

# The Church Is the Light

by Zac Poonen

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*The church is the light of the world and must be built on the foundation of God's word and the power of the Holy Spirit.*

**Duration:** 52:21

**Scripture:** 2 Samuel 24:18, 1 Chronicles 21:1, Luke 16:31, Ephesians 5:25, Colossians 3:10

**Topics:** "Church Unity", "Sacrificial Living"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of building the church as a united body, not just focusing on individual Christianity. It highlights the sacrificial attitude needed to build the church, drawing parallels to biblical examples like David's willingness to pay a price for the temple. The speaker stresses the need for true sacrifice, giving oneself for the church, and not just relying on money, music, or psychology. The goal is to build a church where Christ's presence is felt, transcending cultural, social, and economic barriers, and focusing on unity in Christ.

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## Transcript

We were thinking about the light of the world today, and when Jesus said, you are the light of the world, it's not just individually, but as a church. When you turn to the book of Revelation, chapter 1, you see the church is pictured as a lampstand. John saw seven lampstands.

Revelation 1.12, I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the middle of the lampstands, I saw the seven men. It was not in one believer, it was in the middle of the churches that Jesus was there. What I see in Christendom today is a lot of emphasis on individual Christianity.

You must be a good example for Christ, which is very important. We must be holy, there are a lot of churches preaching holiness, and we must shine as the light of the world, and we must reach out to the lost, etc. But I have seen very little emphasis on building the church.

The early apostles, they never thought of saving souls. Try and find that expression, saving souls, in the New Testament, you will never find it. It's a modern expression, like a hundred modern expressions in Christianity, which are never found in the New Testament.

And when we drift away from the New Testament, we are going to miss God's perfect will. So, Jesus never came to save souls, let me tell you that. He came to call the righteous to repentance, but He said, I have

come to build a church.

And He sent His disciples out, to make disciples, to build a church. And that's what, you read the Acts of the Apostles, you never find any apostle, try and read through the Acts of the Apostles and see if any apostle went out to win souls. Everywhere they went, if they gathered the people and brought them to Christ, they planted a church.

You never find a single place where the apostles went and brought souls and said, okay, goodbye, find some people, they planted a church. So if you went to Paul and asked him, where are these people you brought to Christ, he'd show you, they're here, they're in this church. And that's what you don't find today, unfortunately.

Where Jesus was found in the midst of the lampstand and He said in verse 20, the seven lampstands are the seven churches, Revelation 1.20. So it is the church that is the lampstand, not just an individual Christian. The individual Christian is a part of the lampstand. The first dwelling place of God in the Bible is the burning bush.

And Moses never forgot that. God dwelt in a bush. That's a picture of a church.

It's a picture of a church which is on fire for God. Every twig and every branch in it was on fire. And the wonderful thing about a bush that's on fire is that you won't have any bugs and worms living in it.

They would have all died. If you've got bugs and worms living in your church, you know, you need to set it on fire and then you'll be okay. That's what's needed.

And that's the first dwelling place of God in the Bible. And in the book of Exodus, that's the first one. And the second one is the tabernacle, which is also the dwelling place of God.

And it's also a picture, not only of the individual Christian, but of the church. And God dwells in the midst of the church. And He dwelt in a pillar of fire on top of the most holy place.

That was the mark of God's presence. If you read the books, the book of Exodus, in chapter 25 onwards, the details of the tabernacle are given so exactly that you can make one like that today. The Philistines could have made one in their time.

Very easy. All the dimensions are there. The material is all mentioned.

But there was one thing they would not be able to duplicate, and that was the pillar of fire. You couldn't duplicate that. That had to come from heaven.

I find a lot of Christians around the world trying to make a New Testament church. I grew up in assemblies that spoke about the New Testament pattern. And for them, the New Testament pattern was just like the parts of the tabernacle.

You must have editors and not pastors. You must have freedom for everybody to share. And I sat in all these meetings that called themselves New Testament pattern.

And it was the deadest and most boring meeting that I ever went to. But it was supposed to be New Testament pattern. And as I studied the scriptures, I discovered the most important thing about the tabernacle was that God was there.

When the glory of God departed from the tabernacle, the tabernacle was still there according to the pattern. The Temple of Solomon was built according to a pattern. But the glory of God came there.

But when that departed, the pattern still remained. That's the condition of many churches. And they glory in the pattern and not in the presence of the Lord.

So through the years, I came to see that the one mark of the New Testament church is this light, is the fire of God in the midst of that church. And when the church has lost its fire, lost that burning light, it's no longer a New Testament church, even if it's following exactly the New Testament pattern. It's like the tabernacle with the glory gone away.

But if you go and look at the tabernacle, the material is the same, the dimensions are the same, the pattern is the same, the glory is missing. This is exactly the condition of many a church. In 1 Corinthians chapter 14, we read about a New Testament church meeting where it says that somebody comes in and it speaks about the gift of prophecy being exercised in that church in verse 24.

And an ungifted man enters. And I think that refers to a believer who doesn't believe in the gifts of the Spirit. He comes in there and God speaks from his heart.

And he falls on his face, verse 25, and says, God is certainly in the midst of you. And through the years as I have studied the New Testament, I've seen that is the mark of a New Testament church. That you come to a meeting, and when you go away you say, Boy, I met with Jesus.

He spoke to me. Not the singing was good, or the message was good, but Jesus was there. I met with Him.

And I want to say to all of you who belong to different churches, people who come to your meetings, if they just go away and say we learned something, or the singing was good, or we had good fellowship, that's not enough. They must go away from a meeting saying, I met with the Lord. The Lord spoke to me.

He showed me something in my heart. And I want to say this, that from my own experience, that's very rare. Most church meetings I've been to in my earlier days were the most boring things I've ever attended.

But you dare not say that, because you insult people when you say, well, it was boring. And that's why a lot of young people have turned away from our churches. And that's because we don't really, are not willing to pay the price to form a New Testament church.

I tell you, really, you have to pay a price. I've thought of interesting television programs. I don't mean these dirty, filthy programs.

I mean interesting scientific programs like things about the planets, or things about animals. There are so many interesting programs that people make on TV. And there are children who sit and watch that for one hour, or one and a half hours.

And you can't pull them away from it. It's so gripping and interesting. And I've asked myself, who gave that TV producer that intelligence and ability to make a program so interesting that people sit and watch it, and they're not bored? You know who gave that TV producer that ability? My Heavenly Father.

And you think my Heavenly Father won't give me the ability to get people gripped in a church? How could that be? You mean He'd give that guy the ability to make a TV program that's interesting, and not give us

the ability to make a church program that's interesting? I'm not talking about TV, but there's nothing more wonderful than having the presence of Jesus in a church. And that's what we must long for. If you didn't meet Jesus in a church meeting, you'd go away disappointed.

The music may have been good, some of the other things may have been good, but I didn't meet with the Lord. That means the light was not there. The pattern was there, but the light was not there.

So when Jesus sent you the light of the world, He's talking about that fire. The only type of light they had in those days was not these electric bulbs. It was fire.

And the only way they could produce light for thousands of years, anywhere from caveman's days right up to Jesus' time, was by fire. And for fire they needed fuel or oil most of the time in the land. It's a picture of the fire of God that comes through the Holy Spirit.

So that's the most important thing that should characterize the church. And we should never be satisfied with the tabernacle where the glory is missing. But a lot of Israelites were happy the temple is here.

The glory was not there. Are we happy with the church where the glory is missing? So I want to show you something from the Old Testament, an example. You know, everything in the Old Testament was a pattern which is fulfilled in the New Testament.

You turn with me to 2nd Kings, 2nd Chronicles, where Solomon built the temple according to the pattern that David gave him. Just by the way, when Moses built the tabernacle, and this is a little bit of Bible fact, when Moses built the tabernacle, God gave Moses the pattern and Moses told people how to build it. But when Solomon built the temple, God did not give him the pattern.

God gave the pattern Do you know to whom? To David. David. I just saw a few pages back in 1 Chronicles in chapter 28.

1 Chronicles in chapter 28. You know, King David got people together and got Solomon and told him, you know, God's chosen my son. Verse 10, 2nd Chronicles 28.10 The Lord has chosen you, Solomon, to build a house for the sanctuary.

And then David gave to his son Solomon the plan. Verse 11. He did not get it directly from God.

He got it from his father. David gave Solomon the plan of the porch and the buildings and storehouses and the mercy seat. I was very interested to see further down that he even gave him the plan for the utensils in verse 14.

You know, Solomon was the wisest man on earth. Imagine somebody else telling him what type of spoons to have in the temple. There's a lesson you have to learn there, which I learned.

That Solomon may have been the cleverest man in his mind, but David was a man after God's own heart. And you don't build a church with wisdom, but by being a man after God's own heart. The cleverest man in the world could not build the temple.

He did not know the plan. The plan had to be given to him by a man after God's own heart. The tragedy today is a lot of clever people are trying to build the church with their abilities, this, that and the other.

It's like Solomon. You need a man after God's own heart, who is in friendship with God's heart, who can give the plan that will bring the glory of God down. So having said that, let's turn to St. John, 3 verse 1. David also told Solomon where to build the temple.

Not just the plan and the pattern and everything else. 2 John 3 verse 1, it says there's an exact spot where the temple was to be built. And when you apply this to building the New Testament church, as I said first of all, it's not by cleverness, that would be Solomon, but by a heart in fellowship with God, that's David, that the church is built.

You don't have to be clever. Peter was not the cleverest guy in Israel. He built the church because his heart was right.

The clever people missed out on God's plan. And that's very important. Don't ever think that your cleverness and your understanding of the Bible, your intellectual knowledge of the Bible and of the pattern will help you to build a church.

I've seen a lot of people who can preach great sermons. But I ask them, have you built a church anywhere? Have you planted a church? No. Which is go around preaching sermons, clever sermons of this part of the Bible.

It's easy to preach sermons. You just need to have a clever mind. You can study the Bible like you study chemistry.

You get a PhD in chemistry or a PhD in the Bible. All you need is a clever mind. And you can be a wonderful teacher of chemistry or a wonderful teacher of mathematics or a wonderful teacher of the Bible.

You just need a good mind. But to build a church, according to the heavenly plan, there you have to be in fellowship with God's heart. If you are not in fellowship with God's heart, you will not be able to build a church.

No matter how clever you are, you will not be able to build a church where the fire of God is there. You build something which crumbles one day and gets destroyed. There's lots of that in the world today.

I never want to be a part of that. I want to be a part of something that remains. Built with gold, silver and precious stones that remains for all eternity.

It's not just something with a good hand straw that gets burnt up when Christ comes again. A lot of Christian churches are going to be burnt up in the final days. Because they were built with human cleverness and wisdom.

Not by the power of the Holy Spirit. As I have observed Christianity, in the olden days, in the days of the apostles, they depended on the Holy Spirit completely to build a church. Today, the fire of the Holy Spirit has been replaced by money, music and psychology.

I have observed it all over the world, whether it's in America or India. They try to build a church with music. Draw people with music.

Attract people with our music. The young people will come. What do they come for? Do they come to walk in Jesus' footsteps? No.

They come because they like the singing. It's one of the things I prayed in Bangalore. I said, Lord, I don't want to draw a single person to our church with our music.

I couldn't care less if our music is not good. We have brothers in our church who can't sing two notes properly. But they make a joyful noise unto the Lord.

That's how we're called. That's Scripture, by the way. It says in Scripture we must make a joyful noise unto the Lord.

I'm quoting Scripture. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord. They certainly do.

Because it's the heart that God sings, not your music until it changes. It's very, very important. And then there are others who say the most important thing required for God's work is money.

We can't do God's work without money. Where do you see that in the Acts of the Apostles? The only place where money is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles is when they had to give to the poor. That's all.

You never find a Christian worker saying, I'm not getting enough money. I can't serve the Lord now. Or we're not getting enough money to send missionaries.

Never. Or we're not getting enough money to build a church. This is all modern 20th century deception.

Money, they wanted the Holy Spirit. When they wanted to do something, they sought God in prayer for the power of the Holy Spirit. Today people send circular letters to get money.

That's the difference. Money has replaced the Holy Spirit. No wonder we have a third rate good for nothing Christianity in many parts of the world.

I think of my own country. 99% non-Christian, if you include the Roman Catholics as well. 99%.

And why is it this 99% has rejected Christ? Actually, they have not rejected Christ. The Hindus have not rejected Christ. They have rejected the Christ that they have seen among Christians.

And I tell the Hindu, I want you to know, I've also rejected that Christ which you have rejected. Because the Christ that is portrayed by Christians is not the true Christ. How can a money-loving Christian portray the true Christ? How can a Christian who shouts at his wife or shouts at her husband portray the true Christ? That's not Christ at all.

That is a copy of it or a caricature of the real Christ. And I say, I reject that Christ. How can a church that majors on music portray the real Christ? Jesus Christ didn't come to make musicians.

He came to make disciples. So, where music or money become the major thing, say, this is so important, it's almost as though God's work is suffering because there's not enough money. We need money everywhere.

India is full of people who are always thinking they need more money from some other country to build. That's why when we decided to do our work, we said, we're going to go out different from everybody else. And we decided that not a single one of our elders would ever be paid.

If you want to be an elder in our church, you better ask the Lord for your own needs or do some secular work like the Apostle Paul, make tents or something. But we're not going to pay. That has eliminated all

the mercenaries from our churches.

They don't come there. Because India is full of mercenary Christians who are interested in money. And the other thing we decided, we'd never send a report of our work anywhere because most reports are just begging for money.

And we said, we don't have to advertise our work. It's enough if God sees it. A lot of letters that say, pray for this and actually give us money.

It's surreal. You read between the lines and say, give me money. So we decided we didn't do that.

And the other thing we decided is Jesus said you must give secretly and you must give cheerfully. Very clear. Don't let your left hand know what your right hand does.

And I began to think, how can you put an offering bag in front of somebody and his left hand not know what his right hand is doing? Everybody around him knows he's putting something in the bag. So we decided we'd never pass a bag around. Or a plate.

A plate is even cleverer because everybody knows how much you're putting in there. So we won't do any of this. We'll just give a box in the bag.

Those who want to give, give. Those who don't want to give, don't give. And if you can't give cheerfully, don't give at all.

And we had rules put on top of the offering box saying if you've got a grudge against your brother or sister, don't put money in here. Because Jesus said, first, second, and third. In other words, somebody wants to put a hundred rupees into that box and he sees this and says, no, I'd better not put money into that.

Something's wrong between me and my brother. Praise the Lord. God doesn't want your money.

It's very, very important. We decided to do that. I think we're the only church in India that doesn't.

No offerings. No paid workers. No reports of our work.

And we have never lacked. We build a building. No bank mortgage.

When we have the money, we build. Because the Bible says, all, no bank, anything. We decided to follow it.

There are little, little things where Christendom has drifted away from the main path. And we think it's okay. We follow the principles of the world and we say, why can't the Lord's presence come there? He's not going to come there when he's on to our God and His word.

So it's a costly thing to build a church. Psychology, that's the third thing. Money, music and psychology.

A lot of preaching today is psychological manipulation of people. You know, people want, psychology teaches that people want security. So let's give a message that people feel secure.

And they want a sense of importance. So let's make them feel, give them a sense of value. You're very precious in God's eyes.

And even if you sin, it doesn't matter. And these are the type of things that psychology teaches people that give them a sense of accomplishment. All these techniques which the apostles never learned, they had the power of the Holy Spirit.

They didn't care about all this psychology to try and influence people. And of course, the greatest tricks in psychology is how to get the fellow to take out his wallet and put some money in the offering. You know, all these psychological techniques to get people to give money.

This is what's happened in Christendom today. And the sad thing is, there's hardly anybody who raises a voice against it. There's hardly anybody who knows the Bible to compare all this to the Bible and say, is this the way how they built the church in the New Testament? And there are people, and I say, I don't blame the preachers.

I blame all the people who sit there and support these preachers by their presence and their money. When you support somebody who's doing something against God's Word, you're equally guilty. If you finance a murderer, even if you don't do the murder yourself, you're guilty of the murder.

If you finance a thief, you're guilty of stealing. And if you finance a crooked pastor who is promoting money, music, and psychology, you're guilty before God. Don't say, I didn't do it.

You financed the guy who was doing it. This is the trouble in Christendom. There's hardly anybody who speaks against it.

So let's see. Solomon began to build the house of the Lord, 2nd Chronicles 3, in a particular place. And it's good to see which that place was.

It says it's Mount Moriah. You know, Mount Moriah is the place where Abraham offered up his son. Many years earlier, I mean, Abraham offered up his son more than a thousand years before this temple was built.

The temple was built around 1000 BC and Abraham lived in 2000 BC. But when Abraham offered up his son, God marked that spot. So that's where my temple is going to be built.

And on Mount Moriah, a particular spot, which is described here, as where the Lord appeared to David in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. Now that's a very interesting story there. To know that, you've got to turn back to 2 Samuel 24.

What happened in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, which is not as well known among believers as Abraham offering up Isaac on Mount Moriah. So those of you who are not familiar with it, let me sure teach you a little bit of Bible history. 2 Samuel 24.

This is a time when David had sinned. Not the sin of Bathsheba, that's another time. This was a sin where he depended on human ability.

You know, when I talk about money, music and psychology, it is human ability. All these three are human ability. Money, music, psychology.

Human ability. So David's sin was counting the number of people. He told Joab, go and count to the number of my people.

And Joab had some sense. He knew that this is wrong. Why do you want to take a census of the people to see how strong you are and how big your nation is and how strong your army is? Joab said to king, please, may the Lord add to the people even a hundred times as you have but why does my Lord want to do this king? It's wrong.

Because it's an indication that you are depending on the strength of man and not the strength of God. And if you read the same instance recorded in 1 Chronicles there it is mentioned like this. 1 Chronicles 21 verse 1 Satan moved David to number Israel.

1 Chronicles 21 verse 1 It's one of the only places in the Bible other than the book of Joab in the Old Testament where Satan is mentioned. You look up a concordant, you find Satan mentioned in the book of Joab but other than that you never find the word Satan in the Old Testament at all. He was a hidden figure behind the scenes but here he is mentioned specifically.

Satan moved David to number Israel. There you see how serious it was. It was a confidence in my own ability that was a sin in God's eyes.

In God's eyes that was a worse sin than committing adultery. See sometimes we don't have the opinion of sin that God has. Most Christians when you ask them what is David's greatest sin they say it was committing sin with Bathsheba.

But it doesn't say that Satan incited David to sin with Bathsheba. It does say that Satan incited David to number Israel. Okay.

So what happened when he did that, God was so angry and it says in verse 15 God sent a pestilence back to 2nd Samuel 24 2nd Samuel 24 verse 15 the Lord sent such a plague for three days and 70,000 people died in Israel. Not even one person was judged when David committed Bathsheba. When David sinned with Bathsheba, God didn't kill even one person.

But when he numbered Israel he killed 70,000 people. You see you're trying to number people to see if you're strong enough or mighty king you are. Okay I'll knock off 70,000 of them.

How much does the census count people now? And it says here verse 16 the angel stretched out his hand over Jerusalem to destroy it. These are pretty serious. You would think why in the world is God so strict about numbering people? That's because we don't know God's ways.

God's ways are not our ways. And if you don't know God, you won't understand why he judges something severely. Then it says the Lord relented and said it is enough.

And David began to weep and he says to the angel verse 79 the one who sinned there were 70,000 widows in Israel that day because David sinned. Then the prophet came to David and said okay there's a way you can set it all right son go to the threshing floor of Arona the Jebusite verse 18 2 Samuel 24 18 This is what we read in 2 Proverbs 3 where the church is built temple. There's something interesting there.

So David went repenting of his sin and he went to Arona and said I want to buy the threshing floor from you verse 24 and Arona said oh Lord you don't have to buy it from me it's all free please take the ground take my oxen for sacrifice take the yoke for the wood everything you don't have to pay a cent now you know how human nature is we love to get everything free right anything that's free even if we don't need it we grab it I'll tell you that, you put something out on the table and say this is free you find yourself grabbing

a lot of things which you may never look at again but if they cost one dollar you won't take it but we love to take things free and David, even believers it doesn't make much of a difference there and David said no no I will not take it free because if I take it

free from you and I give it to God it will cost me nothing and look at these wonderful words verse 24 2 Samuel 24 24 one of the most beautiful words of verses in the Old Testament I will never offer to God that which costs me nothing just think of that expression I will not offer to God that which costs me nothing that's what Abraham said in the same spot Mount Moriah remember where when God asked him to offer up Isaac he could have offered up 10,000 sheep, he could have offered any number of sheep and oxen and goats Lord not Isaac God said no Isaac you've got to give up that which is most precious in your life and Abraham said yes he went up to Mount Moriah and said I will not offer to God that which costs me nothing he gave his very best and he gave everything and God marked that spot

and on Mount Moriah is where David also said 1000 years later I will not offer to God that which costs me nothing and when two of God's greatest servants in the Old Testament Abraham and David had that attitude of sacrifice of giving up to God that which is the most precious thing I will not offer to God that which costs me nothing, the Lord said that's the place where I'm going to build my house now I want to say my brothers and sisters that's the place where he builds his house even today in the place where he can find those among his children who are really serious about building the church not just saving souls but building the church who will have this attitude I will never offer to God that which costs me nothing most Christians that I have met serve God when it's convenient and

when it's not convenient they say well it's not convenient to do that but there are a few rare gems among God's people whose attitude is I will never offer to my God that which costs me nothing if they preach a sermon they they there's a lot of sacrifice behind that sermon not just intellectual study there's a lot of sacrifice behind all of their ministry and they don't talk about it like Jesus said you shouldn't let anybody know about your sacrifices but it is only such people that God can use even today to build his church preaching sermons anybody can do but building saving souls even that's easy but when it comes to building the house of God it's got to be in this spot where their attitude is I will not offer to God that which costs me nothing, a spirit of sacrifice see, saving souls

is like cutting the stones from the quarry, the mountainside and bringing it to the building site that's saving souls but building it into a house is very different in India our houses are not built with wood because we have too many termites, we destroy the wood in no time that's why we don't have houses catching fire in India you almost never hear of a house catching fire in India because they're not made of wood they're made of bricks and so the way a house is built is a truck will come and offload 10,000 bricks or 20,000 bricks and they'll be piled up on the road and then with those bricks a house is built and those 20,000 bricks are not a house, nobody can live in that but it's built into a house to drop the 20,000 bricks there is easy that's evangelism bringing it into bricks but to

build them up is quite another thing to put one brick on top of another to make sure the plumb line is straight cement them together and make it into a house that is the difference between evangelism and church building it's a lot of difference it's very easy just to bring the pile of stones and drop it there but the difference is this a lot of people say somebody came and stole members from my church bricks can be stolen when they're on the road side if you keep a pile of bricks on the road side in India, over a period of a few weeks the number will become less and less and less and after a few months there will be nothing left somebody else is building his house so it actually happens believe it or not so when a pastor says

somebody stole a member from my church I say it must have been

a pile of bricks, it's not a house can you imagine a house being built and somebody coming and digging out one brick from that and stealing it it doesn't happen people pick up the pile of loose bricks all these so called mega churches with 30,000 people and all that those are just pile of bricks they're not related to one another they don't even know the guy sitting next to them whereas a house, maybe a small house but one brick is on top of another on the side of another underneath another of course you lose a bit of independence when you get built, right, like that if you have a pile of loose bricks you can get up and walk off wherever you like and come back whenever you like but when you're built with some brother on top of you and someone underneath you and someone on this side and

that side your independence goes you may lose your independence but you're safe no devil can come and see you from there that's the church and I want to tell you that's what I spent the first nine years after I quit my well the first few years after I was born again doing evangelism bringing people to practice pile of bricks most of them disappeared but the last 38 years I decided I want to build a house of God and I'm willing to pay any price for it I don't care what people call me and I've had such a tremendous joy to see the house of God built in different places and the people are educated or uneducated it doesn't make a difference it's the heart that matters, it's not the Solomon's it's the David's with whom, who understand the pattern of God's house and I have never once had to say

somebody stole a brick from my house my wife somebody stole a member of mine how can that be? if somebody stole a member of mine that's the one I didn't build into the house they left it lying on the roadside we don't do that we have visitors coming to our church and those are the ones who don't want to be built and the other ones have drifted away as well after a while and look at a lot of Christians today they are never committed to a church many many Christians they like to attend the church and listen to good sermons but nowadays it's much easier you don't even have to go to a church you just turn on the internet and you can listen to good sermons and people think they are becoming spiritual just by listening to good sermons it's not true are you a part of the church?

Jesus said I will build my church and that's not a denomination it's a group of people brought together by the Holy Spirit and built and that is the light of the world today not an individual and if you are not a part of that you are like a visitor wherever you are there is no commitment to be built together with others with others who have that same spirit which says I will not offer to God that which costs me nothing you cannot build a church with people who serve God when it's beneath or who got their personal preferences when it comes to serving the Lord it has to be in God's way it has to be with a willingness to sacrifice let me show you Ephesians 5 which is the verse I always share with my fellow elders in India as to how to build a church Ephesians 5 and verse 25 it's referring to

husband and wife but I'm thinking of the latter part of that verse the second half of Ephesians 5 verse 25 says Christ loved the church and he didn't give money he didn't give servants he gave himself for it you can't build a church by giving money or giving servants that's easy, it costs you nothing to build a church you have to give yourself and this self life that's the thing we are most reluctant to give Christ loved the church and gave himself for it and I tell my fellow elders in India you want to build a church, you got to give yourself not your money not your time, not your sermons not your intellect, but yourself if you are willing to give yourself like Christ gave you can build a church otherwise you will build an organization you will build a human set up which looks like the

tabernacle or the fire of God so if you want to build a church where Christ is present and where people have sense of belonging and of family you have to give up many many attachments it says in Colossians in chapter 3 that in this new testament church in this new covenant church Colossians chapter 3 says in verse 10 put on the new man which is being renewed according to the knowledge of the image of the one who created him that means he's got the same attitude that God has a renewal of the mind listen to this in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew so in a new testament church if I make a distinction based on community or language that's not a church I do not believe that you can have an Indian church or a European church or a Romanian church or an American church there's

only one church the church of Jesus Christ and if you build a local expression of that that local expression there must be no distinction based on language see the Greeks and Jews just detested each other the Jews felt very special the Greeks despised the Jews and there's a lot of that in the human race you know groups segregate themselves on the basis of language, community, so many things but it says in the church of Jesus Christ there's no distinction circumcised and uncircumcised these are laws the Jews tried it themselves that we're circumcised you guys are uncircumcised in the church there's no such laws that separate people and no distinction between barbarian and Scythian see, that means there's no difference, there's a cultured Greek and fellowshiping with a totally uncultured

barbarian and you know who the Scythians were? the Scythians were the ones whom the barbarians considered barbarian so imagine putting a Greek and a Scythian together in the same church with all the crude ways of that Scythian he'd probably dig his nose in public and if you detest that, he may be a spiritual man, his culture is different, that's all he does a lot of things he doesn't eat with a fork and a spoon perhaps maybe he doesn't use toilet paper a lot of people in the world you know Jesus never used toilet paper by the way I hope you know that he never used a fork and a spoon either these are all modern conveniences we think that everybody in the world has it 90% of people don't and when you want to build a church of Jesus Christ and you say they must all be civilized people they

must all be cultured people they must all be decently dressed and decent this and all that you're not going to build a church of Jesus Christ you'll build a nice cultural club you'll call it the church the presence of Jesus won't be there, you may hear nice sermons good music and a hundred fun things you'll see in eternity it was all wood hay and straw you better discover that now there is no distinction there is no distinction between slave and free man it's not a question of salary structure if you have a church with people only who earn about a certain amount of money that's not the church of Jesus Christ no there is no distinction we have in our churches PhDs and people who are at slum level literate and educated pissed sit in the same hall and you won't be able to make a distinction

we decided from the beginning we're going to follow scripture 100% not pick and choose verses from here and there when you say Christ is all verse 11 Christ is everything do you love Jesus?

I don't care whether you're a Scythian or a Greek or educated or a PhD or you can't read or write Christ is everything are you willing to say to Jesus I will never offer you that which costs me nothing you qualify to build a church otherwise you can build a club but a club will never be the light of the world the light of the world today is the church the global church we have a choice now God doesn't force anyone God doesn't force people to go to heaven He doesn't force people to get converted He doesn't force people to be filled with the spirit He doesn't force people to build a church a God who gives freedom for people to go to hell can definitely give people freedom to do anything they like but I often think I have only one life to live I don't want to get up and stand before Jesus Christ in the judgment seat and discover that I lost so much

and I say why didn't you tell me this? it's like you know the rich man told Abraham you know the rich man who went to hell in Luke 16 send Lazarus down from heaven to tell my people to repent, you read the last verses of Luke 16 you know what Abraham said they love the Bible that's exactly what he said they love the Bible, if they don't read that even if somebody goes from heaven they won't listen those are the last two verses of Luke 16 so I'm discovering the judgment seat of Christ the Lord will say you had the Bible didn't you read it? couldn't you read and write? you had the Bible didn't you know all about the church in the New Testament or were you too lazy to read it? oh were you influenced by what you heard other people say? did you hear men more than you hear me?

I don't want to hear those words from Jesus I have only one life to live and I want to live it in a worthwhile way and do a work that will last forever I often think if I were living in Noah's time I'd spend all my time building the ark I'd forget about my house and say I'm going to build the ark because that's the thing that's going to last and if I were to apply that today I'd build the church that's the only thing that's going to last remember that that's for you Heavenly Father please help us to be wise to go by the teaching of your word to follow it Lord and not to lean upon our own reason give us wisdom we pray in Jesus name Amen

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