

Preparing the Way for the New Covenant

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of following the New Testament, living a life of honesty, and submitting to authority, as we prepare for the new covenant.

Duration: 49:20

Scripture: Deuteronomy 14:23, 2 Samuel 24:24, 2 Chronicles 3:1, Isaiah 54:17, Zechariah 3:10, Zechariah 4:6-7, Malachi 1:8, Matthew 9:13, Matthew 18:20, Philippians 2:5

Topics: "New Covenant", "Church Leadership"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of offering our best to God, both in terms of our sacrifices and our devotion. It highlights the need to follow the New Testament model of church leadership, focusing on the roles of elders and the absence of pastors as an office. The speaker challenges the congregation to examine their motives in serving God, urging them to prioritize wholehearted devotion over seeking personal gain or comfort. The sermon also touches on the significance of humility, submission to authority, and the purity of offerings to God.

Transcript

Like I said before once, in the New Covenant, God always begins his work with two people, not with one. That's how we did it in the Acts of the Apostles. We've tried to follow the New Testament exactly in everything.

That's why we don't have pastors in our churches, because there's no pastor in the New Testament. It's a gift, not an office. In the New Testament, the offices were elders, leaders.

Always two, just like in a home, there's father and mother. You can't have a home with just a father, just a father. I mean, you can't be a father.

It's always two, the same way the church is a family. So in everything, we've tried to follow the New Testament exactly, I mean, to the place where we've even told people, can you show us something in the New Testament we are not following? We've been very careful in the area of money. People ask us why we have this policy.

I say, because Jesus never asked anybody for money. Jesus never sent any reports about his work anywhere. Jesus never told people, I'm doing a great ministry.

Will you support me? He never took a collection after he preached a sermon or did a healing ministry. And same with Paul, same with Peter. Why aren't Christians doing it today? Because way back in the beginning, pretty soon, Christianity drifted away from the faith of the apostles, not after the first century.

At the end of the first century, I don't have time to show it to you. Read in Revelation chapter 2 and 3, five churches that have gone away, elders who had gone away. In one church, it says, there was a time, it says to that church, in the days of Antipas, my servant to the church in Pergamos, Revelation chapter 2, you are faithful, but now you have gone after the doctrine of Balaam.

It says that, who went after money. So when did that happen? Not in the second century, first century, when the apostle John was alive. And there was one apostle left to tell the churches the truth.

They didn't listen. It's like people don't listen to the servants of God today. They say, who is he? OK, the end result, we see in their lives, and we see in their families, and we see in their church.

You know, it's not everybody who is called by God. When you think of somebody like Brother Ian, remember, there was a time in his life when he gave up a secure job only to serve the Lord. How many people here have done that? Anybody? Gave up a secure job only to serve the Lord and trust him? So before you criticize somebody like that, ask yourself whether you've done that.

And if you've never done it, I would advise you, keep your mouth shut. What have you done? You've lived in a secure job, comfortable, earning a lot of money. Some of you earn here 100,000 rupees a month.

And you dare to open your mouth against people who have left their jobs fully to serve God? I don't know how God will judge you. I really don't know. It'll be calamity one day.

Learn to respect. I have learned to respect all such people. And there are some people who have left their jobs, I know, in India.

95% of Christian workers I've met, in order to serve the Lord. And they are earning more today, 10 times more, collecting money from people and sending reports. I'm not talking about those type of crooks and humbugs.

I'm talking about people who left their jobs and who are serving the Lord like the Apostle Paul. So learn to respect such men. That has been our desire as a church.

That's been my desire, too. That when I come to the end of my life, I don't know when it'll be. I hope it is when the Lord comes.

And in the day when God reveals the secrets of people's hearts and reveals the hidden areas of our life, which nobody else knew, that it'll be seen in that day, this has been my prayer, even the unbelievers should say, there is no explanation for this man's life, except that he had a Father in heaven who cared for him. Other people may have different opinions, but in that day, it'll be seen. And all of us have got an earlier part of our life before we came to CFC, where we made a mess of so many things.

And we are ashamed of that. I am. And I thank God it's blotted out.

But after CFC began 42 years ago, I'm talking about from that point onwards, life has been very different, because that's when we were really filled with the Holy Spirit. And that makes all the difference in the world. The early church was born through the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and CFC was born through the

baptism in the Holy Spirit.

And when people come to CFC and are not filled with the Holy Spirit, they become like, you know, the hangers-on. They're not in the core. And I'm not talking about a once-for-all experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

A lot of people have that. But it means a lot more than that. The Holy Spirit is a spirit of truth, Jesus said.

He will not permit you ever to tell a lie. If you can tell a lie, I can tell you straight to your face, you are not filled with the Holy Spirit. Don't fool yourself, because he's the spirit of truth.

If you tell a lie about your life by trying to show others that you're more spiritual than you are, you're not filled with the Holy Spirit, but the Spirit is the spirit of truth. He doesn't give people a wrong impression. And that's why, as you heard in business, or you heard about that official who came to threaten him when he was not there and threatened his worker, I'll come tomorrow, the threat of people.

I remember one, in those days it was not called BBMP, it was a municipality in Bangalore. Way back in the beginning, came to my old house where I was living, and he came with some documents and tried to threaten me, saying this house needs to pay more tax and all that. I said, we've given the exact dimensions and measurements down to the last inch.

And exactly according to the rules, we are paying the tax. He said, no, no, no, it's something like that. I know he was trying to threaten me, so I showed him a verse that we had in our sitting room.

I showed that to him. It says here, if you fear God, you need fear nothing else. I said, that's how I live.

Thank you. He went away and he never came back. I don't know why.

He thought, probably scared God would do something to his family or something like that. I wasn't threatening him. I said, that's how I've lived all my life.

I'm not afraid. All I'm trying to say is don't live in fear in this world. What will you do to me? You do nothing.

No weapon formed against you will prosper. This is the word in Isaiah 54, 17. No weapon formed against you will prosper.

I believe that. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord. It says in that verse, I am a servant of the Lord.

I'm not ashamed to say that. It's God who called me to be a servant. And I believe that's my inheritance.

This is the inheritance of the servants of the Lord. No weapon formed against me will prosper. They can try it.

Many people have tried. I've been serving the Lord 50 years now. Many people have tried and never succeeded because God keeps his word in the second sentence there.

Every tongue that accuses you in judgment, you will condemn. In the living Bible, it says, you will have justice against every courtroom lie. You see, you'd never lose out by honoring God.

It's impossible. And that's supposed to be the testimony of those of you who are a little older in this church to be an example to the younger. Not just that we can preach well or sing well or do other things well, or we've got a nice building.

These things mean nothing, but that we are upright people because it says about the remnant that Ian spoke about in Revelation 14, who stand with the lamb upon Mount Zion, Revelation 14, verse one, 144,000, which is symbolic number. And it says here, verse five, no lie was found in their mouth. Therefore, they are blameless.

The Bible says that we are liars from birth, all of us. From the time we are born, it says in Isaiah, sorry, Psalm 58, verse three, they tell lies from the time they are born. From birth, they tell lies, all of us.

We have told numerous lies to our parents, to other people. We have lived lies, fooling other people that we are holy when we are not. Preached lies, things which are not true in our lives, but think that as a small group of people, which Ian called a core, which God is forming, who have so cleansed themselves that by the end of their life, the Holy Spirit gives a testimony about them, there is no lie left in them now.

What a wonderful testimony that is. To start out as rock bottom liars, like anybody else, just like the terrorists, the terrorist who was born, and you and I were born are in exactly the same when we are born, but to so cleanse ourselves by the power of the Holy Spirit that we come to the place where the Holy Spirit testifies there's no lie in this person. He qualifies to be in that remnant.

You see in the book of Revelation, there are two groups of people. One is Revelation 7, where it speaks of a great multitude of people who nobody can number. That means millions and billions and billions of people are those who are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

And then it speaks of a small number in that crowd, 144,000 in the midst of billions is like a 1% or less. A very small percentage out of these billions in heaven who are standing with the Lamb, the remnant, the bride of Jesus Christ. And one qualification among them is, one of their qualities is there's no lie in their mouth.

The world tells us you've got to tell a lie to escape out of certain situations. Yeah, you can, but you'll lose out on this. And it says in Revelation chapter 22, 15, those who are outside heaven are the murderers, 22, 15, murderers, idolaters, immoral adulterers, and those who tell lies.

So being honest in business and being honest in the church is a very important part of being the core. And if you are not coming into that core in CFC, as I told you the other day, there's a church within the church. Just like in heaven, there's this small group of 144,000 among the great multitude which no man can number.

And that's happening even now, there's a core within CFC. And if you're not coming into that central core, I'll tell you it's because there's lying in your life. That's why, get rid of it.

And automatically you will come in. It doesn't matter how long you've been here. You can be here many years and still remain on the fringe forever.

So Ian also spoke about humility. And you've often heard me say the three secrets of the Christian life, it's all in Jesus. Jesus said, learn from me, he said.

The only thing he told us to learn from him was humility and gentleness, Matthew 11, 29. Learn from me for I am humble and gentle in heart. Our human nature is the exact opposite of that, pride and hard.

Listen to the way you speak to your wife or you speak to your husband. There's a hardness about it. So we are, pride and hardness.

And Jesus said, learn from me, I'm the opposite of all that. Humility and gentleness. Gentleness doesn't mean we compromise.

No, Jesus was never compromising. I don't wanna compromise in my life. But I don't wanna yell and scream at people.

No, that's not the way. We stand for certain things uprightly and people say, we're not gonna compromise, sorry. But we stand for it gently and graciously.

Here's where we read about humility, humility, humility. Matthew chapter two, you've seen, heard it before, but for newcomers, here's where we get it. Matthew nine, it's not original with me.

It is Paul who said it, I only saw it here. I mean, if you look carefully, you'll see it, otherwise you won't see it. Matthew, Philippians, sorry.

Philippians chapter two and verse five. Have this attitude in yourself which was in Christ Jesus. What a verse.

I've often said with that one verse, you can live your whole life. You don't even need a Bible. If you read the Gospels and have this attitude in yourself which is in Christ Jesus, I can spend my whole life just with that one verse.

In every situation, what shall I do here? Have the attitude which is in Christ who spoke the truth, who humbled himself, who loved his enemies. There's much in that. But here's particularly speaking about one thing.

Number one, he was God and he emptied himself and became a man, that's humility. Then he, as a man, verse seven, he became a slave. That's further humility again.

He didn't have to be a slave. He could have been a king. That would have still been a humility.

God becoming a king is a fantastic step down. But he didn't come as a king, he became a servant. Second step of humility.

And you think what is worse than a slave? A criminal. The Romans never crucified their slaves, but they crucified criminals. These fellows are not fit to live.

Slaves can live, but criminals, kill them in the worst possible type of way, kill them with crucifixion. And it says here, Jesus humbled himself, though he was not a criminal, to that form of crucifixion, death. So there was God becoming a man and man becoming, he became a slave and then he humbled himself to be identified as though he were a criminal.

Humility, humility, humility. Therefore God exalted him. Those that have this attitude in you, that is the secret of the Christian life.

And what he said about being under authority, that is another great secret of the Christian life. It's part of humility. Because sin came into the world first, not through Adam, long before Adam.

In a perfect universe, which was perfectly pure and holy, sin manifested itself through one thing. One created person refused to submit to authority. Don't ever forget that all your life.

Sin came when a created human being, whom God had put in a certain place, refused to accept that place. Even though he had millions of angels under him, he's known as Lucifer, but we really don't know his name because the Bible doesn't reveal his name. But anyway, let's call him Lucifer.

There was nobody above him except God. You'd think a person would be extremely happy. Nobody above me except God and all these millions of angels under.

That's the nature of the devil. Even if I've got millions of people under me, I don't want to be under authority. Better to be a king in hell than to be a slave in heaven.

That was his attitude. So he became a king in hell. And that was the first sin.

He rebelled against authority. I mean, if you want to know how stupid the devil is, just think of that. Can you rebel against God, your creator? You've got to be crazy.

But that's what he did. And in a moment he was cast out along with all the other angels who joined with him in that rebellion. And that's how sin came into this universe.

You can say that's the root of sin, was not adultery, not murder, not even telling lies that I just mentioned, but lack of submission to authority. That's why rebellion is so serious. And that's why God says to parents, teach your children to honor their father and mother if you want it to go well with them on this earth.

Why does he say that? He hasn't given 25 commandments for children, only one. You know that children are given only one commandment? Honor your father and mother and parents are responsible to teach their children one commandment. And many parents don't teach their children that.

Teach your children to honor their father in the spirit of it is, teach them to respect anyone who's older than them. I'm not saying what I didn't practice. I taught my children right from childhood to honor or speak respectfully to anybody older than you.

Whether it's a beggar who's older than you or a servant who's older than you, speak respectfully. To every brother in the church, speak respectfully. Don't look at social level and all, that's all rubbish, which the world cares for.

The person's older than you, speak respectfully. I do that even today. Someone's older than me, I don't care.

If I want to disagree with them, I'll say disagree with them respectfully. To be under authority is a tremendous thing. It's a principle.

Whoever appoints somebody to a position, God gives them authority to remove that person. And there's no man who is without authority. Everybody's appointed somewhere by someone.

Whoever appointed that person has got power to remove that person. It's logical and clear and simple. Who could remove the Apostle Paul? Sure, whoever appointed him.

Paul could say about some people in the church in Corinth in 1 Corinthians 5, get that man out of the church, put him out of the church. You read that in 1 Corinthians 5. Not only that, I hand him over to Satan because of the way he's rebelled against God and lived in sin. Tremendous authority these apostles had to hand a person over to Satan.

And somebody could ask Paul, what about you, Paul? The answer, Paul would say, well, whoever appointed me has got power to remove me as well. And it's not that God doesn't do that. He does it.

Who could remove Judas Iscariot? Tell me. Not Peter. Peter couldn't say, hey, Judas, I excommunicate you.

He couldn't do it because he never appointed Judas Iscariot. But was Judas Iscariot gonna be there forever? No. The one who appointed him could remove.

Jesus appointed Judas under the power of authority he had from his father. And one day he said to him at the last table, he waited till a long time, what do you want to do? Do. See, most people are possessed by demons.

But this is the one case where we read that Satan himself, the top boss, entered into him immediately, John 13, 27. Jesus said, go, do what you want. So it's a principle we have taught in the church, be under authority.

And if you have come to a church where God has appointed certain people as elders, I would encourage you to submit to that own authority in your own interest, not in their interest. They have no desire. I know the elders here.

They'd be very happy if they have very few people to take care of. It's a headache to take care of so many people. You think it's such an easy thing? Can you take care of 100 children? Then you'll understand how difficult it is for three elders to take care of 400 people here or I don't know how many.

So it's good for us to be thankful that God has allowed us to come to a church where the truth is spoken. Ian spoke about Zephaniah, a very, very important chapter. And as I was listening, I got a light on a few things that he was sharing.

It's good. I'm always open to say, Lord, there's still a lot of light I have to get on scripture. I don't have time for so many things because I haven't got all the light there is in scripture yet.

So I'm always open to hear. And as I was listening to him, I was realizing suddenly, all of a sudden, it seems to me that the last four books of the Old Testament in the order in which it is written seem to be a preparation as if God is saying, this is why there has to be a new covenant. You see this, this, this, this? That's why we have to have a new covenant.

And you read about Zephaniah, how all those things, which is very new covenant-like. I will remove the proud people and leave a humble people. And the things we've taught in the church, how the Lord is singing over us with joy.

And you go to the book of Haggai and Zechariah after that. They are rebuilding the temple of God in Jerusalem. That's new covenant stuff.

And the first thing Haggai says is in verse four, chapter one, verse four. Is it time for you people to build your own houses and you don't care for God's house? You are so interested in building your own house, but you don't care for building God's house? That is the question the Lord was telling Israel in those days. That's how careful you are to save some money, to build your own house.

How careful you are that you don't get the wrong contractor or must get an honest man and you supervise everything. We don't want this, we want this. How much do you care for God's house? Just come and sit Sunday morning, listen to a message, sing a few songs and go away.

No wonder you will live under the old covenant all your life or under no covenant. This was God's complaint against people in those days. You are so eager to build your own house.

What about my house, the Lord says. I can say that almost from the beginning of CFC, God showed me very clearly, my house is your house. Don't ever forget that.

The way you take care of your house, you must take care of my house. That's what I told the Lord when I had to travel many times in those days, you know, everywhere I went, the conference would always be on a weekend, Saturday, Sunday, because those are the days people would get off. But I had little children and Saturday, Sunday was the day they got off from school.

This is the only time I could spend with my children. But I was off many Saturday, Sundays, weekends. And I said, Lord, you can make up for that.

You take care of my children, I'll take care of yours. You take care of my family, I'll take care of yours. And I wanna say today, after all these 42 years nearly, God's done a better job than I have.

He's faithful, absolutely faithful. We may have gone through hard times, but my children never had to miss a meal. We may have gone through hard times, but there was never a month when we could not pay their school fees, God's taken care of them till you honor God and he'll honor you.

It may look so bleak, but like we sing in that song, as he cared for Jesus, he will care for you. I believe that. I remember when that truth gripped me years ago and I wrote that song in 1977.

He loves me as he loved Jesus. He will help me as he helped Jesus to overcome sin. He will care for me as he cared for Jesus.

A wonderful truth. It came through recognizing that Jesus became a man like me. The secret of godliness, as you heard, not in a doctrine.

A long time, I thought it was in a doctrine. And all those years, it was in legalism and bondage. I tried to convince people about a doctrine, but they were defeated by sin.

Until I realized that the secret of godliness was in Christ, in Jesus, not in a doctrine. In a person. There's a lot of difference between a person and a written doctrine.

Oh, it's almost as the Lord asked me, have you married a doctrine or have you married my son? I said, forgive me, Lord. I'm not married a piece of paper. I'm not even married this book.

Married to Jesus, a living person. That's why the resurrection is so important. If he hadn't risen from the dead, we would have nobody to be married to.

Then we had to marry a book. The Old Testament people married a book and a lot of believers today will marry a book. I don't despise this book.

You know that I have studied this Bible through and through for 50 years. I value it, but I'm not married to this book. Through this book, I come to my savior and my Lord and my bridegroom.

It enables me to love him and be devoted to him. That's Christianity. So the house of God is my house and God's family is my family.

And I have relatives in Bangalore. I hardly see them. My relatives are here in the church.

I really mean that. It has changed my life. To me, the family of God is a real thing.

It's not just a nice phrase to use. It's a real family. And then in the book of Zechariah also, some wonderful expressions, new covenant expressions.

Zechariah four, it says here in verse six, it won't be by your power or your might, but by my spirit. The Old Testament was all by human ability and power and all that, but building the church, God says, it'll be by my spirit. And when that, when God fills us with the spirit, the next verse, Zechariah four, seven, what is this mountain that can stand in the way? The mountain will be reduced to a plain.

That's what Jesus said. You speak to the mountain to get out of the way and it'll get out of the way. We've seen that.

I could tell you stories of how we changed things in the central government when we prayed in a way that affected the whole of India concerning what the government's attitude would be to conversion to Christianity. You can read it in my book, Day of Small Beginnings, in one chapter, how we influenced the government. Not me, church.

The two or three are gathered together in my name. That's another verse that we got light on. Most people read it like this.

Most people read scripture carelessly. This is one example. Where two or three people gather together in my name.

Did I say it right or wrong? Did you get it? Where two or three gather in my name, they're, I'm in the midst. That's how most people hear it, but that's not what the Bible says. It says in Matthew 18, 20, where two or three are gathered together.

Gathered means somebody else does the gathering. Two or three gathered together means you and I gather together. Hey, we gather in the name of Jesus.

Lord, you're here. No, he's not there. Look at the multitudes of people who gather in the name of Jesus.

Thousands and thousands of people. The Lord is not in their midst, but where they are gathered together. Gathered by whom? By the Holy Spirit.

There the Lord is in the midst. Not just any Tom, Dick, and Harry gathering together in the name of Jesus. The multitudes of gatherings like that where the Lord is not there, but when they're gathered by the Holy Spirit.

Boy, we certainly know that. We didn't gather together when CFC started. It was definitely the Holy Spirit.

And then the other thing we see in Zachariah when you come to the last verse. I'll never forget this verse. The last verse of Zachariah.

It's all preparing the way for the new covenant where it says, in the last sentence, in the margin of my Bible says, in that day there will no longer be a merchant, a businessman in the house of God. All the businessmen will be driven out. All the businessmen are people who want to make profit.

The whole principle of business is how can I make profit? All those who want to make profit, financial profit, will be driven out of the house of the Lord. There will not be one person left like that in the house of God. Those who want to make profit for themselves of money or honor or anything.

And in that day it says, in verse 20, the bells of the horses will have holy to the Lord. And the cooking pots in the Lord's house will be like the bowls before the altar. You know the meaning of that? The bells of the horses are worldly secular stuff.

Holy to the Lord was a badge put on top of Aaron, the high priest's forehead. And it says in that day, when the new covenant comes in, there will be no separate sacred compartment and secular compartment. It's not that on Sunday we'll be holy and on Monday we go to work, we're gonna operate on a different principle.

No, the bells on the horses will have holy unto the Lord and the cooking pots in the kitchen will be as holy as the bowls kept in front of the altar. The meaning there's the division between sacred and secular is demolished, which was there in the old covenant. One day was sacred, the Sabbath.

Demolished, demolished. And then the businessman will disappear. The man who's doing business with the Lord.

You know, there are a lot of people doing business with the Lord today, even in the churches. Pastors say, pay your tithe and God will reward you so much more. That's business.

Isn't that business? If one bank says, other banks give you 7%, come to us, we'll give you 25%. Oh, and here's a preacher who says, God will give you more than that. Come, give your tithe here, you'll get 100 times.

Oh, I better give to God then. You know, this actually happened in America. One person gave money like that to a Christian organization and he took them to court.

But these people said, I'll get 100 times, but I did not get 100 times. So, actually took somebody to court. All the humbugs.

Tithe, pay your tithe, pay your tithe. I like the living Bible paraphrase of Deuteronomy 14, 23. You know, speaking about tithing in verse 22, you shall surely tithe and you shall eat in the presence of the Lord and so on, so that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always.

Deuteronomy 14, 22, 23, the living Bible says, the purpose, very, very clear. Sometimes the living Bible, that man, Kenneth Taylor, who paraphrased the living Bible, extremely God-fearing man. Very God-fearing man.

I remember meeting him in 71. He published one of my books, Finding God's Will in his publishing house. And such a humble, God-fearing man, and I'm not surprised that he got some amazing paraphrases in certain parts of the living Bible.

And he says, this is the paraphrase he's put here. The purpose of tithing, listen to this, is to teach you to always put God first in order that you may fear the Lord, in order that you may learn to put God first. These are the people who are not doing business in the house of God.

They're not tithing in order to get some return. They're not giving to God, thinking they'll get something back, no. They give out of the joy of their heart, and there'll be no more businessmen in the house of the Lord.

And Malachi, that's the other book before the New Testament begins. And Malachi, you know, the complaint that God had against Israel. These are some of the things that came to us in the early days of CFC.

What was his complaint against them? He says, you, Malachi 1, verse 8, you are presenting the blind for sacrifice and the lame and the sick. You see, they knew they had to bring a sheep. So they look around the sheep.

This one is blind. It's a bit of a nuisance to us in any case. Let's offer it.

Or a bull. This one is lame. Oh, it's a problem.

Let's opt for this. They offered the lame and the blind and the sick. This goat is about to die.

Quickly, let's offer it to the Lord before it dies. They were going by the letter. The Lord had said very clearly, whatever you offer must be without defect.

They were offering that which cost them nothing. And then the Lord said, you have despised my name. You have despised my name.

You have not honored me, verse six. You see how we despise your name. Last part of verse six.

By offering all this, do you know how we despise the name of the Lord? They asked this question in verse six, the last part. You say, how have we despised your name? By giving that which cost you nothing. I want to ask you here.

Are you any of you despising the name of the Lord? And you ask the same question. How have we despised the name of the Lord? I'll tell you. By offering to God that which has cost you nothing.

And in a church like CFC, it's very easy to offer to God that which cost you nothing because we never take an offering. We never tell people even to put anything in the offering box. And if you go to the offering box, there are four or five filters you have to go through on top of it.

And you fail in all those filters and you're happy. I don't have to put anything because I don't qualify in all these things. Great.

Okay. Great. Wait and see how your life ends up.

Wait and see how it happens in your life and your children, et cetera. The Lord says, you all despise my name, but I'm gonna do something new. He told the Israelites.

From the east to the west. This never happened in Israel. In Israel, it was only, all old covenant was only for the Jews.

But now he says in verse 11, from end to end of the whole world, my name will no longer be despised. But among all the nations, verse 11, it'll be great. And in every place, they will offer a pure offering in all the nations.

An offering that is pure. That means an offering that cost them something. I'll never forget when I was a young man around 22 years old.

I'd just been baptized the previous year. The Lord showed me this verse in 2 Samuel 24, in verse 24. Where David said, I will never offer to God that which costs me nothing.

And the Lord said to me that time, that was 55 years ago. You must never offer to me that which costs you nothing. I made a vow before God that I'll never do it.

Lord, I'll never offer to you that which costs me nothing. Not just money. It must cost me inconvenience.

I must be willing to be disturbed at three o'clock in the morning if somebody calls me on the phone. I mustn't get upset. Why in the world is this guy calling me at three o'clock? No, I have to offer to God that which costs me nothing.

I have to serve God's people. People must be free to come and disturb me anytime or demand more and more and more and more. I will not offer to God that which costs me nothing.

And it says, this place where I don't have time to show you all that, you read in 2 Chronicles 3, verse one, it's the exact spot where Abraham offered his son Isaac also. And that's the place where God said, I'll build my temple. And that's what I discovered, that the church is built in a place where people offer to God that which costs nothing, that which costs them something.

And that is the reason why it was not built in the days of the Israelites. And then you come to the New Testament and you see that that is how God built his church, by calling people who had to give up something. You know that Jesus never called an unemployed person to full-time service? Never.

Everybody was doing a job. Peter, Andrew, James, John, they were working and they were earning a lot of money as fishermen. But the Lord said, give it up.

You read that Moses had a job and he was called. Elisha was plowing, he was a farmer, earning money when Elijah called him. You always see people working.

Amos was a gatherer of fruit and God called him to be a prophet. It's only nowadays you find people all unemployed people going to Bible schools and claiming to be servants of God and you see the disgrace

that such people have brought upon the name of Christianity in India. It's true.

Perhaps 98% of Christian workers in India have never done a secular job because that's not what the parents want them to do. He's doing well in school. Ah, we'll put him in a good job, make him an engineer or a doctor.

Or this guy's always failing, always failing, this son of ours. Send him to Bible school. He'll be a pastor.

This is true in India. I'm not saying, I mean, I believe we should train a child to get a profession so that he doesn't depend on others, not become a parasite on society, earn their own living. But why is it that this reputation we have in India, that it's people who are uneducated and Dalits, those are the people who become pastors, a tragedy.

And they, because they couldn't get a job, they couldn't earn anything, so go and do Christian work. And the other thing I've seen, you know, in the olden days, missionaries like Hudson Taylor, C.D. Studd, Hudson Taylor went to China and told others, come here where I'm working. C.D. Studd went to the heart of Congo in Africa and said, come here where I'm working.

But today, you know what mission leaders do? Go and see all the mission organizations in India. They live in the comfort of some nice South Indian city and tell people, go to the north. Go to Himachal Pradesh, go to Rajasthan, if you don't believe me, go and see all the mission organizations where their leaders are living.

None of them are out there in the difficult places saying, come here, like Hudson Taylor and C.D. Studd. They say, no, no, no, we live here. You go there, you go there, and we'll support you.

What about you, brother? No, we have to live here to organize all things and to make sure our children go to good schools and all that. It's hypocrisy. People have asked me, brother Zach, why don't you send some people to North India? I'll tell you why, because I haven't done that myself.

It's good, but only somebody who's called to go there can say it. I will not be a hypocrite in my life living in comfort here and tell other people to go. That type of hypocrisy and humbug, I'm not here to judge them, but I say it's absolute downright hypocrisy to tell people to do something you're not willing to do yourself.

Hudson Taylor, C.D. Studd, and those old great missionaries were not like that. That's why God accomplished something through them. Today, the standard's gone so down in Christianity in India, and that's why God's tried to raise up something which will be somewhat of a pure testimony for Christ.

And that is why, and like every movement, the devil seeks to corrupt it and corrupt it. And that's why we fight a constant battle against compromise. And it's very, very difficult, and we, sometimes the elders and I, sit together and say, how shall we protect this church from going the way all these denominations have become, with multitudes who've come to listen to a good message or a good preacher, but who are not interested in wholehearted devotion to Christ, who are not interested in saying, Lord, you'll be first in my life.

I fear you. I will not be like those Israelites in Malachi's day who offered the lame and the sick and the weak and the leftover dregs of the cup of tea to a visitor. No, I'll give the best.

Yeah, it's not easy to do it, but I believe by the grace of God, we want to preserve a pure testimony, even if it's only among a few, until the day Jesus comes. May God help us.

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