

Preserving the Standard of Jesus and Apostles

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of preserving the standard of Jesus and the apostles in the church, and the need for leaders who are willing to pull out and let others come forward.

Duration: 1:04:51

Scripture: Malachi 1:6

Topics: "Church Purity", "Biblical Obedience"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of maintaining purity and obedience to God's Word in the church, focusing on the need for a genuine, pure offering to God. It highlights the dangers of compromise, the significance of following the examples set by Jesus and the apostles, and the importance of building our lives on the rock-solid foundation of God's teachings. The speaker stresses the need for obedience, holiness, and love in the church, while addressing issues of integrity, evangelism, and standing firm in the face of criticism and accusations.

Transcript

I came to Dubai first in 1990, 24 years ago. For many years, I had no desire to come to the Gulf countries for one reason. I said, everybody goes there to make money.

I have no message for such people. But then I also discovered that many people come here because they don't get jobs in India or they have to support their family members. They don't earn enough.

So after that, I've been coming almost every year. And when we started, we were very few. And one big difference between the way we have run our churches and other churches, there are many differences, but one of them is we never had a desire to increase in numbers.

We wanted to increase in the quality of the people in the church, whether two or three or whatever. Because we believe it is the Lord who adds the numbers. In the New Testament, the day of Pentecost, after they preached the gospel, in the end of Acts chapter 2, I want you to see the last verse of Acts chapter 2. This is the early church.

In Acts chapter 2, it says in verse 47, the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. So who added? The Lord added. And that was our desire, that quantity is God's business.

Quality is our business, to keep the church pure, to make sure, like Paul told the Corinthians, you know that a little bit of leaven can leaven the whole lump? Don't worry about the size of the bread. That's God's business. You just make sure that no leaven gets into the bread, because that will spoil the whole.

There are many verses, that's in 1 Corinthians 5. There are many verses like that. 2 Corinthians 7, 1, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. The entire teaching of the New Testament is its emphasis on purity.

If you read Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, these are the letters to the churches. You'll never find one verse, not even one verse, which says, go out and preach the gospel. It says, keep yourself pure.

And the Lord will add to the church. It doesn't mean that we shouldn't preach the gospel. My point is, the emphasis was not on me going out and doing something, but me being a witness for Christ.

And the Lord adding to the church those who are going to be saved. But when they come in, it's our job to make them disciples. It's our job to make sure that they don't bring any leaven into the church and corrupt the church.

And that's why Paul was a very strict apostle. He even told the church in Corinth to remove a wicked man from your midst. Get him out of that church.

Because he said he spoiled the whole church. So Paul was not the type of person who says, oh, let's overlook it and let's forgive him and hope he will change. Well, we hope he'll change, but he first better get out of the church, change, and then come back.

That's what Paul's attitude was. Remove that man. He says, remove that wicked man.

He's talking about a believer who brought corruption into the church in 1 Corinthians 5.13. And later on in 2 Corinthians 2, when the man went out and repented, he then said, please bring him back. So Paul was not interested in making sure there were plenty of people. He was very careful to preserve the purity.

That's why even in Jesus' lifetime, there were different times where people got offended with his message. There were times when somebody said, I'd like to join you. A rich ruler once came and said, I'd like to join you.

And the Lord asked him, do you honor your parents? Have you avoided committing adultery, murder, and all the commandments? He said, I've kept all of them. Think of this. If in some church today, a rich man, and the ruler means influential in society, came to a pastor and said, I want to join your church.

And he also is an upright man who's never committed adultery or murder and really wants to keep the commandments. And his question is, what should I do to inherit eternal life? Which pastor in the world today will tell that man what Jesus said? Go and give your money away. You come to my church without your money.

Have you ever heard anybody preach that? I have sometimes gone and told people that. Come to our church. Go and give your money to some other.

I don't care where you give it. I'm not interested. That is the reason why Christianity is in such a corrupt state today.

People say the important thing is doctrine. Which doctrine? People say you must get people baptized as believers, not as gays. That's easy.

There was a crooked magician in Acts chapter 8 called Simon who also got baptized. And some people say you must get them to be baptized and all these things. I believe in that.

But there's so much of counterfeit. The one doctrine that nobody preaches is you mustn't love money. You mustn't lose your temper, get angry with your wife or husband or anybody else.

You must never lust after women. Those are the doctrines nobody preaches. Because if you preach it, just like it happened to the rich young ruler, they'll go away.

They'll join some other church. What did Jesus say? He didn't say no, no, no, come back. Let's talk it over.

He said go. I've said that to many people who come to our church in Bangalore. They feel offended.

Somebody came to me once and said where is that? The standards are too high in this church. I can't be a member of your church. I said that's great.

There are many other churches in Bangalore where you will find a place to stay. Please go. It's like going to a hospital and saying this is too hygienic a hospital.

I want a hospital which is a little dirtier. I said there are many dirty hospitals. Please go there.

We're not here to lower our standard of hygiene because you want a dirty hospital. Church is a hospital. We're all sick to some degree or the other.

Some are more sick than others. There's no patient in this hospital who can say I'm completely cured from the flesh. I cannot sin.

I become like Jesus. Nobody. Everybody is a patient.

Some have been cured to some extent. Some have been cured more than others depending on how faithfully they take the treatment. And the treatment is free.

But not everybody takes it faithfully. So those are some of the differences. And like I've often said, which I told somebody once, I said one big difference between our church and others is this.

For other churches, the big day is Sunday. The music must be good. The preaching must be good.

The people, the man who stands up front must be able to crack jokes and make everybody laugh. That's what goes on in many churches. And then, of course, it must take a good offering.

Sunday is the important day. I said in our church, the important day is Monday. Oh, here, sorry, here we have Friday.

Sorry. I'm in Dubai. I forget.

Friday is the important day when you come to the meeting. And I said in our church, the important day is the weekdays between the meetings, not the day of the meeting. Because however well you may sing and clap and all that's good, but if the week before you came here, you didn't live a godly life, your praise

sounds empty to the angels in heaven and to God himself.

But if you really sought to live a godly life, not that you didn't make a mistake, but if you did make a mistake, you immediately ask for forgiveness from God and from your wife or neighbor or whomever you hurt. You sought to live in righteousness. Then even if you don't sing in tune, God will be delighted with your praise.

You know, God is not listening to whether we sing in tune. We listen to that. We look down on somebody.

A guy can never keep a tune. But does he live a godly life? That's what God is looking at. So many churches have different ways in which they evaluate what is important.

So that is why I say the way we live during the week is important for us. How you live at home, how you work in your office, how faithful you have been with money that you earn, these are the important things. There was a French atheist who lived 250 years ago in France, and he looked at all the denominations, and he said these denominations have different doctrines.

Some preach this and that. You know, the denominations of those days, 250 years ago, there were no Pentecostals or Brethren. They were mostly Anglican, Lutheran, Roman Catholics, and the Methodist movement was beginning.

And he looked at all those denominations and said, they emphasize different truths. But when it comes to money, they all have the same doctrine. They all love it.

So if we say that CFC Church stands out as different from others because we have certain doctrines, it must be more than that. It must be that they also see that when it comes to money, we are not the same as others. And that's why from the beginning, you see, we've been going now for 39 years.

And I'll tell you, one of the great desires I had when we began this work 39 years ago was to demonstrate to the world and to India that in a poor country like India, where there's so much poverty, as you know, and you had to pay for everything, there's no Social Security, there's income tax, which you don't have to pay here. There are many disadvantages in a country like India that in such a country, even in the 20th century when we started the work, if you seek God's kingdom first and his righteousness, all that is needed will be added to this. We wanted to prove that.

First of all, I wanted to prove it in my own life, in my own family. Then I wanted to prove it in our local church in Bangalore. Of course, Bangalore is a city, so people earn more money.

Then I wanted to prove it in the poorest villages. And the poorest villages in India are, in South India anyway, are more in Tamil Nadu than Kerala. So, actually, if I can prove that, in the poorest villages, particularly in villages where there were no Christians for 2,000 years, and we have churches in some villages like that, we can prove there that to seek God's kingdom first, all that is needed will be added to it.

Then we prove that 21st century and 1st century are the same, that God is the same. And the other thing I wanted to see was, to prove, was can we follow the principles the apostles followed in the 20th century, exactly like Jesus and Paul did it? For example, if you read the whole Bible, no one said, follow me, until Jesus did. In the whole Bible, if you look up, who was the first person who said, follow me? Not Moses, not even John the Baptist, because Jesus did it.

But he's not the only one. Paul said, 1 Corinthians 11, follow me, because I follow Christ. He didn't say he was the example.

He said, I'm following another example. It's like climbing a mountain. Jesus has gone ahead.

Paul was following him, and he could say, follow me, because I'm following Christ, towards perfection. So I felt, from Scripture, that we need a generation of leaders in the church, elders, who could tell others, follow me, because I follow Paul, and I'm following Christ. Ultimately, it's Christ, but there are many others, like Paul, and John Wesley, William Booth, many people through the years, Sadhu Sundar Singh, different ones who followed, who could say, follow me.

And that, behind this line of people who are following Jesus, seeking to walk as Jesus walked, we could have a number of churches where we have elders who say the same thing. Follow me, because I follow these things. So, I said, I hardly hear anybody saying that.

I hardly hear any preacher preaching like that. I said, well, then we must have some. We must have leaders who say that.

So that was another reason why we started the churches. And now it's nearly 40 years, in different places God has raised us. But we need to have that original vision.

So, let's look at some of the things that Jesus and Paul did, particularly in relation to the work and to money. You know that, in Jesus' entire life, he never asked anybody for money. Number one.

Never. He needed it, because he had to feed 12 other followers and their families. He never asked anybody for money.

Sometimes people gave you reading Luke chapter 8, some rich people like Herod's talisman, he took it, but he never asked. And he never made his needs known to anyone. These are principles of New Testament work.

He never sent out a report of his work to people. They were writing letters those days, Corinthians, Galatians, they were all letters. But you never read of a letter where there's a report of the work.

Not Jesus, not the apostles. Never. You never read of any apostle saying, I'm doing a ministry for the Lord, you please support me and please support my co-workers.

Jesus didn't do it, Paul didn't do it. So, where did this practice come? Which is so common in every Christian group in church today. It's like asking, where did child baptism come from? Not in the Bible.

Where did prayer to Mary come from? Not in the Bible. Now, all of us sitting here, see, child baptism is wrong. Praying to Mary is wrong.

What about sending reports of our work? Oh, that is not so wrong. Aha, where is it in the Bible? If you say that sending reports of our work and asking money for our work is acceptable, then I say prayer to Mary is also acceptable. Child baptism is also acceptable.

It's not in the Bible, but we can change it. How is it that Christianity has changed these things in some areas, but are very strict in other areas? This is how compromise has come into Christianity. Because they say, if we don't do that, we won't get money.

And if we don't do that, more people will not come. So everything is centered around people and money. Do you think the Holy Spirit is not disturbed with all this type of compromise there is in Christianity? He certainly is.

There are a lot of things that go on in Christianity which God doesn't put a stop to it. So let it go on. Look at the millions of Christians who are baptized as babies completely against the Word of God.

God doesn't stop it. I'm not here to judge any church. We're not here to compare ourselves with any church.

I often say, CFC is also about hypocrites. Every church in the world has got hypocrites. Jesus' church had one hypocrite out of 12.

That means 8%. So if you have a church of 100 people, if 8 of them are hypocrites, your church is as good as Jesus' church. If you have a church of 500 people and you have 40 hypocrites, it's as good a church as Jesus' church, 8%.

So you can never have a church without hypocrites. Even Jesus couldn't. But the point is this.

The hypocrites could not control the church. That's the point. The church of Jesus Christ was controlled by Jesus Christ, by his principles.

Judas Iscariot may have had a different attitude towards money, to collect and use it and swindle it. Yeah, and so, if some churches want to go that way, that's up to them. But Jesus and Paul wouldn't allow that.

I think Paul had a little Judas Iscariot in his team. You know what his name was? Demas. Just like Judas left Jesus' team, Demas left Paul's team as well.

They couldn't survive there because they were very strict in these areas. And it's that strictness that has gone away. Some people think it's okay.

So it's very important, the reason I'm mentioning all this is it's very important that we preserve the standards that we find in the New Testament right until the end. Very, very important. You know, when people say that, well, you don't have any interest in doing evangelism, we don't do evangelism like many other evangelists do.

For example, there are evangelists in America and India who go around preaching, have big, big hundreds of thousands of people. But if you were to go and ask them, brother, you had a big meeting of hundreds of thousands of people in such and such a place, and I heard so many people sign decision cards and are converted, where are they? Can you show me where they are? These people whom you brought to the Lord? Every one of these evangelists will say, I don't know, I hope they're following the Lord. I did my job and I moved on.

But you never see that in the New Testament. If you went to Paul and said, hey, Paul, I heard that you brought some people to Christ in Philippi, where are they? He says, come, I'll show you. Come to the church in Philippi, all these people sitting here, these are the people who came to the Lord.

I heard you brought some people to Christ in Thessalonica, where are they? Come, I'll show you. Paul was an evangelist who brought people into a local church. He wasn't one of these who just had a big crusade and let them find their own place.

That's the big difference. So we don't do that type of evangelism, but we evangelize seeking to bring them into a local church. In every place.

So that we can build them up. It's like evangelism, to bring people to Christ is like getting a baby to be born. A mother, when she has a baby, she doesn't throw the baby in the street.

No. She brings the baby into the home, nurtures it, feeds it, and enables it to grow up to be a young man or a woman. That is a true father or mother.

That's why we have elders in churches who seek to build up people to grow up spiritually. And a true elder is not one who seeks to establish his position. Everybody must recognize me as an elder.

No. Many of you are fathers and mothers. How do you train your children? You seek to train them in such a way, listen to me, so that after a few years, they don't need you.

They're capable of setting up their own home. That's how some of you, your children are married. Do you train them to sit in your home for 50 years? How eager parents are when their children are in their 20s, girls and boys in their 20s.

I must get them a partner now. I must get them married. To do what? To send them out of the house? To be on their own.

Which father and mother says, no, no, no, we want to keep them here. They're 40, 50 years old. They must still recognize me as their father.

No. No father is like that. But do you know the number of elders who are like that? Who never allow other people to grow up to the place where the elders can retire.

No. They never want to retire. That's one of the things which we decided right from the beginning.

Wherever we started a church, we would immediately appoint somebody to lead it in a couple of years. Appoint an elder and other elders. And as soon as possible, make it independent.

And then when there are people to lead it, pull out. I myself pulled out of eldership in Bangalore after leading it for about 25 years. 16 years ago.

Less than 25. I pulled out. I'm not the elder here.

Others are elders. And little by little, in every place, we've had that type of thing. Because that's how a true father and mother is.

Where we have elders who are interested in their position and everybody must respect me, they are not fit to be elders. A true elder is one who's willing to pull out and let other people come forward. And where God sees that somebody is trying to sit on his throne like King Saul when he could see, the anointing has gone away from me.

It's gone to young David. He can't bear to think that David is going to take his throne. No, he wants to train Jonathan to take over.

And he wants to sit there till then. God removes such elders. Like he removes all.

Because he wants those who will be fathers and mothers, just like you and I. Our fathers and mothers to our children. Many of our children are more educated than us. My children are more educated than me.

Some of you, your children are more educated than you. Are you jealous of them? Are you proud of them? Are you happy that they got more degrees than you got? In fact, didn't you want them to get more degrees than you? That is a true father and mother. There's no competition.

There's no feeling, oh, that person is getting more qualifications than me. Or he's more anointed when he preaches the word of God than when I preach. I better push him down.

That is King Saul. Christendom is full of such elders and leaders. Jesus will never keep such people.

So these are some of the areas where we have differed from others. We are not here to judge any other church. We're not here to judge any other group.

But we believe that God's word is a guideline. To me, God's word is like the rails on which a train runs. Supposing a train says, yeah, I've got enough experience.

I don't need these rails and I'll go up. You get stuck in the mud. Even if a train has run for a hundred years, it will still run on the rails.

God's word is like the rails. And I never in my life ever want to feel that now I don't need the rails. And the other thing an engine needs is power.

Diesel power or steam power. Otherwise it can't run. And that's the other thing we have emphasized.

The power of the Holy Spirit. There's a lot of counterfeit of that power. But if a train engine gets power, it gives it power to run on the rails.

Not to go wherever it likes. And if the Holy Spirit really fills a person, he will give him power to go on the rails of the word of God. So when I see some preacher not following what's written in God's word, I say, I have no interest in listening to him.

Some of you may sit and listen to these television preachers and corrupt your minds and be led astray. I'm not going to stop you. I have no time to listen to them.

Because I don't want. They're not going to lead me astray, but I don't want to waste my time listening to them. I check.

This man claims to be filled with his Holy Spirit. Is he following the pattern that Jesus and Paul taught in the area of money? In the area of sending reports? In the area of asking people for money? No. Why should I follow him? Why should I listen to him? Even if he's an entertaining preacher, there are many politicians who are entertaining speakers.

You might as well listen to them. See, I find there are very few Christians who are radical and say, we believe in obedience to God's word 100%. We believe that if you're filled with the Holy Spirit, it will lead you to obey God's word 100%.

And the other thing, which I'm just trying to emphasize some, I mentioned some of the things we have emphasized for 40 years, that is, in the Old Covenant, if you read the Old Testament, there's no emphasis

on family life. There's no teaching in the Old Testament how a man should live with his wife, how the wife should live with her husband. Very little instruction on bringing up children.

But when it comes to the New Testament, when it says in Ephesians 5 verse 18, be filled with the Holy Spirit, it's the only place in the New Testament where it says be filled with the Holy Spirit. And do you know what's written immediately after that? Not speak in tongues. No.

Be filled with the Holy Spirit and speak in hymns and psalms and give thanks to one another. And then wives, be subject to your husbands when you're filled with the Holy Spirit. And husbands, verse 25, Ephesians 5 25, love your wives because Christ loved the church.

And children, chapter 6 verse 1, obey your parents. And parents, fathers, bring up your children in instruction of the Lord. And if you've got servants at home, treat them properly.

Such an emphasis on family life. And that's another thing we have emphasized from the beginning. There are elders in some CFC churches whom I have removed because their children were not following the Lord.

I say, I don't care how gifted you are. I don't care how long you've been an elder. The Bible says if a man cannot bring up his two or three children at home in a godly way, how can he lead a church of a hundred people? He can't take care of three people at home.

How can he lead a hundred people into God's ways? So the home becomes a test of whether a man is qualified to be an elder. But we don't find that standard maintained among pastors and leaders. So these are the so many areas in which Christianity has compromised, compromised, compromised, compromised.

Oh, let it be, let it be. Child baptism, let it be. Pray for Mary, let it be.

Begging for money, let it be. And against all this compromise, God always wants at least some people to stand up and say, no. We don't judge you.

Go the way you like, but we're going to be different. Dear brothers and sisters, it's important that even if your numbers never increase or your numbers decrease because some people get offended, that we never lower the standard. The standard is not what Zach Poonen teaches.

It's what Jesus taught. It's what the apostles taught. Which you can find in God's Word.

I've often said to people, you don't have to believe anything I say if I can't show it to you in Scripture. No, you don't have to believe anything. If I can show it to you in Scripture, you accept it.

There are other areas which are not written in Scripture where I may give my opinion like Paul, 1 Corinthians 7 He said, I don't have a command from the Lord but I give you my opinion. So it's very important that we preserve these standards till the end. Till Jesus comes again.

And if we do that we'll build a church that cannot be shaken. The important thing is not how big the church is. Turn with me to Matthew chapter 7 and let me show you a passage that you're very familiar with.

Matthew 7 and verse 24 Everyone who hears my words and obeys them can be compared to a wise man who built his house on a rock rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew and it could not fall. That

house is a picture of my life It's a picture of my home It's a picture of my church I want all three to be unshaken. I want to live a life which cannot be shaken by the devil or trials or anything I want to build a home that cannot be shaken.

I want to build children who will not be shaken No matter which storm or flood comes I want to build a church that will not be shaken The only way to do it, Jesus said obey what I say But if you hear what we're doing now is not obeying, what we're doing now is hearing Obeying is the next six days before we come back again So the day of worship day meeting day is the day we hear the rest of the days we obey Which days are important? Not just the days we hear, but the other days of the week when we obey or don't obey So the wise man and foolish man were both in the service on a Sunday or Friday here They both heard. One man went and obeyed the next six days The other man didn't bother to obey the next six days And among all of us sitting here I want to say to you, you decide whether you're going to be a wise person or a foolish person depending on how you live the next six days after you come here on a Friday for your service There, the next six days you decide whether you're wise or foolish Not here Remember, the wise man heard and the foolish man heard So how can we differentiate the wise and the foolish here? But the next days of the week you'll find out whether you're wise or foolish And the test will be finally when the flood, the rain and the storm come, your life will stand You'll be free from fear You'll be free from anxiety You'll be free from grumbling and complaining It's a wonderful life, the Christian life And if you're serious about it God will lead you into that life There is no partiality It doesn't depend on education All the educated people in Israel killed Jesus Christ It didn't depend on Bible knowledge The people with Bible knowledge only killed Jesus Christ But a simple man like Peter who was a fisherman, unlearned He could say, you're the Christ Son of God and Jesus said, you are blessed You could understand but all these great Bible scholars could not understand because my Father gave you revelation So, this is what we have emphasized from the beginning in our church And we want to continue to the end preserving the purity of the church Do you know why God rejected the Israelites in the days of Malachi? It's very interesting to read the history of Israel in the Old Testament There are two journeys of Israel in the Old Testament And those two journeys teach two different things One journey everybody knows Coming out of Egypt through the wilderness into Canaan There are many songs written about I've left Egypt, I'm not a slave to Egypt anymore I'm not a stranger in Canaan, I've moved out of Egypt and I'm coming into Canaan. Many songs Have you heard even one song about I've moved out of Babylon and I've come to Jerusalem.

I don't think there's a single song about that in Malayalam or any language, I don't know That is the second journey of the Israelites When God punished them, they went to Babylon for 70 years and a movement started It began with Daniel who fasted and prayed We read in Daniel chapter 9, confessing his sins Lord take us back He had a burden. Every movement to build the body of Christ begins with men and women who have a burden. A burden is like a baby in the womb.

You can't have a baby unless you carry it in the womb And it's only those who have a burden I had a burden in my heart for 10 years before I saw the birth of a small local church in my house in 1975. The burden started in 65 I had a burden in my heart I carried and carried and carried and I wondered whether the baby would ever be born Until one day I saw it. And now I've seen it grow It's not enough.

See the journey from Egypt to Canaan is a picture of being redeemed by the blood of Christ, baptized in the Red Sea, water coming out, cloud coming down, baptized in the Holy Spirit, coming into the land of Canaan killing the giants and overcoming life That is a picture of the individual Christian. The second journey described in the Old Testament is Babylon to Jerusalem. That's written in the books of Jeremiah

and Ezekiel going to Babylon, from Daniel onwards coming out of Babylon Ezra, Nehemiah Haggai, Zechariah If you go to the CFC India website cfcindia.com, you go to the topical Bible studies or verse by verse Bible studies, you'll see a series of verse by verse messages of mine titled, From Babylon to Jerusalem.

It's a study of these Old Testament books and Jerusalem is a picture of the body of Christ. You read in Revelation chapter 21 Babylon is a picture of a corrupt compromising church which has given up biblical standards, like I said just now. So, there is a movement from there was a movement from Babylon to Jerusalem in the days of Ezra and there is a movement from Babylon to Jerusalem today of God's people coming out of corrupt systems coming into something, but what happens very often through the years is they come out and start something and in a few years it becomes Babylon again.

And there is going to be another movement out of this new Babylon into Jerusalem again. This has been going on through the centuries. And in every generation God wants a pure testimony for his name.

And if the Old Testimony which was pure a hundred years ago has become corrupt now, then God has to start anew. That is how even the Marthoma Church came out of the Jacobites. And different churches came out of something which was corrupt.

Early leaders were God-fearing men. But that becomes corrupt again and God has to start something fresh. So that's always happened like that again and again, whether it's brethren or Pentecostal or anything.

Something becomes corrupt and then God has to take something out. And so when people go out, people in the old system say, where are you going? What's wrong? With us. Our forefathers they like the Pharisees told John the Baptist, we are children of Abraham.

And so the Lutherans will say our leader is Martin Luther. Methodists will say our leader is John Wesley. And different people say our leader was this, our leader was that.

Maybe true, those leaders were godly men. You guys are not like those leaders. So in the book of Malachi we read in Malachi chapter 1 as to why God finally rejected the Israelites.

He says you don't, verse 6, Malachi 1.6 The son honors his father. The servant honors his master. If I am a father, where is my honor? Where is my respect? And he says, verse 8 When you present the blind for sacrifice isn't it evil? And when you present the lame and the sick, isn't it evil? You know, Israelites had laws which said you must offer a goat or an ox.

So when they had to offer a goat they would look around their plot and say this one is sick, about to die. Let's offer this. They'd go to their ox and say this one is lame, it's always a bit of a nuisance to us.

Let's offer it to God. And they would find, look around for the blind and the sick and give it to God. The best they would keep for themselves.

And the Lord said, is this the type of offering you give me? He says try and give it to your governor. If the governor of your state comes to visit your home will you get some rotten meat which is lying for one week and make a meal for him? You would give him the best. The chief minister is coming to my house and you don't even treat me with that much respect.

I want to say to you, my brothers and sisters this is the condition of Christianity. And it's possible that you can have that spirit sitting here that you give the leftover to God. Not what is best.

I use the illustration sometimes to invite some respected man to my house for tea and I tell my wife, bring one cup of tea. And I drink that cup and it's almost finished. I say, sir, I'd like to give you some tea.

This is exactly what many people are doing to God. The best for myself. A little bit left over.

God says, I wish verse 10, there were some priests who would close the gates when people bring such offerings. Shut the gates. So we don't want you to bring such useless offerings to God.

But there were no priests who were bold enough to tell those fellows to get out of here. Don't bring those offerings to God. They were all men pleasers, just like today's preachers, seeking to please men.

So the Lord said, I will not, verse 10, accept an offering from you. I've finished with you fellows. I've finished with Israel.

Now, verse 11, from the east to the west, from the rising to the setting, I'm going to get, in the last part of verse 11, a pure offering. There's going to be a pure offering in every place. An offering that is pure.

When we started CFC 39 years ago, August 1975, in our house, that's the verse we began with. God wants a pure offering. Pure offering means, according to the standards of God's word, what Jesus and the apostles did.

We never want to do things which they did not do. Somebody was asking me yesterday, what about these people who lay hands on people and they fall down? Is that the Holy Spirit? I said, no, that's all hypnotism and psychological manipulation. Why? I said, I adopt a four-fold test for everything that I see in Christianity today.

One, did Jesus do it? Anything. You can test anything like that. Did Jesus push people down? No.

Jesus always lifted people up. He never pushed people down. Did Jesus do it? Number one test.

Second, did Jesus teach it? Did he teach that you must lay hands on people and push them down? Third test, did the apostles do it? No. Did the apostles teach it? No. And if it is no, no, no, no, no, I say, thank you, I don't want that.

You can do what you like with it. I'm going to shut the gates to that type of stuff. What about asking people for money? For God's work.

Did Jesus do it? Did Jesus teach it? Did the apostles do it? Did the apostles teach it? No. Paul told people to give to the poor. He never said for his own ministry.

Second Corinthians, two chapters he wrote. Give money to those poor people. That we have often said.

We have given lakhs and lakhs and lakhs of rupees to poor believers. God has given us much, we pass it on. Especially to the household of saints.

So, if you have got this test to everything that you see in Christianity, you'll be protected from a lot of things which people say are spiritual. If it's really of the Holy Spirit, it must be somewhere in scripture that Jesus did it or taught it or the apostles did it or taught it. Otherwise, how do I know? Because once you go

outside these four things, then you can accept child baptism, you can accept prayer to Mary, you can even accept prayer for the dead.

Because we say Jesus didn't do it, the apostles didn't do it, but this is a new teaching. And there's plenty of this rubbish. But if you look at your life, you'll find some of that rubbish you reject.

You won't accept prayer for the Mary, pray to Mary or pray for the dead, but some of the rubbish you accept. Why is that? That also is not in scripture. How do you accept it? Either you don't know the scriptures or you act as if you are a judge of God's standards.

Yeah, yeah. Times have changed. We don't have to do it like that today.

I remember when my son, Sandeep, started a church in America two years ago in California. He taught every sister must veil her head when she prays or prophesies in this church. And you know, American people don't do that.

So half the people in his church left. I said, praise the Lord. Wonderful.

My son, you're going in the right direction. If you emphasize God's word and people leave, let them go. And it was the women who dragged their husbands away and went out of the church.

And I said, Sandeep, those women were absolutely honest when they did not veil their heads in the church. They were saying thereby, I'm the head of my house. And they acted like that and pulled their husbands and ran away.

Well, we don't want such people in the church. We believe in obedience to God's word. Now let me tell you, veiling the head is not the most important commandment in the Bible.

The most important commandment is to love God and to love one another. But my point is, which is the commandment that we can reject? I always tell people, don't make big commandments and small commandments. There are big commandments and small commandments, but they're all given by a big God.

That's what makes everything important. I'm just giving you an example. That if you allow compromise in your church in one area, that's all the devil wants.

You allow him to put one foot inside the door, that's enough. He'll come in completely after a while. So I'm not saying that this is the most important commandment.

Don't misunderstand me. But make sure that we build our house on the rock. Everything that Jesus said.

We are living in a time of compromise and if we build like Jesus said, we will evangelize like Jesus taught us. Jesus didn't go around holding big crusades, get a hundred thousand people and just get them converted and say go where you like. No.

He gathered them together. Paul gathered them together. And that's what we have done.

We have these two villages in Tamil Nadu where since the time of Christ there were no Christians in that village. Two thousand years. CFC has planted churches in those villages.

Even today, ours is the only church in those two villages. But we don't advertise this time. We don't advertise everywhere.

We're doing evangelism. You go to the CFC website. You will think that CFC has got only one church.

Go and look in the website and see how many branches it has. Zero. Because we don't talk about these things.

We don't talk about the healings that we have seen in answer to prayer. We don't talk about it because then people say, oh you don't believe in healing. We have seen such healings in our midst at least two cases which are almost close to raising from the dead in CFC.

One this year. But that's not what we talk about. And I'll tell you why.

Paul wrote at least 13 letters. In any of those letters does he talk about any of his healings? Does he say once I raised the dead person who fell out of a window? Does he say anywhere some handkerchiefs went from my body and healed people? No. He never writes those things in his letters.

He only talks about holiness. You try and read Paul's letters. Peter raised a woman from the dead but you don't find it in his letters.

That is the difference between those apostles and today's preachers. Can you imagine a preacher today who raised a dead man not talking about it in some letter he writes? Dear brothers and sisters, we need to study the Bible to see the difference between today's preachers and New Testament truth. That's the only way we can preserve the church.

Otherwise many of us will go astray. And what about people who accuse us, hate us, like some of the people who left us recently. Call us a cult.

Cult leaders, Bible says bless those who curse you. Bless them. Don't call them a cult.

Let them call you a cult. Say, you are brothers whom we disobey. That's what we call a cult.

They can call us whatever name they like. We call Jesus visible, prince of devils. This is our forgiveness.

So we are not, I mean if somebody calls you a devil, you don't become a devil. But as a matter of fact, if somebody calls you a prophet, you don't become a prophet. If somebody calls you a cult, you don't become a cult.

People, when they get angry, call people by all kinds of names. That only shows their anger. But when people are angry, you can remain in love.

You are not going to provoke me to anger. You want to serve the devil and call me bad news, I will serve God. And I will love you and forgive you.

That is our position. And that is what we should hold on to till Jesus comes. Heavenly Father, give us grace from above to thank you for the wonderful brothers and sisters you have gathered together for many ups and downs that CFC Sharjah has gone through.

We preserved this church and we kept a number of people here. We pray we preserve them to be true to you unto the end. To be a light for you in the midst of all the compromise that there is among preachers

and churches in these dark countries.

Preserve them as a light for you that will not compromise. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/ccUPSQw6-gU.mp4>

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