

Seeing New-Covenant Leadership

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being a servant leader, following Jesus' example of humility and servanthood. It highlights the need for godly leadership in building the church, focusing on submission to authority, humility, and a servant's heart. The speaker challenges listeners to prioritize spiritual growth and character development over external success or achievements.

Scripture: Luke 22:27, Hebrews 13:17, Romans 12:1, Isaiah 53:10, Philippians 3:17

Topics: "Servant Leadership", "Humility in Service"

Description

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Transcript

We've been looking at a number of things in Matthew 16. In relation to building a new covenant church, as I said, this is the first time that the word church occurs in the Bible, in the New Testament. It's a New Testament concept.

There was no church in the Old Testament. It's something that Jesus introduced in the New Covenant. And I find that lots and lots of Christians don't have an understanding of it.

Now, that's not surprising because the devil's main aim is to blind us to as much of God's truth as possible. I mean, he'll first of all try to blind us to the forgiveness of sins, which he succeeded in blinding millions and billions of people around the world. If they knew that truth, they would be free.

Just like Jesus said, you shall know the truth, the truth shall set you free from the guilt of sin. Okay, if he didn't succeed there, that means you somehow broke through and got some light on how your sins can be forgiven. Then that's not all the truth there is in the Bible.

The Bible speaks of the whole counsel of God. And you may have got a small segment of that circle. Then the devil will seek to blind you to as much as possible.

You break through to an overcoming life. A lot of people think, that's it, I've really got everything there is in the Christian life now. I met numerous people who never become a submissive member of any local

church, which is an expression of the body of Christ.

They flit from church to church to church, like visiting Chinese restaurants and Telugu restaurants and different restaurants in search of food. Now the church is not a restaurant, it's a family. And many people don't want to accept the responsibilities in a family.

One of the characteristics of the human race is, we like to have privilege without responsibility. You see that in teenagers, you see that in grown-ups. We want all the privileges, all the blessings that God can give us, but we don't want to take any responsibility until we see how Jesus lived, and then we change, we take up the cross, and then we realize that responsibility is a major part of the Christian life.

And then we shall not flit from church to church. We shall become a committed part of a local church. But again, like I said, if we don't break through, we'll remain blind.

It's not something that I can explain to you or convince you about. I think of Paul writing to the Ephesians, and he says, I pray that God will give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, and that the eyes of your heart will be enlightened. Now he didn't say, just read my episode 10 times, meditate on it, study it, go to the root meanings of the Greek words, and you'll understand all this rubbish and the way in which people try to understand scripture today.

It's good to read scripture a hundred times. The Pharisees read it a hundred times and still thought that Jesus was the prince of devils. What did they lack? Intelligence? No.

Earnest study? No. What they lacked was humility, which would have given them the revelation of the Holy Spirit, because God in his great wisdom has hidden these truths from the clever and the intelligent. Those are Jesus' words in Matthew 11-25, and revealed them to those who have the heart of a babe.

They get revelation. So I've seen through the years that the church is a revelation. God opened Paul's eyes to see it, that the church was a body.

I think he got that light on the road to Damascus as he was going down that road, and he heard this voice from heaven saying, why are you persecuting me? Who are you, Lord? I'm Jesus, whom you're persecuting. And he began to think, he was a clever man. How in the world can I persecute someone who's living in heaven? And there the seed was sown in his mind of the great truth that though the head is in heaven, the body is on the earth.

And when Paul persecuted Christians, he was persecuting the head. And that whole truth began to open up in his mind through the Holy Spirit. And for the rest of his life, he preached on the church as a body of Christ.

And wherever he went, he didn't have the passion to save souls like today people have. He had a passion to build the church. Saving souls is like getting a finger and throwing it there, and getting a leg and throwing it there like the anatomy laboratory in medical colleges.

It's not a body. But I've seen through the years, unless a person's eyes are open, you can speak to them for years, they'll never understand it. I'm not here to judge them, but I know the reason is the lack of humility.

Anyone who's got humility will get revelation on the whole truth of God. The more you humble yourself, the more God opens your eyes. Cleverness will never lead you there.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and don't lean upon your own understanding, it says, if you want God to direct all your parts. So we've been looking at that. The church that Jesus spoke about in verse 18, and the mark of that church is that the gates of hell, the powers of spiritual darkness, will never be able to triumph over it.

Any church over which the powers of darkness are triumphing, it's not the church of Jesus Christ. And when you see churches today where divorce is accepted, remarriage is accepted, pastorism remarried and divorced, what is that? That's not the church of Jesus Christ, that's the church of the devil, which claims to be the church of Jesus Christ, which has completely disregarded the commands of Christ and which treats sin lightly and think that in the 21st century we've got more wisdom than Jesus had in the first century about matters like divorce and remarriage. Well, that'll always be there.

Babylon will continue to be big and great. The Bible says that it's going to end as a great institution which will finally collapse. Jerusalem may not be that big in size, but it's going to be pure in quality.

And that's what we want to spend our life building, because that's the only thing that will remain. It's like Noah. Once he knew that the ark was the only thing that would remain after the flood was gone, he devoted all his attention to building the ark.

I mean, he worked to earn his living. There was nobody to support him financially. He worked to earn his living, a great example for Christian workers today, and devoted all his time to build the ark.

It's a great example. Your job must only be a means of earning a living. If you want to be like Noah in the last days and devote yourself to building the church, it's the only thing that'll remain.

Noah didn't just bring a lot of planks together and put it there and a whole lot of nails. That's like saving souls. He built something.

He built. What's the use if he had just collected all the planks and the nails and everything else and left it there, like many evangelists do? No, he built. He built an ark.

It was built one with another, in unity. That's what Jesus is building today, and he built Adam. He didn't just build a hand and leave it there and a leg and leave it there.

He put it together, and that's what he's doing today as well. So I want to share a little more today about what Jesus said. You know, we were looking last time at the way of the cross, which was the first time Jesus spoke about the cross, the first time he spoke about the church as well.

We saw that last time. And then, you know, he also, we looked at this too in verse 24. If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

So I want to say a few words about following Christ. In the Old Testament, nobody, not even the greatest prophet, could say, follow me. They all said, hear the word of the Lord.

Exactly like most preachers say today, don't look at me, listen to the word of God. It sounds very humble and spiritual to say, don't look at me, look at Jesus. There are a lot of ideas we get from our understanding which are totally contrary to scripture.

The human understanding of humility is a million miles away from Christ-like humility. In a human understanding of humility, Christ should not have gone and whipped the money changers out of the temple. The humble men don't do that, according to human understanding.

But Jesus, the humblest man on earth, whipped them, and he didn't just gently ask them to remove their tables. He turned the tables and sent the coins flying, and he told us Pharisees, you generation of vipers, how will you escape the damnation of hell? This is the humblest man that walked on the earth, don't forget. So if you get your definition of humility from the dictionary, you'll go completely astray.

And you deserve to go astray, because you don't look at Jesus, but you look at the dictionary. The Bible says we run the race looking under Jesus. We get our understanding of humility from Christ.

We get our understanding of holiness from Christ. We get our understanding of love from Christ. His love for that rich young ruler.

It says he looked at him and he loved him, it says in Mark 10. And when the man was not willing to give up his money and follow Jesus, Jesus did not go after him and say, okay, let's start with 10%, we'll move on to 20%. No.

Goodbye. That's love. How many people know that type of love today? Very few.

Because their understanding rules their life, not the Word of God. They think their understanding is superior to God's Word. Now I'll tell you why I say that.

If you really believed, let me be honest with you, if you really believed that in all the millions and billions of books in the world, there's only one book that God wrote, and you say you're a child of God, I'm amazed that you don't study it. You don't believe it. That's why.

You have more time watching television. How can that be? You say nominally the Bible is the Word of God. I mean, it's like this.

If my father was a billionaire and had written a will in my favor, I'd like to know everything written in that will. Why should all my father's hard labor and all the money he earned go to some crooked lawyer? I want to know what he wrote for me. Much more important than money is what God has written in his book for me.

And I want to encourage you, brothers and sisters, if you come to the Word of God, you'll find it's very different from what a lot of preaching that you hear today. For example, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11, verse 1, follow me as I follow Christ. Was that pride? Or was that humility? Paul received a thousand times more grace than you and me.

God does not give his grace to the proud. He gives it to the humble. And this humble man who received such fantastic grace from God, proving that he was a very humble man, probably the humblest man in his lifetime on earth, said to people, follow me as I follow Christ.

This is true new covenant leadership. It's not follow me, full stop, no. It's follow me as I follow Christ.

I don't want to follow a guy who says follow me. A lot of false teachers saying follow me. A lot of false religions leaders say follow me.

But follow me as I follow Christ. This is new covenant leadership. As I said in the old covenant, it was not like this.

Nobody, not even Moses or Elijah could say follow me. Moses could say come and hear what God has told me on the mountaintop, but please don't come and look at my family life, how I fight with my wife and we had a quarrel the other day over our son's circumcision. Don't, that's not a good example, but don't look at me.

Look at, hear the word of God. Preachers who preach like that are old covenant preachers and they will build an old covenant congregation and not a new covenant church. A new covenant leader must be able to say follow me as I follow Christ.

Come and examine every area of my life. Come and look at my family. Come and look at how I live with my wife.

Come and look how I brought up my children. Come and look at all of my children, not one or two. Come and look at all my financial dealings.

Every single thing. You can examine all my books. Come into my house and see the books I read.

Come and see how I spend my time. There's nothing to hide. You see why churches are not built, new covenant churches? Because God can find so few who can lead those churches.

Jesus once looked around in his day and he said the people were like sheep without shepherd and he had tremendous compassion. What did he do? Did he say who's volunteers? Who will volunteer? Who will come and join a bible school? We want to raise up more shepherds. All these modern methods produce third-rate, good for nothing, useless Christian workers.

You know what Jesus said in Matthew 9, 36 to 38? He said the harvest is plenteous. The shepherds, the laborers, the shepherds are few. It's true today.

So what shall we start? More bible schools? No, no, no, no. That will only produce false prophets. Pray.

Pray that Almighty God the Father will thrust forth shepherds into his harvest. The answer is in prayer. We need to learn that.

That humble dependence upon God for everything. And I'll tell you after 50 years of being a Christian and seeing Christianity in many parts of the world, the greatest need today is godly leadership. And the devil will do everything in his power to prevent you as a young man from allowing God to break you and humble you and prepare you to be a leader in God's work one day.

Do you know at what age people became leaders in the bible? Joseph was the second ruler of Egypt when he was 30 years old. Prepared for 13 years before that through trial and difficulty and tested with evil women and tested whether he would complain and grumble and all types of things and it says the Lord was with him when he was a slave, the Lord was with him when he was a prisoner. And he was he went through the grind and then came out at the age of 30.

More mature than a lot of 70-80 year old people today. Prepared to be a leader. David, another young man probably around 20 years old when he killed Goliath.

Had to be trained 10 years running around in caves. Became the king of Israel. Man after God's own heart.

Age 30. Daniel probably 17-18 years old. Determined in his heart it says in Daniel 1.8 that he would not defile himself.

Boy I wish we had more young men 17-18 years old who would determine in their heart not to be like the other young men around them but they will not defile themselves because they have a respect for the word of God. Not only the big commandments like don't murder, don't steal but the small commandments like don't look upon the wine when it is red, when it just stirs itself in the cup like it says in Proverbs. And they were told they heard certain laws in Leviticus concerning clean and unclean animals.

Daniel decided to follow it. So these are the men in the New Testament. Jesus was 30 but he'd been trained for 30 years before he became a leader.

Even Jesus the son of God had to be broken in his home by submission to imperfect parents. How do you like to submit to a boss who knows less than you, who's not upright? I know in my younger days I had to submit to elders whom I couldn't respect as godly men. I'll tell you honestly I could not respect them as godly men because I saw them lose their temper.

I saw carnality in their life. I saw their sermons were the most boring things I ever heard on earth. How could I respect them? But the Lord said shut your mouth and submit to them because I was part of that church.

I did. I didn't know why. I mean it was sort of the best church around and the best church had leaders like that.

But I tell you it was good for me. God broke me in so many ways. When the leader would tell me to shut my mouth and sit at the back and I sat at the back for three years.

Good. It was very good for me. There were people who were jealous of my preaching and wouldn't let give me a chance to speak.

I said okay. I'd go out into the streets and preach there. Nobody wanted to do that.

I'll tell you this. In your younger days if God lays a hold of you in your teenage years I want to tell you in Jesus name God wants to do a tremendous work of breaking in you before you're 30. I see that throughout scripture and if he doesn't succeed in that you're pretty much missed the bus.

What a tragedy. That's the reason why there are so few prophets in India. Why there are so few shepherds after God's own heart because you can't be that just by even if you're a gifted speaker that's not good enough to be a shepherd.

God has to do work in your heart. So when Jesus spoke about following him he wanted examples who could say like Paul follow me as I follow Christ and not people like Moses who say don't look at my private life just listen to what I preach. It's a great requirement of the new covenant church and as we've gone around planning churches the Lord's Planet churches in India.

I've always looked for God-fearing leaders. It's not easy to find them. We have to make do with whatever is available.

Sometimes we have to start up start with a one-eyed man because he's a king among the blind but all the others are blind. The one-eyed man is better than the rest but it's not the best. We look for two-eyed people but we don't find them and we get a one-eyed man.

In some places I've just closed down the church. I say listen I'm not going to be responsible for this. Do what you like.

Go where you like but we've tried for years to try and get godly leadership. It's not there. Forget it.

I can't take any responsibility because where there's no shepherd if you gather sheep together you have just produced food for the wolves. I don't want to do that. I don't want to save souls and keep them like that for the wolves to come and swallow them.

There must be godly shepherds. That's a great need. That's why we seek to encourage young people to study the word of God to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Don't let the devil fool you saying you've got to be 50-60 years old before you start serving the Lord. No. Start when you're young.

Do what you can when you're young and God will work in you. I mean I started serving the Lord when I was 22-23 and I had to learn through mistakes and wrong things and be I had to be broken and humbled and all types of things brought to a zero point etc. It's all part of education.

So don't get discouraged if you fall or fail or make a mistake. All the great men of God who've gone ahead of you have all bungled up things and messed up and made mistakes but through it all God prepared them one day to be shepherds among God's people. You can be a shepherd by the time you're 30 years old.

Many of the shepherds God's raised up in our churches are all young people. I mean when we started here I was only 35. So don't let the devil tell you that you've got to be a very old person.

I think Paul was around 32 when he started and probably about 40 when he was an apostle. And all the apostles of Jesus Christ whom he chose, he was 30 and no Jewish rabbi would ever select a person who was older than him to be his disciple. All his disciples were younger than him.

Peter may have been the oldest, John may have been around 27 and they were trained and trained and trained for three and a half years so that by the time they came to the day of Pentecost, all those leaders were apostles. The oldest was only 33. The youngest may have been 30.

Can we expect that today? 30 year old apostles, 33 year old apostles. Boy, I look for that day and so sad. I think God is grieved.

I mean it's a grief to my heart, a million times more a grief to God's heart that so many young people are living for money, living for honor, trying to live a comfortable life, allowing their standards to be dictated by the world around them or by the compromising Babylonian Christendom around them. Where are the young men and women? Because many of these young men need wives. Where are the young men and women who will say, Lord, I want to be totally available for you.

I don't want to lower my standards. I want to be upright. I want to be able to say, follow me as I follow Christ.

That's why I say to you sisters, the way you dress is so important because little girls in this church are going to look at you. They'll tell their daddy and mommy, why can't I dress like her? Be an example in modesty and decency. To be able to say to younger ones who are younger than you, all of you got younger ones here, follow me as I follow Christ.

That's the great need to build a new covenant church and if you were to ask me what is the number one lack in India today, it's people like that who can say, follow me as I follow Christ. In my time in India and in all these years I've grown up in India, I never heard anyone tell me, Zach, follow me as I follow Christ. I wish I had.

I longed in my younger days to have a spiritual father. I didn't have one. I had to sort of struggle through.

That's why I made so many blunders and mistakes and bungled up so many things. And you people are so lucky. Many of you got godly leaders.

That's a tremendous privilege. And I'll tell you this, Christian history has proved one thing. If you study Christian history, godly leaders are appreciated only after they are dead and gone, when it's too late.

And during the time they're alive and you didn't take the opportunity to learn what you could, what a tragedy. Most godly leaders, if you read Christian history, all the way right from the Apostle Paul onwards through Martin Luther, John Wesley, William Booth, anybody. The great Christian leaders were always called heretics and false prophets in their lifetime.

And they were called true prophets and saints after they died and went away. People like Tozer and Watchman Nee, people never knew them when they were alive and ministering. Hardly anybody.

Mostly after they are dead and gone. They say, oh that was a great man of god there. So let me show you another verse where Paul says the same thing.

He says, it's not only me. He says in Philippians chapter 3, he's not afraid to say this again and again. Philippians 3 verse 17.

Brethren, talking to the Philippian Christians, follow my example. What a word. I want to ask you, my brothers and sisters, can you turn around to people younger than you and say, brothers to the brothers and sisters to the sisters, younger ones, follow my example.

How many of you husbands can say, follow my example as a husband? How many of you wives can say, follow my example as a wife? How many of you fathers can say, follow my example as a father? How many of you got any responsibility in any church say, follow me. The way I conduct myself with those who are my flock. And he says here, it's not just me.

Carefully observe those who walk according to the pattern which you have in us. It's not just me. Paul doesn't say, oh, I'm the only man on the earth.

No. He says, there are a few, not many. Once he said earlier in chapter 2, he says, I don't have anyone else, verse 20, other than Timothy, who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare.

They all seek after their own interests. He's not talking about unbelievers. He's talking not even about believers.

He's talking about the co-workers who were with him at that time. I don't know how many there were at that time. Not all of his co-workers.

Some who were with him at that time. He wanted to send one of them to Philippi to encourage them. He looked around and said, whom shall I send? Boy, Lord, I can't send any of these people.

They're all seeking their own. They'll go there to Philippi and they won't serve them. They'll go there as experts.

I've often said to brothers from CFC, when they go to the other churches that have some respect for us, I say, you know that those people respect you because they respect CFC, but please don't go there as an expert. Go there as a servant. I say, that's how I go.

I don't go as an expert anywhere. I go as a servant. And Paul looked around at his co-workers and said, I can't send any of these people except Timothy.

All the others are just seeking their own. Their own honor. Maybe they want a little money from somebody or some honor from somebody.

Or they want to have a ministry. They're not seeking the things of Christ. You know, even if you're seeking a ministry for yourself, that's seeking your own.

We're supposed to seek the glory of God. That's all. I'm not saying we shouldn't be seeking a ministry or honor or money or anything.

The glory of God. Building the church. Whether it's done through me or somebody else and if I have to do just a small part of it, that's enough for me.

He's like, I can't find many. But he says in chapter 3 verse 17, please observe those few who are walking according to the pattern that they have seen in me. You know, when you find a godly leader, there are a few who get gripped by that and who will follow in his example.

And I pray that there'll be many in our land. We look around and see persecution increasing. Jesus warned us the night is coming when no man can work.

For more than 30 years, I preached that persecution will come to India, that the church will go through the great tribulation of seven years before Christ comes again. A lot of people don't believe it. They haven't studied the scriptures.

They don't believe what Jesus said in Matthew 24. But we've seen persecution coming. It's coming even to this state.

The night is coming when no man can work. Work while it is day. Don't make silly excuses.

I said to the Lord, I will never make silly excuses. I will not say it's inconvenient, it's difficult, it's expensive, it's difficult, my health is going, I got a pain here, I got an ache here. Don't make any silly excuses.

Abound in the work of the Lord, it says, 1 Corinthians 15, 58, knowing that your labor is not in vain. And we've seen through the years, sometimes we sow a seed and years later we see the harvest. So I want to encourage all of you.

Paul said there were people like that and we pray there'll be many, many like that. I pray there'll be many godly men and women will be able to say, follow me as I follow Jesus. Now I want to show you something else, which is a primary mark, what Jesus said of those who are going to be his under shepherds.

He's the chief shepherd, but he has under shepherds. You know, there are some people who are very super spiritual, super spiritual meanings, wrongly spiritual like the Pharisees, who will not submit to any earthly leadership. I can ask many of you the same question I asked those people, who is your leader? And these spiritual people say, Jesus Christ only.

Uh-huh, good. How do you obey this verse, Hebrews 13, 17? This is New Testament, this is not Old Testament. Hebrews 13, 17 says, obey your leaders, plural.

If Jesus Christ is your only leader, how in the world do you obey this verse? Submit to them because they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Who do they give an account to? They've got to give an account to Jesus Christ one day. All under shepherds have to give an account to the chief shepherd one day.

Let them do this with joy and not with grief. Who are these leaders? Have you ever in your life obeyed that verse? Obey your leaders and submit to them. You say, I'm only submitted to Christ.

That's why you've gone astray and that's why the Lord's not able to build a church through you. He never will, not in another 50 years. You may bring souls to Christ, oh yes, but you won't be able to build the church as a body because you submit to nobody.

I've seen through the years one thing. I've seen Christian leadership of all types in many countries and I've seen those who are authoritarian, those whom God does not back up, those whom God does not anoint and God does not bear witness to their work in building the church, I'm saying. Building a church is a body of people functioning, working together as a body.

And why doesn't he do it? Listen to this because God does not give authority to a man who's never submitted to authority. Never. It's a dangerous thing to give authority to a man who's never in his life been broken by submission to authority.

I never knew why God took me through breaking for more than 10 to 15 years in my life. I didn't know it then. I didn't know God's principles and ways.

I was young. But now as I look back, I understand because I've seen the harm that comes when people take authority who've never submitted to authority. That's the folly of these young 23-year-old fellows who come out of some Bible school being made a pastor.

Who has he submitted to in his whole life? What does he know? He gets up and tries to get people to submit to his authority. It's crazy. Or for that matter, in any other group, if you don't go through a period of being submitted to authority, you know Joseph had to go through that.

Submit to potty fire, submit to a jailer. God said, okay, now you're ready. David had to do that.

Submit to his parents first, submit to Saul and never try to grab the throne for himself, even though he was anointed as king. Saying, no, God will give it to me in his own time. And all that breaking and humbling as he ran from cave to cave, despairing of his life sometimes.

You read the anguish David had in the Psalms. They were all broken. What about Jesus? How did he, how was he trained to be the greatest leader of all? There's one verse which tells us.

It's in Luke chapter 2. In Luke chapter 2, we read when Jesus came back to Nazareth at the age of 12 from the temple, he knew the scriptures more than his parents. He knew the scriptures more than the scholars sitting in the temple. At the age of 12, he knew the scriptures better than anybody in Israel.

And let me tell you this, he did not come from heaven as a baby with all that Bible knowledge crammed in his head. If so, he was not born like us. That's blasphemy to believe that Jesus was not born like us.

He was a baby just like anybody else. He had to learn as a child and learning as a child. And probably, I don't know when he started learning, maybe the age of five, but by the time he was 12, he knew the scriptures.

I learned one thing from that. I said, Lord, in seven years, you knew the scriptures without having a Bible at home. You know, those days, nobody had a Bible at home.

Seven years, just by going to the synagogue, listening, listening, whatever the scriptures were proclaimed, maybe is Joseph and Mary shared the scriptures at home and he went to the Hebrew school, they used scriptures. But he listened, he listened, he listened. And in seven years, he knew the scriptures.

Because he was humble, he got revelation from his father as well. It's possible to learn the scriptures in seven years and to get revelation. If you study the scriptures seriously, and don't waste your time with a whole lot of unnecessary things that divert you from the scriptures.

That's what I decided when I was 21 to study the scriptures. And I discovered that I could do it in seven years. Dear brothers and sisters, we can walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

You can know the scriptures so thoroughly. Okay, he knew the scriptures and he came back. What does this man with, what does this young boy with such fantastic knowledge of scripture in his mind do? It says in verse 31, he came down to Nazareth with Joseph and Mary and continued in subjection to them, continued in subjection to people who didn't know half the scriptures he knew.

Why was that? He had to go through a period of being broken. And on the, even before that he was broken. In the next 18 years, he was broken.

You can know the scriptures so well, you still need to be broken. Broken. I can think of the number of times.

I'm using my imagination now, not just imagination, sanctified imagination. The Bible says that the Holy Spirit will take of the things of Christ and show them to us. And I praise God that he's taken other things and shown them to me.

Because it says he was tempted in all points as we are. You know, you and I know as we look around in homes, how three-year-olds, four-year-olds have a problem submitting to their parents. 10-year-olds have a problem.

17, 18-year-olds have a bigger problem. And if you're 25 years old, boy, you don't waste your time listening to daddy and mommy now. In America, they leave their homes when they're 18.

People ask, hey, what are you doing? Living in your home still? You're 18 years old. What are you doing? Get out of there, man. Don't let your dad and mom run your life.

Even if somebody said that to Jesus, he wouldn't listen. All the crazy ideas people have in the world, Jesus submitted. Submitted.

I'm sure, you know, the mark of great men of God is that they never tell you the secret sacrifices they made in their life. That's why you never read a record of what all Jesus went through in those 30 years in Nazareth. They call them the silent years.

That proves what a man of God he was. But I know from experience and from study of scriptures, there must have been a lot of breaking that went through him. It says in Isaiah 53, verse 10, it pleased the Lord to crush him.

Try and understand that, brother, sister. It pleased the Father to crush him. To crush the Son of God? If he went that way, is there any other way for us? This is how we are prepared for leadership.

Submission to authority that God had placed over him, not because they are spiritual. God placed Joseph and Mary over Jesus, submitted. And at the age of 30, God said, your education is over.

Now come out and serve me. He anointed him and said, this is my beloved son, in whom I'm well pleased because I've seen not for a single moment did he rebel in that breaking that I was doing in his life all these years. He is fit to be a leader.

He will build my church. Will the Lord ever say that about you? So many believers spend their life just finding fault with this person, criticizing this person, even criticize the elders. You think God will use such a man in a hundred years? Criticizing people who have done thousand times more for God than you have done.

And you dare, you dare to open your mouth and speak against a man of God like that. God have mercy on you. I don't know whether you'll ever get to the gates of heaven if you don't repent before it's too late.

And go and apologize to all those men of God you criticized and spoke evil against. I tell you honestly, I'm serious. Psalm 105, God says, touch not my anointed and don't do any harm to my prophets.

Is there a sickness you're not healed from? Ask yourself whether you're spoken against somebody, some man of God, maybe that's the reason, that's what you need to set right. A hundred tablets and injections, not even surgery will cure you. We got to be careful.

Jesus was anointed because he had submitted. And he told his disciples in Luke chapter 22, before he went to the cross at the Last Supper, he was preparing them for leadership to build a new covenant church. You know, at the Last Supper, they were having a dispute, verse 24, who is the greatest? Imagine Jesus was just saying in the previous verses, I'm going to be crucified.

The hand of one who is betraying me is on the table, verse 22. And so on, I'm going to be betrayed. And they began to discuss which of them is going to be the great thing.

That discussion got over in two minutes. The next discussion was in verse 24, who's the greatest? Peter, is it you or is it me, Matthew? John, is it me or is it you, Andrew? Imagine discussing around that on the table and the master is going to die in a few hours. And Jesus was so gentle with them.

I got to learn from that. I mean, if I was there, I'd say, I'm sick and tired of you fellas. Three and a half years I've been trying to tell you something and you still don't understand.

Boy, I got to learn gentleness from Jesus. He said, you know, the kings of the Gentiles, verse 25, lord it over them. But it must not be like that with you, verse 26, my dear disciples.

The one who is the greatest must become like the youngest and the leader must be a servant. The leader must be a servant. It's even different from old covenant leadership.

The leader must be a servant. And then he says, who is greater? Verse 27, the one who sits at the table or the one who serves? You tell me. We know in India, we know in a restaurant, a waiter who serves at the table.

Who is greater in a house, a servant who comes and puts food on the table or the master who sits at the table? We know the master is greater. And he says, you are the great people, all 11 of you. I, verse 27, am a servant.

Boy, if that doesn't humble you, I don't think anything will. I wanted you to listen to those words. I am among you as he that serves.

The lord had to teach me that through many ways. I remember in the early days, I used to be very disturbed when people didn't come at 930 for the Sunday morning service. I said, Lord, it's terrible.

I mean, I remember when I was in the military, 630 parade means we had to be there at 625. If you were there at 631, you'd learn such a lesson, you won't forget it for the next 50 years. They've got ways of teaching you lessons in the military.

Nobody would be late. I see so many people coming late. And the Lord said to me, be merciful to them.

They were not in the military like you. They don't understand that. They haven't got discipline.

Then he told me something else. If in a palace, the king says breakfast at 930, the servants must all be there at 930. But if the king comes at 10 o'clock, the servant can't ask the king, Hey, why are you late? He doesn't ask.

His job is to be there at 930. The king and queen can come when they like. The Lord said to me in the church, you're a servant.

The kings and the maharajas and the maharanis can come to the Sunday morning whenever they like. But you must be there. If you're an elder, you must be there on time.

I learned it. Then I came to rest. Then I discovered we had many kings and queens in our church who would land up whenever they liked, but it never disturbed me anymore because I was not a king.

I was a servant. I had to be there on time. And gradually over a period of years, some of these kings and queens may become servants.

That'll be a great day. But until then we loved them. No, no, not even a judgment in the mind.

That's just a small area, very, very small area. I'm just using an example how when I didn't have that understanding, it disturbed me when other people were not doing something. If people were not punctual

for a meeting that I set up with them, it would disturb me no longer.

I mean, if a king comes late for a meeting, you don't question him. The servant must be there on time. In everything, it's attitude.

The leader must be a servant. That's the only type of leader that can build the church of Jesus Christ, that does not think that I'm better than you. I'm more important than you.

I'm here to serve you. It is so difficult because what happens is the more gift a man gets from God anointing, he begins to think he's very important. Like many pastors who once upon a time when they were nobodies, you could easily go and meet them.

Now they've become big, important men. You can't even talk to them. Many churches, do you know that big churches, the pastor disappears before the end of the service lest people come and talk to him? It's true.

It's true in many countries. It's true in Bangalore too. No wonder the new covenant church is not built.

Can you imagine Jesus disappearing after a sermon saying, I don't want anybody to talk to me. I've got to go and get alone with God or some stupid excuse like that. No.

He had a Nicodemus disturbing him in the middle of the night. I don't know whether it was midnight. Jesus said, come right in.

What do you want? He was a servant. And I believe the great need to build a new covenant church is for people who like Jesus said will follow him, who will look at his example and whose great longing. I mean, I said this to the Lord myself.

I said, Lord, what shall I be at the end of my life after years of ministry and doing this, that and the other and all that? Where shall I finally end as a director or chairman or something like that? No. I said, Lord, I want to be found on my last day of my life on earth at the feet of the disciples, washing their feet. Because that's what you did.

And if I really follow Jesus, it's a downward path where you finally end up washing feet. And everybody's important to you. It's because Jesus had the servant attitude that he loved children.

If you don't love little children, if you don't know how to talk to children, you'll never be a leader in a hundred years. You've got to love children just like you love adults. They are closer to heaven than some of those adults you talk to.

I believe there are so many areas where we can learn from Jesus. He was a servant and he loved little children. He never despised anybody.

He never despised sinful women who had messed up their lives. He just felt sorry for them. Whom did he condemn the most? The people who played a double, lived a double life.

Actors who acted wholly in the synagogues and lived another life. He was dead against them, but he was so compassionate to sinners. And I believe that is the type of person God is trying to raise up in many parts today, because he has a great lack.

I'll tell you something which you may not hear from any other preacher. God has no lack of money for his work. Tell me if you hear that from some other preacher.

I'd like to meet him. He's got a lack of shepherds, godly men and women who will be servants of others. There's a tremendous lack of that.

He does not ask you for your money. He asks you for your body and your mind. Romans 12 1 and 2. Present your body, not your type.

We've run this church for 35 years without taking an offering. And not only this church, we've reproduced that in all the other 50 churches that the Lord has planted through us. Not one of them do we take an offering, but we tell people to offer their bodies.

You say, don't you need money for God's work? Yeah, we need money. We just keep a box there. Those who want to put it, put it.

Those who don't want to put it, don't put it. But we are more interested in people giving their eyes to the Lord. Saying, Lord, I want my eyes to be pure.

We want more interest in people giving their tongues to the Lord than their money. Because that's what God's looking for. The Holy Spirit doesn't ask you for your money.

He asks you for your body. He says, let me make your body my temple. That's what I want.

And I'll tell you this. If God can find a man who will give his body totally from head to foot, totally to be the temple of the Holy Spirit, where he'll never read anything or look at anything, which will dishonor God, will never say anything with his tongue that will dishonor God, who will be quick to apologize and ask forgiveness from any Tom, Dick or Harry, even from a beggar, if need be, where he's hurt someone, who is quick to acknowledge that he's wrong and say, I'm sorry, I was wrong there. So difficult.

I've rarely found in my life a leader, even in many of our churches, who will humbly acknowledge, I'm sorry, I was wrong. Those words, I wish I would hear it from some elders. Almost never.

I'll tell you honestly, my testimony. Pride. No wonder there's a lack of anointing upon their life.

Who is the one who says, who never can say I'm wrong? God. And these leaders who act like God, as though they never make a mistake. Where in the world can God ever use them? Have not been broken.

That's the tragedy around the world. God's looking for people who will be humble enough to say, I'm sorry, please forgive me. That was my mistake.

I was wrong. I believe God can do amazing things. If God can find one man like that, who will give himself head to foot to God, he'll accomplish more than if some wonderful Christian manager can raise 1 billion rupees for God's work.

You'd be excited if somebody could raise 1 billion rupees for God's work. Not me. I don't believe 1 billion rupees can accomplish more for God than one man who is totally yielded from head to foot to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Be that. Be that. I believe God wants people like that who are the spirit of a servant.

And we have a lot of practice at home, by the way. The Christian leader must be one who is a leader servant, like Jesus Christ. He was the leader, but he was a servant.

And he has opportunity to practice at home as a husband, who's not a dictator, but a leader servant to his wife. And as a father, who's not a dictator, but who's a leader servant to his children, just like Jesus. We have opportunity to practice at home with a few people.

Why children? And then God leads us into a larger ministry in the church. So don't despise the training you get at home. Don't despise those days.

Even if you're a young man and you're to submit to your parents who don't know as much as you. Maybe who got some demands. The only place where you can disobey your parents is where they tell you to disobey God.

Otherwise, follow Jesus' example. Dear brothers and sisters, I don't know whether I've succeeded in communicating the burden in God's heart, but I've tried to. I believe God wants to use many of you sitting here to be his servants in the days to come.

Let's pray. So while our heads are bowed in prayer, there's one thing you can do with all the bunglings and mistakes and stupid things you did in the past. Confess it to God.

Say, Lord, cleanse me in the blood of Jesus. Blot it all out. I want it to be different.

Some of these things I've heard so many times. Lord, why are you telling me this again? Is it because I still haven't heard what you're trying to tell me? Lord, I want to listen at least today. I want to be the man or the woman that you want me to be in these closing days of the age before Jesus comes.

Time is so short. God needs you. He needs you.

Heavenly Father, help us all to be what you want us to be. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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