earth, just like he created Adam, and come into it and appeared and said, you know, I'm the Son of God. It could have been like that.

I mean, nobody could trace where somewhere in the desert, God could have made a human body and Jesus could have come into it and walked in just looking like an ornery man. Nobody would have known who his father or mother was. But he could have done the same ministry in three and a half years that Jesus did.

What's stopping him from that? That would have been a good way to do it. But then Jesus would not have been an example for our little children. How could Jesus be an example for five-year-olds and

eight-year-olds how to obey their parents if he himself came as a full-grown man? Then he can, certain groups of people, he cannot say, follow me.

He had to come as a baby. And the other thing is that God always does his work along with a man. He wants to do it along with us.

It's not the tree by itself that bears the fruit, it's the branch. But the branch needs the tree. But the tree needs the branch.

It's almost as though God has made himself dependent on man. See, I need you to do my work. Now, he doesn't have to do it.

There are millions of angels who do a better job than any of us. But I like that story in Acts chapter 10 where God sends an angel to Cornelius' house. And Cornelius is a guy who's desperately seeking salvation.

And the angel knows the gospel from A to Z. Don't you think angels know the gospel? Do you think the angels can preach the gospel better than you and me? I believe so. They have never sinned. And those angels will preach the glory of God.

Why didn't God tell the angel, go and tell Cornelius the gospel? Do you know the reason? What is it? He had not experienced it. In God's work, you are not supposed to speak anything you have not experienced. The angel could not say, Christ has died for me and forgiven my sin.

He could say Christ died for the sins of people. And if you have not experienced it yourself, shut your mouth. It's a lesson I learned there.

So he has to tell Cornelius, as it were, listen, I know this. I'm desperately wanting to tell you, but I can't tell you because I haven't experienced it. So you have to send for that sinful fellow who was converted called Peter.

He'll come and tell you. Sinner saved by grace. I know it'll take a few days for him to come, but you've got to wait.

What to do? I like that. God wants people who have experienced to tell up to the limit of their experience. A hypocrite is one who speaks more than what he's experienced.

And the Christian world is full of hypocrites. Don't be a hypocrite. That's the best way to ensure that you'll never be a part of the body of Christ.

Because you know, Jesus said concerning his body, John 14:30, the prince of the world comes and he's got nothing in me. You want to be a part of Christ's body, brother, sister, you better make sure the prince of the world's got nothing in you. That's the body of Christ, especially hypocrisy.

Don't pretend. You know, in the early church, the first couple that pretended, Ananias and Sapphira, why were they killed? Did they murder somebody? They didn't even gossip. They gave 50% of what they earned from selling their property.

How many people in the world give 50% of what they get from selling their property to God? Boy, today that fellow would be considered a wholehearted Christian. But in the early church, he got killed. Only one

reason.

Because when he gave 50%, he pretended that he was giving 100%. Oh, Lord, is that such a big crime? Think of how good he is. He's giving 50% of what he's selling property, selling value to God.

Now, God says hypocrisy is a terrible sin. And I'll ruthlessly eliminate it from the body. It's a gangrene that can kill the whole body.

And I got to cut it off. And he cut it off. That's why Ananias and Sapphira were killed.

It doesn't matter if you're weak. Don't be a hypocrite. It doesn't matter if you're in the kindergarten, even after 20 years.

Don't be a hypocrite. Just be honest and say, I'm in the kindergarten. I've been a bit slow in my spiritual education.

I'm lazy. I'm half-hearted. I've never got beyond kindergarten.

That's okay. You can be in the body. You won't be a very effective member of the body, but at least you're not a hypocrite.

But when you begin to think that you're spiritual, just because you've attended CFC for 20 years, you've got to be off your head. Spirituality does not depend. It's not like government service, where you have 20-year service and 25-year service.

It means nothing in the church. God can bring somebody today and in one year make him more spiritual than some of you who've been here for 30 years. That's how the body is built.

God chooses those who are nobodies and makes them somebodies. Why does he choose them? Because they've got nothing to boast about. So that no man should boast before God.

I'm not saying that you've got to be stupid. I'm not saying you've got to be dumb for God to use you. No, but I'm saying you've got to be humble.

That's what I'm saying. And it's easier for a nobody to be humble than for somebody. You tell me yourself, is it easier for a poor beggar to be humble or for a rich man? A rich man can be humble too.

I'm saying, which is easier? I worked among college graduates and I worked among villagers, illiterate villages. And I know the answer. College graduates can also be humble, but it's a battle.

But I've seen you go and speak to these simple villagers and you've heard me use this example. Supposing the chief minister were walking down this road and he dropped his handkerchief and somebody picked it up and gave it to him. He'd take it and move on.

Supposing a beggar was walking down this road and he dropped his handkerchief and you, a more educated man, picked it up and gave it to him. What would that beggar say? Sir, thank you so much for picking up my handkerchief. Because he thinks he's smaller than you.

You see, it's easier for him to be humble. Humble people are always thankful. Notice this, a humble person will be thankful for the smallest thing that anybody does for him.

It's a very important principle. Do you think that Mary, you know that in Israel, they knew this promise that the Messiah would come through a woman. And I can imagine all the young women were thinking, oh boy, I wish I could be the Messiah.

Just like a lot of young girls wish they were film actresses today. In those days in Israel, they were longing to be the mother of Messiah. I wish I could be them.

I wish God would choose me. I wish God would choose me. And there were great, smart, good-looking women and God bypassed all of them.

The clever ones and the people who thought that God would choose them because they knew so much of the Bible. And God chooses this completely unexpected 18-year-old girl in Nazareth. You know what reputation Nazareth had? You read in John 1, Nathanael said, can any good thing come out of Nazareth? A woman from that town, God picks up to be the mother of the Messiah.

I'll tell you, I've discovered through the years, I've studied Christian history. I mean, I've read books on it and I've seen through the years, God picks up the most unexpected people. He doesn't always pick up illiterate fishermen.

He sometimes picks up a very educated Paul as well. There's no partiality with God, but both must be humble. That's the point.

He doesn't say that I'll only pick up poor, uneducated people. He says it makes no difference. It makes no difference whether you're a PhD or an illiterate.

If you're humble, I'll choose both of you equally. It's humility. And Paul had to be humble and Peter had to be humble.

Both were proud. Fishermen can be proud too. Illiterate people can also be proud and educated people can be proud.

Both need to be humble. So there's no distinction before God, but Mary, she didn't have any high thoughts about herself. And when the angel comes, she gets a surprise.

She gets a surprise. I mean, if God were to come to you and say, I'm going to use you to build a church, you say, oh yeah, I was waiting for that, Lord. I always thought I was the sort of person you would pick up.

No, if you feel like that, you're not the one. But if you get like surprised, Lord, me? Lord, have you made a mistake? I'm sure it's not me. It must be the next house somebody.

You know, it's like Moses. There's a statement about Moses, which is very interesting in Acts of the Apostles in chapter seven, where Stephen speaks about him. Verse 22, Acts 7, 22, Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians.

And he was a man of power in words and deeds. But when he was approaching the age of 40, it entered into his mind to visit his brethren. You know, his mother had taught him from childhood, you are not an Egyptian, you're not an Egyptian, you're an Israelite, you're an Israelite.

And that remained in his head. So he visited his brethren who were slaves. When he saw one of them being treated unjustly, he took vengeance on him by striking down.

He was a muscular man to kill an Egyptian with a single blow. Guy died. And why did he do it? Listen to the reason, which is not mentioned in the Old Testament.

The reason is mentioned here in verse 24, sorry, verse 25. He thought his brothers would understand that like this, God was granting them deliverance through him. You fellas know who I am? You know, which colleges and universities I studied in? You know, I taught my class.

You know, I've done physical exercise, you see the muscle, do you see how I kill this Egyptian? You know, the influence I have in this whole country. God has chosen me to deliver you. They didn't understand.

And he had to run away for his life. And God says, Moses, you're not fit. You who think God's going to use you because you're so smart, you're capable, you're educated, you're tough, you're strong, you've got influence.

You're not fit. And after 40 years, verse 30 had passed. After 40 years, what a long time, what a long time it took for God to break Moses.

I don't have time to show this to you, but I believe God's plan was to train Moses in 10 years. And I'll tell you why. When you have time, look it up.

In Genesis 15, the Lord said to Abraham, you know, your children are going to be slaves in Egypt for 400 years. Genesis 15 and verse 13. Your children will be enslaved for 400 years.

God, who knew the future, planned that they should be enslaved for 400 years. But when the children of Israel actually left Egypt, Exodus 12, verse 41, it was 430 years. How did this mistake? Did God made a mistake in looking into the future? Hey, I thought it was going to be 400.

It turned out to be 430. It was God who told Abraham, your children will be there for 400 years. But it says here in Exodus 12, verse 41, it's 430 years.

Now I have an explanation. I have an opinion. It's not in scripture.

My opinion is God planned that Moses would take 10 years to be broken. It's like God plans that you and I will be broken in a certain period of time. But you and I know from our experience, we are not broken in that period of time.

It takes much longer. And unfortunately, it took 40 years, what should have taken 10 years. If it had taken 10 years, it would have been 400 exactly.

But Moses is not ready. What to do? But Lord, can't you use anybody else? No. I need a broken man and I can't find any broken man.

And this is the only guy I'm working on him still. He doesn't seem to be succeeding much, but I'll work on him, work on him, one day after 40 years, he's broken. And then God says, now you're ready, Moses.

And you know, and it says here in Exodus chapter three, God says to Moses in verse 10, come now. Exodus 310, I will send you to Pharaoh so that you can bring my people. And Moses said, Lord, who am I? No, no, no, not me.

And he goes on saying, no, not me, not me, not me. And he keeps on in chapter four, verse one, they won't trust me. They won't believe me.

He's having a long discussion with God. God is calling him to the greatest ministry on the face of the earth. And he says, not me, Lord.

How would you feel if God said to you, I want to use you to plant my church? You say, yes, Lord. I'm trained. I'm qualified.

Then you're Moses at 40. God has to do a long work in you till you come to the place where you say, not me, Lord. Now I'm not talking about this artificial humility.

Sometimes you ask somebody, brother, you want to be, we want you to be an elder. And I say, oh, brother, not me. I don't want to be.

And then wait, hoping that I'll ask him again. And it's like people who say, do you want some extra, another serving of food? No, no, no. Hoping that you'll ask again, the amount of hypocrisy we have in this country.

Why not be honest? Yeah. I'd like a second helping. Thank you.

I like a third helping too. Moses was not saying as a hypocrite. Oh no, no, no, no, Lord, not me.

No, he genuinely meant it. And you could see the way he's fighting with God. No, Lord, not me.

To the point where finally it says God was angry with him. See, it says in verse 13, please, Lord, send somebody else. Not me.

Verse 14, chapter four, verse 14. The anger of the Lord burned against Moses. Okay, Moses, you will not speak.

Aaron will speak. That was second best. That man was really broken.

Really broken. Mary, when the angel spoke to her, you're thinking about building a new covenant church, the body of Christ and Mary. And, you know, Moses leading the Israelites out is one example.

God needs a broken man to build his body. One who's been broken and crushed and humbled that he doesn't feel that he doesn't feel that God can do anything through him. That's the type of man God uses.

You know, when Abraham was 85 years old, he felt, I can produce a son. I know Sarah can't. She's barren, but I can.

And it's the same principle there. It says in Genesis that chapter 16, I think, chapter 16 and verse 16, Abraham was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him. Abraham was 86 years old, and that was a normal type of production of a son.

He had the ability at 85 to have a son, but not through Sarah. And as time, and have you noticed the next verse? When Abraham was 99 years old, previous verses, Abraham is 86 years old. Next verse is 99 years old.

What is happening these 13 years? God was waiting for Abraham to become important, unable to produce a son. The trouble with Abraham, the trouble with you, Abraham, is you're capable. Sorry, you can't, that's

not going to be my seed.

And at 99, when he's a hundred years old, finally he gets a son. See, for Abraham to have a child when he was 86 may have been difficult, but he managed it. By the time he was 99, it was impossible.

By the time he was 100, he got it. There are three stages in the way God works. First, it's difficult, then it's impossible, and then it's done.

Which stage are you in? It's like the person who once told me, you know, the Sermon on the Mount, by the way, is a replacement of the Ten Commandments. The old covenant, the great thing was the Ten Commandments, the new covenant, the replacement is the Sermon on the Mount, because we know Jesus said there many times, you have heard that in the Old Testament it said that, but I'm saying to you, you have heard the Ten Commandments said, you shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, but I'm saying to you, it was a replacement, the Ten Commandments. And at the end of, and the Ten Commandments were the great law that Israel had.

They kept it in the ark all the time. And in the new covenant, unfortunately, unfortunately, the Christian church has not taken the Sermon on the Mount seriously. That would be as crazy as the Israelites not taking the Ten Commandments seriously.

How many churches have you met, have you found, or have you heard of, that preach the Sermon on the Mount? Go to the internet and see how many sermons there are on the Sermon on the Mount. Go and see how many books there are teaching the Sermon on the Mount. You hardly find anybody teaching.

For example, number one, if you get angry, you can go to hell. Have you ever heard that message? It's in the Sermon on the Mount. If you lust after women, you'll go to hell.

Have you heard people preach that? Where do you find such preaching? That if you love money, you don't love God. That's also in the Sermon on the Mount. You should not be anxious at all, at any time.

That's in the Sermon on the Mount. These are messages you never hear. You must never judge other people.

Discern, expose the error, but don't judge them. Jesus discerned, He exposed the error, but He didn't judge people. He said, I judge no one.

Who knows the difference between judging and discerning? Hardly anybody, because they spend all their time judging, criticizing, murmuring, complaining. God doesn't give discernment to such people or understanding of His Word. So, and because people, they read the Sermon on the Mount, they don't do it.

That's the point. And Jesus said at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, that the person who reads this and doesn't do it is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. And that is Babylon, the church on sand.

It collapses. But the person who hears it and does it, He says in Matthew 7, 24, is the one who builds on rock. That's Jerusalem, the true church.

So there's a difference, that which remains and that which collapses. So if we can understand the type of person whom God wants is one who will listen to what God says and say, Lord, I can't do it. I remember a person telling me when Brother Zach, the Sermon on the Mount is so difficult to obey.

I said, it's not difficult. It's impossible. As long as you think it's difficult, you'll struggle like the law.

The law was, life under the law was, I can't make it yet, but I'm going to make it. I'm going to make it. I'm going to make it.

1,500 years they tried, they couldn't make it. Don't waste your time trying. I read the Sermon on the Mount and I found it was impossible to obey it.

The Lord's Prayer, Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, which I used to repeat like a parrot from my childhood. I never used to get out of bed till I knelt down and prayed that prayer. But it took me more than 35 years to understand that it's a very difficult prayer to pray.

It's only a spiritually minded person who can pray that prayer, who understands that. We take it all so lightly. All Christian churches repeat the Lord's Prayer in some way, but do you know what it means? Oh God, my Father in heaven, you're my Father.

You control this whole universe and therefore I have no worries, anxieties, no problems, nothing at all. You start there. That's where you got to start.

If you haven't started there, you haven't even got past the first sentence. And Father, I have a lot of aches and problems and trials in my life, but I'm not bothered about any of them. My number one prayer is, hallowed be thy name.

Can you say that? And my number two prayer is, thy kingdom come. Forget about all my problems. And my number three prayer is that your will must be done in my life every day, just like it's done in heaven, like the angels obey you instantly.

I want to obey you instantly. Do you pray like that? No. Like dumb parrots, Christians repeat that prayer.

And Lord, I want to do your will in my body as it is done in heaven. And to do that, give me this day my daily bread. Give us this day our daily bread.

What for? To do your will. And do you know the three words never found in that prayer? I, me, my. Never found in that prayer.

What about your prayers? Thy name, thy kingdom, thy will. Give us daily bread. Forgive us our sins.

Deliver us from evil. The word I, me, and my are never found there. And Jesus said, always pray like this.

How many Christians pray like this? This is a classic example of people who read the Sermon on the Mount, don't do it. No wonder they build Babylon. We're talking about building a new covenant church.

And all these things apply. We've got to be broken. We've got to be broken and humbled by God.

To like Moses, we say, Lord, this is impossible. It's just like Mary said, when the angel came to her and said, the Holy Spirit will come upon you. When she asked the question, when she said, when the angel said, you're going to have a child in your womb, her question was, 34, how can this be? This is impossible.

I'm a virgin. Never heard of such a thing. It is impossible.

What is the answer when you say it is impossible? The Holy Spirit. How shall we build a new covenant church? It is impossible. God says, the Holy Spirit.

You need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. You know, when we think of the beginning of this church 35 years ago, you probably don't know, but brother Ian and I were very frustrated, defeated people. I don't know much about him.

I was. And we used to pray together in our need and God met with us and filled us with the Holy Spirit. And that's how the whole work began.

It was not because we heard messages on the new covenant. We never heard anything like that. We didn't even know what new covenant church was.

You think Mary had any experience of other people who could testify how as a virgin they produce children? No, there were no books on it, how virgins have children or any such thing. I never saw a book on new covenant church. She didn't need all that.

God said one word, the Holy Spirit. You know what God says to us? You want to build a new covenant church? Honor the Holy Spirit. You can listen to messages on the new covenant church for 50 years.

You'll never build it. It's like trying to study books on how to have a child as a virgin. Study it, study it.

See if you can produce a child as a virgin. Not possible. Even with all this cloning rubbish, no virgin is going to have a child.

The answer is the Holy Spirit and the power of the Most High overshadowing you. And then this baby, the body of Christ will come out. Because, verse 37, nothing is impossible with God.

And Mary said, I'm a slave. Do whatever you like. You know the thoughts that went through her mind immediately? What will people say? They will not know this is the Holy Spirit.

They will blame me, accuse me, despise me. I'll be scandalized in this village. Do you know the price you have to pay to bring forth the body of Christ? You'll be scandalized.

You'll be persecuted. We faced that as soon as we started. For years, it's still going on now.

But Mary thought of all that, scandalized. People will misunderstand. They'll tell all types of lies about you.

They say it even till today. There are people in Israel who say that some Roman soldier made Mary pregnant, and they call that a son of God. All that went through her mind, and she could have said, no, no, no.

I don't want all this dishonor. There are people who do not want to suffer shame and ridicule. They will not.

There are people who don't want to join a church when it's ridiculed and shamed. They'd like to join it when it has become a little popular and respected. You don't understand.

You'll never build the body of Christ. Mary chose that way when she knew it was going to bring shame and ridicule. People did not want to associate with Jesus because it was shameful.

People did not want to associate with Paul. They would pretend that they didn't know Paul. We found that.

There were people who didn't want to associate with us because we had a bad name. But one thing through 35 years I've heard, never has anyone said that any of our lives are bad. They said their doctrine is bad, but their life is good.

It's like a farmer saying, that farmer's seed is bad, but his harvest is good. My seed is the best. Unfortunately, the harvest is bad.

He's got a screw loose in his head. If the seed is bad, the harvest will be bad. How does a guy get a good crop if his seed is bad? How is it that for all these years, despite all the accusations about false doctrine, people haven't been able to accuse us of our life? Mary went through all that and he said, I'm your slave.

Let it be to me as the Lord has spoken. These are some of the initial thoughts I want to share with you as to how we experienced the beginnings of building a new covenant church and how we continue in the same way. Jesus was despised and rejected of all men, it says in Isaiah 53.

He still is the true Jesus. The true church of Christ will never be honored. Those who seek honor must go to the world or to Babylon.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you that you've given us your word and you've given us the examples of men like Moses, women like Mary. Fantastic examples for us to follow.

Men like Abraham, men who failed but who came up, lifted up by you. We pray that we shall walk in humility and follow the example of Mary, your humble servant. What an example for all of us men and women to follow.

That young girl who submitted to the possibility of ridicule, shame, opened herself to the power of the Holy Spirit that the body of Christ might come forth. Help us to be like that. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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