

# Putting Christ Above Family Ties

by Zac Poonen

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**Scripture:** Luke 14:26, Romans 6:6, 1 Peter 3:20, Galatians 6:14, Galatians 2:20

**Topics:** "Discipleship", "Prioritizing Christ"

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## Description

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## Transcript

When we think of the commandment, I believe the main reason is that people haven't taken the words of Jesus exactly as he said it, comparing scripture with scripture, or they went off on a tangent on one particular verse, which became their favorite verse, and ignoring all the others. And then, of course, you have a very imbalanced... All scripture is inspired by God, so it's only if we take it in its totality that we can really get the truth properly. So I want to show you two things that Jesus said, and I find that a lot of Christians have got imbalanced on one of them.

And those are the parting words of Jesus after he rose from the dead, and before he went up to heaven, he met with his disciples and gave them what is known as the Great Commission. Christians call it the Great Commission, which is the command that Jesus gave as to what they were to do now that he was going up to heaven. So the first part of that Great Commission is in Mark chapter 16.

In Mark 16, we read in verse 15 onwards, he said to his disciples, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creatures. He, to all people, he who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved, but he who has not believed shall be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who have believed.

In my name they'll cast out demons, they'll speak with new tongues, they'll pick up serpents, they'll drink any deadly poison that will not hurt them, they'll lay hands on the sick and they will recover. Now that is one part of the Great Commission. So I want to say a word about this before we go to the next part.

He said to go everywhere in the world and preach the good news of forgiveness of sins through the death of Christ and his resurrection and to baptize people. That's all he said, nothing more. He stopped there.

Get them to believe, born again, baptized, period. And in this ministry, he said to confirm your word, I will do some miracles through you to confirm that word. And some of these miracles are casting out demons and speaking with new tongues.

And I say that's not just in the first century. It happens even today wherever people are taking the gospel for the first time to some unreached area. And if you don't see it in your midst, it's because this is not an unreached area.

This has heard the gospel for hundreds of years. But we've seen that in India. You go to some new village.

We've got, for example, in our churches we have planted, two of them are in villages where there was no church for 2,000 years. We're the first people to go with the gospel there and first churches planted there. And then, of course, there are demon-possessed people there.

And when you cast out a demon in Jesus' name, a person who could not be delivered in any other way, they know Jesus Christ is alive. So the Lord confirms his word with signs following even today. Wherever the gospel is going out for the first time and you give them the gospel and you tell them about, in many cases, about a Jesus whom they've never heard of and prove the fact that he's alive by supernatural signs.

But that's only one part of the gospel. The other part of the gospel of the Great Commission, not the gospel, but one part of the Great Commission, the other part of the Great Commission is in Matthew 28. And, you know, we have to take scripture with scripture to get the full truth.

If you take only one scripture, you remember how the devil tempted Jesus with one scripture. Jump down from the temple, he said, because there is a scripture which says, it is written, he will give his angels charge over you to keep you. And Jesus said, hang on, it is also written, you shall not tempt the Lord your God.

So when the devil quoted a scripture, can you believe the devil can quote scripture to you? Of course he can. If he quoted a scripture to Jesus to lead him astray, to lead him astray, jump from the temple, here's a scripture, he will give his angels charge over you. That would have been the most stupid thing to do, to jump from the temple and to foolishly claim that promise.

But there was another word in scripture which said, don't tempt the Lord your God. So Jesus quoted that other scripture. When the devil said, it is written, Jesus said, it is also written.

So the whole truth of scripture is not found in one verse. With one verse, you can go astray like so many cults have gone astray, quoting one verse. You balance it out with another scripture, then you get the full balance.

It is like the left hand and the right hand of the body. So the left side and the right side of the body. So here is one scripture, go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creatures and these signs will let them be baptized and then these signs will accompany.

The other side of the coin, as it were, is Matthew 28 which says, when you have made these converts, what do you do then? Make them disciples. Verse 19, go therefore and make disciples of all nations. That means don't just be satisfied that they are accepted the Lord.

Make them disciples, baptize them and then you don't even stop there. Verse 20, teach them to do every single thing I commanded you. How long do you think that will take? To teach these people every single thing that Jesus commanded.

That's what I mean when I say that a lot of Christians haven't taken every word of Christ seriously. They got their favorite verses, favorite passages, not balanced with others. It's like having a coin printed only on one side.

It's fake. If it's a genuine coin or a genuine currency note, it's printed on both sides. And here are two sides of the Great Commission.

Go into all the world, preach the gospel, evangelism and then make disciples. So it's that evangelism part that's been emphasized throughout Christendom. Go, go, go, go.

Very important. But if the other part of discipleship is not emphasized, what happens is you have a flock of people who haven't been delivered from sins. They just believe that Christ forgives us.

That's it. So you see Jesus used an example of one sheep lost out of a hundred. Let's look at that passage, Luke 15.

In Luke 15, Jesus told this parable. If a man, verse 4, Luke 15, verse 4. If a man has got a hundred sheep and he's lost one of them, doesn't he leave the 99 in the open pasture and go after that one which is lost until he finds it? And then he brings that one back into the fold of 99. So that 99 is supposed to be a picture of the church, the fellowship.

This one lost person is being brought in. And then there's joy in heaven, verse 7, over this. What is this lost sheep? One sinner who repents.

This one lost sheep is described by Jesus in verse 7 as one sinner who repents. And the 99 are called, listen to this. See how Jesus describes the true church.

If you want a description of the true church from Jesus' mouth, here it is. 99 righteous persons who need no repentance. Who are the people who need no repentance? Are there people like that in the world who need no repentance? Jesus said there are.

That's what a true church is supposed to be like. If a church has got 20 people, there must be 20 people who don't need any repentance. Why? Because they are repenting all the time.

As soon as they sin, they confess it, it's cleansed. They have turned from it and they are cleansed. They don't need repentance.

Maybe later on in the evening somebody sins again. But immediately they repent, said it right, and they are cleansed again. So they are living a life of constant judging themselves, constantly, you know, setting things right, asking forgiveness from people, asking forgiveness from the Lord.

And they are living a life where they don't need repentance. That means they are seeking to live a life free from sin. That is the picture of the church Jesus gave.

But that is not the condition of many churches. You go to so many churches today, even people who claim to be filled with the Spirit and all that, there is gossiping, backbiting, murmuring, complaining, covetousness, love of money, anger, bitterness, sexual lust, and some people sitting there watching pornography. These are not righteous people who don't need any repentance.

Certainly not. And you bring that one lost sheep into the midst of this fold, that sheep is going to get a lot of sicknesses it never had by coming into this fold. In fact that sheep is probably better off over there without any sickness than bringing them into such a fold like this.

So what is the great need? The great need I see in Christendom today is to teach these 99 people to come to a life of freedom from sin so that they can be described as 99 righteous people who need no repentance. That is Jesus' description of the church by the way, not mine. How many of you have seen that as a church is a group of people who need no repentance because they are always repenting? And that is the type of fold into which this lost sheep must be brought in.

So if you only go after the lost sheep, the first part of the Great Commission, go and preach the gospel and bring them to Christ and get them baptized. Then go to the next person and bring the gospel and go to the other unreached area. That sounds wonderful, evangelism, missionary work, go here, go there.

And you can have wonderful reports of 500 people converted here and 1,000 people converted there and 2,000 people raise their hands and sign decision cards in our meeting. Okay, but what is their condition after that? They come into a flock where they are fighting, quarreling, gossiping and all that. That's not the church.

That's just a bunch of lost sheep sitting inside the church building. They need to be saved. That's what I discovered in the early days of my ministry.

And I said, Lord, I'm fed up with this type of Christianity. I want to try and see something more close to the New Testament. Then the Lord showed me that you have to make disciples.

If you don't make them disciples, they are just going to be converts who just fight and quarrel. The only difference is that they talk about Jesus and you look at the life of the average person who calls himself a Christian today and the non-Christian, there's not much difference. I'll tell you honestly, I live in a country with 98% Hindus and some of those Hindus are much better than some of the people sitting in the church.

Believe me, it's true. What is that true? That these guys are not really disciples of Christ. They bring such dishonor to the Lord's name.

You know, the first prayer that Jesus taught us to pray, I hope you know that, our Father who art in heaven, and what is the number one request? It's not heal my backache or heal my sickness. It is hallowed be thy name. Number one request of a true Christian is Lord, not my name, let the name of Jesus be honored and respected.

And I'll tell you, you cannot disgrace the name of Christ if you are not a Christian. It's only when my wife became Mrs. Poonen that she could bring a bad name to Poonen, not before that. Before that she had another name.

She can't bring a bad name to me. I'm using that example in our relation to Christ. We are the bride of Christ, married to Christ.

So word Christian really means Mrs. Jesus Christ. Once I take that name, then I can bring dishonor to his name, not before that. So if a person is a non-Christian, some other religion, he cannot dishonor the Lord's name.

It is impossible. How can somebody dishonor your name before she's married to you? So it's very important to understand, when a person claims I'm a Christian, then he can bring dishonor to the Lord's name. And so, hallowed be thy name is so important.

So when I look around, I mean I grew up in India and I've been there all my life, and I say, Lord, such dishonor has come to your name in this country among the heathen because of the disgraceful ways in which so many Christians live and behave with each other. There's as much fighting and quarreling in their homes as in a non-Christian's home. There are as many Christians in the prison as other non-Christians.

What disgrace to the name of Christ? So, Lord, my prayer is let your name be honored and hallowed in India. And if that is to be true, then we need to raise up Christians of a slightly higher standard than what we have now, and that is the only way to do that is make disciples, not just stop with converts, but make them disciples. So, then the question comes.

When Jesus told his first apostles, go and make disciples, they didn't have to ask him, what does that mean, Lord? What does it mean to be a disciple? I'm sure many of you have read the word disciple. Let me show you a very interesting verse. In Acts chapter 11 verse 26, there you see the first time the word Christian comes.

The first time in history where a group of people were called Christians. Not like people are called Christians today because they were born in a Christian family. They get a birth certificate saying Christian.

It's not like that here. Acts 11 verse 26, it says the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. Who were called Christians? The disciples.

Not just those who signed some decision card or raised their hand in a meeting. No. Those who were disciples.

Today, people are called Christians who are not disciples. That's the problem. So we want to build a church where disciples are Christians.

Back to the Acts of the Apostles. So Jesus had already taught his apostles who were disciples and who were not. That's what I want to share with you now.

What the Lord showed us, and this is not theory for me, this is what we started doing in India 43 years ago. And what we have preached for 43 years, not only all over India, in the cities, in the villages, in so many different countries, and we've seen the results. Here it is.

The conditions of discipleship are in Luke chapter 14, verses 25 to 35. This is a very, very important passage. So when we started our church, it started in our home with just a few people.

Maybe 10 people or so. We started meeting in our home and said we want to be disciples. So let's look at the conditions of discipleship.

And I'm sure the early church was like that. They met in homes and they studied the conditions of discipleship. And we saw here in this passage three conditions which you have to fulfill if you want to be a disciple.

This is not a question of going to heaven. The question of calling yourself a Christian. The disciples were called Christians.

So if I want to go by the word Christian according to Acts of the Apostles, I have to be a disciple first. Otherwise I'm living a lie. Now see what it says.

Please follow this in your Bible, Luke 14, 25. Large crowds were going along with Jesus. And like I said the other time, whenever a preacher sees a big crowd, he says let's take an offering, or let's give them membership cards and make them all members of our church.

Jesus did nothing of the sort. And if you read what he said to this large crowd, he made some of the most difficult conditions for them to even follow him. No one would ever think of preaching such words to a large crowd.

You see we drive them all away if we say such things. Today we have a Christendom. It's always streaking.

Let's make our church a mega church. Let's have more people. Let's fill all the seats.

I say I'm not interested in a mega church. I'll tell you honestly why. Because Jesus said the way to life is very narrow and very few people find it.

Whereas the way to destruction is broad. And many people go that way. The mega churches are all there.

I don't want that. Jesus preached for three and a half years. The greatest preacher that ever walked on this earth.

And he could make only 11 disciples. And even after that, how many people waited for the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost? Who were the people who became disciples on that day? 120 people. That was his church.

Is that the great son of God coming and building a church and there are only 120 people there? After this most fantastic miracle ministry that he did for three and a half years? I'll tell you why. Because he made the conditions so strict and stringent. Because he was determined to make disciples and not just converts.

He didn't want sheep who were sick. He wanted righteous people who needed no repentance. Remember this description that Jesus gave of the church.

Righteous people who need no repentance. Because they are repenting all the time. Not because they don't sin.

But because they are repenting all the time, they don't need any repentance. If you just had a shower, you can say you don't need a shower. You had it five minutes ago.

And if you got dirty during the day, you take another shower and you are clean again. So righteous people who need no repentance are like people who are constantly clean. It's like your hands for example.

We like to keep our hands constantly clean. Every time it's dirty, we wash them. If you are working in a garage or in a factory, your hands may get dirty frequently.

If you wash them frequently, your hands are always clean. I keep my hands clean all the time. When I go to eat my food, I keep my hands clean.

And it doesn't mean it doesn't get dirty, but it's always clean. That's righteous people who need no repentance. That's the picture.

So here it is, the conditions of discipleship. And there are three of them. Please listen carefully.

If anyone, verse 26, comes to me, and I believe all of us must take this very seriously. Because you need to ask yourself whether you are a disciple. Don't check anybody else with this.

The Bible says, James 1.25, it says, the law is like a mirror. Now there are two types of mirrors. One is the mirror in your bathroom, and the other is the driving mirror in your car.

You know what the difference is? The mirror in the bathroom, you see your own face. In the driving mirror, you're looking at somebody else. And for a lot of people, the Bible is a driving mirror where, ah, that suits that guy sitting over there, or that other person.

There's an exact verse for him. And there are preachers who preach like that. This verse is for that guy over there.

The Bible was not given for other people. It's given for us. You know that verse in Hebrews 10? If you don't know it, in the volume of the book it is written about me.

It's a great verse. In the volume of the book it's written about me. I'm going to show you that verse if you haven't seen it.

I like to get you familiar with the Bible. Hebrews chapter 10. I don't want to be like these preachers who just preach one verse and then air my own views.

Hebrews chapter 10. Jesus says, Behold I have come, verse 7. Hebrews 10.7. In the scroll of the book, it is written about me. Who is it written about? It's written about me.

That's a great verse. I've always kept it in mind. This is not a driving mirror for me to look at somebody else's face.

It's a bathroom mirror where I see my own face. And I see the dirt on my face. I see the things I need to wash away from my face.

In the volume of the book it is written about me. Go like that through scripture. It will bless you.

Keep that in mind and let's come to Luke 14.26. If anyone comes to me and listens to these strong words. Jesus used some very strong words like, Cut off your hand if it sins. Better to go to heaven with one hand rather than go to hell with two hands.

If you lust with your eyes, pluck it out. Better to go to heaven with one eye rather than two eyes. You don't hear that type of preaching nowadays.

Because you won't be able to build a mega church with that type of preaching. You'll drive away people. But that's the type of thing that Jesus did.

He preached people because he was interested in quality and never in numbers. Quality, quality, quality. Righteous persons we need no repentance.

That's what he was looking for. And he said people who are interested in that come and we'll build a church. So we see here, listen to these strong words.

This big crowd is following him and he tells them, you want to follow me? You got to hate your father. You got to hate your mother. Now there are some people who are very happy with that.

I'm actually pretty fed up with my father and mother. So thank you for those words. But it's not meant for such people.

It is meant for people who have first learned to honor their father and mother as children. And then graduated to the place where they learned to hate their father and mother. You can't jump to college without going through school.

The school lesson is honor your father and mother as a child. Then you need to understand what he meant by hate your father and mother. Then he said you got to hate, listen to this, hate your wife and children.

Lord, how does that fit in with your teaching that love your wife like Christ loved the church? Both are true. We need to understand it. Love your wife like Christ loved the church and hate your wife and hate your children.

Hate your brothers and sisters which means your physical siblings as well as your brothers and sisters in the church. If you don't hate them and your own life, you cannot be my disciple. Now you can get a verse like that and say oh that's too difficult to understand.

You go to verses and you find it difficult to understand and you don't pursue after God and say Lord explain that to me. You remain ignorant all your life of some amazing truth that God is trying to show because the Lord has put some difficult verses in the Bible. Not impossible to follow.

He never allows us to be tested beyond our ability. Everything in scripture can be followed in the power of the Holy Spirit. But you got to understand what he's meaning.

So I've tried to understand what this means. So what I do is when it comes to verses like this, I compare scripture with scripture. So somewhat similar words are found in Matthew chapter 10.

Then I can understand it. In Matthew chapter 10 and verse 37, I want to compare Luke 14 26 with Matthew chapter 10 verse 37. Matthew chapter 10 verse 37.

You got to pay attention here. He says he who loves his father or mother more than me. Now I understand it.

He who loves his father or mother more than me, Jesus said, is not worthy of me. Or he who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. So that's what he's meaning when he says you got to hate your father and mother.

And that's what he's meaning when he says you hate your wife and children. If you love your wife or children more than me, you're not worthy of me. Or you love your brother or sister even in the church more than me, you're not worthy of me.

So when we bring that in here, that understanding from Matthew 10 37 to Luke 14 26, the picture, I like to think of pictures. Jesus often illustrated truth with pictures. So I see the my love for my father and mother like the light of the stars.

There's light there, sure. My love for my wife and children are the lights. I love my brothers and sisters lights in the sky.

But when the sun rises like right now, bright noonday sun, what's happened to those stars? Have they been obliterated? No, they are there. But you can't see them. Let the night come and you see them again.

So that's the picture I got about Luke 14 26. That means when my love for Jesus is like the bright shining sun at noonday time, that's how I love Jesus. It'll be almost as though my dad and mom and wife and children are my love for them is almost non-existent compared to my love for Jesus and intense love for Christ where he's supreme in our life and everyone else and everything else fades into insignificance and darkness compared to our love for Christ.

As I said, it's not that it's not there. Stars are still there. And I still love my father, mother, bride, children, everybody else.

But love for Christ has taken over. So I want to ask you, this is the first condition of discipleship. How many of you can honestly say that you're faced up to this verse seriously? That you love Jesus more than you love all your family members.

There are many people who love their family members more than they love Christ. And whenever you have a church consisting of people who love their family members more than they love Christ some situation will come where you have to choose between your love for Christ and your love for your family members and you'll choose your family members. And that's where you will prove that you're not a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Your attachment to your family members becomes supreme. I've seen that happen again and again and again among born-again Christians. They never understood the first condition of discipleship that I don't know my family members as family members now.

I know them in Christ. I remember when I got married. I told Annie, you will never be first in my life.

I'm sorry. You'll always be second. Christ will always be first.

We've been married 50 years now. I tell her the same thing. You're going to be second.

Christ is first in my life. Otherwise I cannot be a disciple. And at the same time I don't want to be first in your life.

I don't want to marry a girl in whose life I'm first. I want to be second. I want her to have Christ as first.

That's why our marriage has been supremely happy. I'll tell you, Jesus Christ has been like the glue as it were that's held us together. How do all these divorces come? Because in the beginning they say, oh I love you darling.

I'll do anything for you. And one year later they hate one another and they divorce one another. Why? Because Jesus is not in the middle.

So it's a very important truth that Jesus said. You must not love anyone more than Christ. Not even your wife.

Not even your children. Not even your father or mother or brother or sister or even brothers and sisters in the church. They must be next to Christ.

That means between you and them, there's Jesus Christ always. So if they do something which is contrary to the word of God or contrary to Christ, I'm not going to bypass Christ and say, hey you're still my brother. I'll stand by you.

No, I will not stand by you. I'm sorry. I'll give you an example.

I have only one brother and he was not a believer. I think he's a believer now but when he was getting married years ago he was an unbeliever. Marrying an unbeliever.

But he wanted to marry in a church building because you know it looks nice with the aisle and the music and all that type of stuff. And so he asked me to be the best man at his wedding. I said, if you're getting married in a court I'll be your best man.

But if you're getting married in the name of Jesus Christ whom you don't believe in, I'm sorry my brother. I cannot be your best man because I'll be supporting a false statement you're making. You want to be married in the name of Jesus Christ but you've not given your life to Christ.

It's a lie. Neither has your wife given her life to Christ. So I don't want to go through a formality like that and just pretend that I support you.

I don't. So I said, I'm sorry. I can't be your best man.

I'll do everything else to arrange for your reception at the wedding and all that. But I proved in that situation in my own life with my own brother, the only brother I have that Christ meant more to me. Actually if you get offended you get offended.

But he's not offended with me. He loves me and we love each other very much even today. But he respected my stand because what he learned one thing that day that Christ means more to me than him.

And I think my wife understands that too and all my relatives know that. I'm not going to keep them happy if it's going to be dishonoring to my Savior. That's the only type of person who will be a disciple and that's the only type of marriage that will really be happy because Christ means more to you.

And I want to encourage all of you if you want to have a happy marriage love Christ more than you love your husband or more than you love your wife. Very, very important. There's a verse in 2nd Corinthians in chapter 5 which is very relevant in this connection.

In 2nd Corinthians in chapter 5 it says like this it's in verse 16. 2nd Corinthians 5 and verse 16 see what he says here. From now on we don't recognize anyone according to what he is in the flesh.

That means I don't recognize him as my brother, my wife my children. No, no, no, no. Even Christ we knew him as a Jew.

He was born in a Jewish family but we don't recognize him as a flesh as a Jew anymore. He belongs to all humanity. So these people who speak about messianic Jews as being a special category compared to other Christians it's just a lot of rubbish.

There's only one type of Christian those who have accepted Christ and it doesn't matter whether they came from a Jewish family or a Hindu family or a Muslim family or any nationality in Christ verse 17 if anyone is in Christ he is a completely new creation and that is why I say you cannot come to Christ and still relate to the old creation I like to be people with my own community I want to be in a church where people of my community are there or my country but in Christ there's no such thing that means I don't recognize a person as an Indian anymore it doesn't matter whether he's Indian or African or Nigerian or South American or Brazilian or American, North American or Canadian doesn't make any difference to me. In Christ there is no difference because I'm a disciple I hate that old relationship because I'm not an Adam in Adam I had all those relationships oh you're my fellow Indian or in India also we've got more than 20 states and you come from my state so there's a special attachment we speak the same language, we've got 22 languages in India so an attachment based on, I tell you this is very true in India, people are attached to the people of their own community their own state and sometimes their own social level people are different social levels in India and we like to be in the same social level or the same intellectual level and it's all the same principle of not being a disciple when you come to be a disciple it's only Christ that matters not your intellectual level and not your nationality or community. So you go to a church where everybody is one community I say hey what's the basis on which you come together Christ or your nationality and we see so much of that as I said last Sunday we have churches which are all Indians or all one particular language of India Tamil speaking Indians church or Telugu speaking Indians church, that's not a church let me clarify, if it's a church they all speak English but they gather with people of their own community that's a club, not a church that's an Indian club or a Tamil club or a Malayali club or as I said last time a Hungarian club or a Romanian club or a Russian club or a Ukrainian club or a Caucasian club or a white club or a black club, it doesn't matter what you call it it's not a church in a church as it says we don't know anyone according to the flesh anyone is in Christ, he's a new creation the old relationship is gone and I'll tell you this, it's very difficult to break it there was a time as I've said many times I was in a tree called Adam I was a part of that tree I had all the curses that come through that tree and I inherited it but one day the Holy Spirit cut me off and I was born again and grafted me into another tree called Christ and in Christ there is no Indian or Brazilian or Spaniard or Italian or American, there's no such thing that is all in the other tree in Adam there's a Spaniard tree and a French tree and German branch I mean, different branches of that tree and American branch and Indian branch and in Indian branch there are sub-branches of Tamilians and Malayalees and Hindi speaking I was in that, I have to admit I was in that once but thank God I was cut out of that and put into Christ there is no distinction now in the old covenant there was only one tree, all Jews maybe the tribe of Reuben or Levi or Simeon but it's all one tree, Jesus finished with that like he says, even in Christ we don't know according to the flesh it says here in verse 16,

he's not a Jew now people say Christ was a Jew, I say no have you read 2nd Corinthians 5.16 he's for all humanity, he's the new man, M-A-N that's all in Christ, the mediator between God and men, it's a wonderful thing and that's why I was saying last Sunday though we are a small church, what a wonderful church it is when you have nine nationalities in this church, isn't that amazing and yet we are one in Christ, we don't look at each other as different nationalities, we are one in Christ, that's it see there's something we like about being with people who are just like us, same intellectual level, same social level same community, it makes it very easy, I don't have to die to myself much in that situation, but you try to mingle with people who are different community and I tell you you really have to die, think for example it says here in Colossians chapter 3, Paul was fighting this all the time he says there's no such thing as your attachment to your community, sorry that's out now if you're a disciple, that's finished, in Christ he says in Colossians chapter 3, listen to this 2nd Corinthians 3.10 you have put on the new self you're a new man in Christ renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the one who created him and that is the Lord image of the Lord according to that and in this renewal verse 11 listen to this verse Colossians 3.11 there is no distinction between Greek and Jew Greek means, it's the word they used in those days for non-Jews anyone who was not a Jew was called a Gentile the Jews divided the world into two categories Jews and non-Jews this is what community is, those who are my community all the rest another community, this is old covenant that's what I mean by an old covenant church Jew and non-Jew or name your community this community and all who are not my community, just two groups in the world that's old covenant and he says but in Christ it's not like that there's no distinction between Jew and non-Jew between circumcised and uncircumcised between barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man no difference between slave and master in Christ and barbarian, can you imagine putting a cultured, the Greeks were the most cultured polished, refined, civilized most people on earth at that time and the barbarians were really crude can you imagine a Greek and a barbarian sitting next to each other in the same church, boy, that would have been real fellowship, to prove that Christ is everything this cultured Greek sitting with an uncultured barbarian and fellowshiping with him as an equal, and the Scythian do you know who the Scythians were? listen, the Scythians were the ones whom the barbarians felt were barbarians I mean the barbarians wouldn't even say the Scythian, boy you know there are people like that who are pretty uncultured themselves and they look at someone else and say boy we're never having anything to do with them, and the wonderful thing that Jesus did, save all of them through his blood and put them all in one church and say I'm going to demonstrate to the world and to the devil that when I cleanse people in my blood and put my Holy Spirit within them they love each other because they belong to me, not because they belong to the same community or because they have the same intellectual level or they agree on some petty little doctrine, no, it's because they love me and they want to be my disciples dear brothers and sisters, that is the true church, anything other than that all white, all black, all Russian, all Ukrainian all German, that's not a church that's a club, there's a multitude of clubs, all Indian so many clubs there are, I remember when my children came here to the US the first time I told them, there are many Indian churches in America, please don't join any of them, that's a club I want you to go to a local church which comprises of people who live in that locality there may be any community, white, brown, black, yellow it doesn't make a difference, if they are representative of that locality but not a club of people in one community because I told them you'll never grow spiritually if you sit with people in your own community, that is a club and your unity will be based on community and not on Christ and even though you say I'm a Christian, it's only for namesake but deep down in your heart, you're not a Christian first you're whatever community you are we can't deny the fact that we belong to one community but when it comes to church, it doesn't make a difference to me it's very very important and I believe that is one reason why many people don't grow spiritually because they relate only to people who are exactly like them as an intellectual

person, it's very easy to relate only to people at the same intellectual level an intellectual level can appreciate these high level jokes that you crack, which less educated people can't understand it's like these tube lights that take a long time to come on and you say something funny and the guy hasn't understood it it's difficult to fellowship with such people but if you're in Christ, it makes no difference because your fellowship is not based on whether you can understand my jokes or not he loves Jesus and I love Jesus, that's all that's all there is to it and I want to ask you honestly to ask yourself do you really have fellowship with other Christians on that basis? can you honestly say I know no man or woman according to the flesh it's not that they were put in my background or my community there are sub communities in these communities no, I'm a disciple and I hate my community, father, mother, brothers in the right way, I don't mean hate in the sense of the way Jesus used it in Luke 14.26 the light is there I'm an Indian, I speak a particular language but in Christ it makes no difference to me all are the same, now I say this because this is what Jesus said, go into all the world and make disciples that's why I'm emphasizing this and don't let your attachment to your parents or to your family members mean more to you I know churches that have been split because of attachment to the family members one family member is offended and the whole family leaves the church all the families leave the church why? because one family member is offended what was their unity based on? it was based on family, not on Christ thank God that church split God never wanted a church which was based on family based on Christ and I praise God when God does such a work anywhere to split and break up a church that's based on community or family and say, I want to build a church which is based on Jesus Christ being in the middle and everything else is secondary so that's the first condition turn back to Luke 14, there's another very important thing here it says here that he must not only hate his own family members his own life Luke 14.26 and that's what he emphasizes in the next verse if you don't carry your own cross and come after me, you cannot be my disciple so that's the second condition of discipleship which is, I've got to hate my self life that's a little more difficult that means what I was saying earlier in the matter of denying your own will in the earlier session that when I'm tempted and my self is hurt I've got to reckon myself dead do you know that this is the meaning of baptism by the way? it's the second condition of discipleship if you do not carry your own cross and come after me, Luke 14.27 you cannot be my disciple so in that connection I want to turn you to Romans chapter 6 let me read you this verse which talks about what the cross means in our life there is a cross on which Jesus died we all accept that here's a cross in our life, you take up your cross and follow me and that is written in Romans chapter 6 it says here about Romans 6.6 our old self was crucified with Christ so that the body of sin can be done away with so that we should no longer be slaves to sin now many of us don't try to understand this but I want to say it's very very important if you want to be a disciple I've not only got to say Christ is more important to me than all my family members I've also got to say in my life Jesus Christ is more important to me than me I don't care if people hurt me let the name of Jesus be honored, let them say anything about my name let them drag my name in the dust say 101 evil things about me, makes no difference I've died in baptism when somebody takes you and dips you in the water it's a picture of burial it says here in verse 4, buried with him through baptism into death so that we are saying that the old me is finished and coming out of the water I'm symbolizing resurrection I'm a new person in Christ so that means my old self which is always about me what do people think about me, what do they say about me my special friends and my attachments it's all gone I'm a new person in Christ there's a picture of this in the Old Testament I'll show you in 1 Peter it's very interesting some of these pictures 1 Peter chapter 3 did you know that the flood of Noah you all heard about the flood in Noah's time you know that's a picture of water baptism Noah was baptized in that flood you read that in 1 Peter 3, it's amazing it says in the days of Noah verse 20, 1 Peter 3 20 the middle of that verse, the ark was being constructed and 8 people were saved who were the 8? Noah, his wife his 3 sons and their wives, that's all it's a picture of a church, a very small

church in the midst of a corrupt world that all got destroyed and it says the flood waters came and these 8 people came out of it they went into the flood and came out of it because they were in the ark all the others got destroyed and it says here in verse 21, this is a picture of baptism Noah's flood is a picture of baptism how is that? because Noah and his family went through the flood and came out of it I go into the waters of baptism and come out of it and when Noah came out of that flood he looked around he and his sons all their old friends had gone and they didn't sit there weeping oh my, that friend of mine is gone and this other friend of mine is gone you think they sat there weeping outside the ark? No thank God he saved us we are a church our old relationships are gone it's a picture of baptism I'm united with Christ now and they came out into the world and started building fellowship with one another their old connections were completely cut off now many people don't like this I'll tell you why, because they don't want to be disciples and they hang on to some of their old relationships which drag them into worldly habits and gossip and backbiting and all that type of stuff you should be thankful if God cuts it off I don't know what Noah's and his sons friends were outside before the flood came but I know that after the flood it was all finished it was a new world into which they came where they built a new fellowship between them and that's what God does in a church it's not that we hate others, no we love them we serve them, Jesus served the multitude we are glad to serve and bless the world around us help the poor and do all types of things but our connection is in Christ it's very important to understand this this is a disciple, myself has died and now I'm in Christ let me just show you one more verse and then we'll close it's in Galatians chapter 6 in Galatians chapter 6 it says Galatians 6.14 may it never be that I glory in anything except the cross of Jesus Christ whereby the world is crucified to me and I'm crucified to the world you know the living Bible which is a good paraphrase of the Bible reads like this in Galatians 6.14 now I'm dead and I have as little interest in this world as a dead man has, I like that I'm crucified with Christ and now I have as little connection and interest in this world as a dead man has spiritually speaking a dead man is not going to fight with other people if people take advantage of me I just forgive them, it's ok if they call me bad names I will bless those who curse me, sure I'm not going to be offended if that person treats me in a bad way no, because I'm dead but I'm not only dead, Christ has made me alive Paul says it is no longer I but Christ it's not no longer I period no, I'm not just dead, I'm raised up but it's Christ who lives in me so it's not that I'm like a dead man I'm like a person in whom Christ is now living think of the difference if one day, I thought of it like this if Jesus Christ himself could come into the skin of mine one day and live through me that day Christ himself outwardly he looks like Zach Bonin but it's Christ inside living me would my wife notice a difference and say, darling you're so different today but that's the way I should always be if it's no longer I but Christ would the people who work in my office say hey there's something gracious and loving about you now that is what it means to say it is no longer I but Christ I have died to myself I want Christ to live in me and I want Christ to be seen through me this is only possible through the power of the Holy Spirit that is why I say we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit we need to long for this more than for anything else I remember the days when I longed and longed and longed and said Lord please fill me with the Holy Spirit I cannot live this life without that power and you know that verse we saw in the last session you will seek me and you will find me when you search for me with all your heart may the Lord help us, let's pray Heavenly Father please help us to live by the truths of your word we pray in Jesus name, Amen here is a book which was just released last month the title of the book is God's work done in God's way and it's written in the back God's work today is not being done in the way that Jesus and the apostles did it money has become the most important thing in Christian work today but money was not at all a factor for Jesus and his apostles is it possible to do God's work today in the way it was done by Jesus and the apostles? Yes and we approved it during the last 43 years I did not write this book for 43 years because I did not want to write about unproven theories but what we have learnt in these years of how God builds his church has made

me a debtor to other believers to share with them what God has taught me this book is my effort to clear that debt to others, God bless you

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