

The Difference Between a Congregation and a Church

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a revelation of Christ to live a godly life and to build the church, which is a body and a family that has this revelation.

Duration: 1:27:13

Scripture: Genesis 14:18-20, Psalm 73:25, Psalm 84:11, Isaiah 42:8, Luke 5:16, 1 Corinthians 1:27-29, Hebrews 7:1-2, Hebrews 7:17

Topics: "Humility In Service", "Priesthood Of Christ"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being a humble servant in the church, focusing on the priesthood of Melchizedek as a model for serving others quietly and disappearing without seeking recognition. It highlights the need to listen to God, be sensitive to His leading, and bless others with words and actions without seeking credit. The goal is to build a church where Jesus is glorified, and individuals strive to be like Melchizedek, quietly blessing others and giving all glory to God.

Transcript

I want you to look at a verse in Luke's Gospel and Chapter 5. We want to look at a parable that Jesus spoke and try to understand what it means. Two parables, both teaching the same thing. Luke 5, 36, and Jesus was also telling them a parable.

No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment. Otherwise, he will both tear the new and the piece from the new will not match the old. And no one puts new wine into old wine skins.

Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled and the skins will be ruined. New wine must be put into fresh wine skins. And no one after drinking the old wine wishes for the new where he says the old is good enough.

What was Jesus referring to? He never gave an explanation. There were many parables for which Jesus never gave an explanation. And when it is like that, he expected us to seek for the guidance of the Holy Spirit so that we try to understand it.

So we get a hint from that by the words new and old. New garment, old garment. New wine skin, old wine skin.

New wine, old wine. And we know that Jesus came to establish a new covenant. So obviously, the contrast here is between an old covenant life and a new covenant life, which is referring to the old wine and the new wine.

And then the old covenant congregation and the new covenant church. That's the wine skin or the garment. So Jesus came saying, I will build my church.

That's the new garment and that's the new wine skin. I want to show you all these verses because it's very important that all the young people and children here also know these verses. Matthew 16 and verse 18.

In the last part he said, on this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell will not overpower it. So there's a lot of controversy concerning what is this rock. See, we must know the scriptures in such a way that if somebody asks you, anybody here, some non-Christian or nominal Christian came to you and said, what is the rock on which Jesus said he will build the church? What will your answer be? So if you read the whole passage, you'll understand it.

Jesus asked them, who do you say that I am? Verse 15. Simon Peter said, you are the Christ, the son of the living God. And Jesus answered, blessed are you Simon, son of Jonah, because my father has revealed this to you.

Flesh and blood did not reveal it to you, but my father in heaven revealed to you who I am. Other people just thought of Jesus as an ordinary man. You know, they said maybe he's Elijah, verse 14, or Jeremiah, or something like that.

Come back. But Simon Peter said, no, no, no, he's not an ordinary prophet. He's the Messiah, the son of the living God.

And Jesus said, that's not by your human cleverness you understood that, but a revelation from the Father that showed you who I really am. And on this rock, that is which rock? The rock of a revealed Jesus Christ, a Christ whom the Father reveals to me. On this rock, a church is built.

So the rock is Jesus Christ, not just Jesus Christ as a person in history, but Jesus, not even just, you read about Jesus in the Gospels, but Jesus as revealed to me by the Holy Spirit, by the Father. On that I will build my church. And Jesus said that it's on this rock.

So if you don't get a revelation of who Christ is, you will not be able to build a church. I know in my own case, it's when I really saw Jesus, clearly, that we began to build CLC 42 years ago. It began with a revelation of who Jesus really is.

And not only Peter, but you see in Galatians chapter 1, Paul was the other man who built the church, you know, and he says in Galatians 1 and verse 15 and 16, God who had set me apart from my mother's womb called me, and through his grace, Galatians 1, 15, 16, to reveal his son Jesus. Now that's not referring to his seeing Christ on the Damascus road, no. Because if you read carefully, it says, reveal his son inside me.

That means Paul got an inward revelation of Christ, just like Peter. Peter got an inward revelation of Christ, and Jesus said, that's the rock. Peter's not the rock.

That revealed Christ is the rock on which I'll build my church. Paul also says, Christ was revealed in me, then I went and preached him among the Gentiles. Now I find that many people don't have this revelation.

They've heard about Jesus, I mean, they've read in the Gospels and know Jesus Christ, and they've heard, like you can read the Bible like a history book and know there was a person called Caesar or there was a person called Akbar or different kings, and there was a person called Jesus, and you know all about his story, but that's not Christ revealed in me. Jesus said in John chapter 16, he spoke about the spirit of truth in verse 13. When the spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.

What will the Holy Spirit do? Verse 14, he will glorify me, because he will take of mine and disclose it to you. He will reveal Jesus Christ in your heart. This is very important, because it's only when we see Jesus in our heart, revealed by the Holy Spirit, that we can be empowered to walk in his footsteps, that's the new wine, and have a new wineskin, which is the church.

Otherwise, we will live an old covenant life and say the old wine is good enough, or we will build a congregation and not a church. See, the Old Testament people, they may have been 2 million, 600,000 men, women and children total were about 2 million, but it was a congregation, it was not a church. Jesus came to build a church which was like a body and a family.

The Old Testament group of Israelites were not a family, they were not a body. It was a huge congregation. They feared God and they obeyed his commandments and fulfilled certain laws and had a tabernacle and all that, but it was not a body, it was not a family.

And most so-called churches today are not a body, they're not a family. It's just a group of people who believe certain similar truths. They believe what the Roman Catholics teach or Methodists or Baptists.

It's a group of people believing certain truths. They have a doctrinal statement. If you believe all this, you can be a part of this church.

But there's no revelation of Christ, and that's the reason why people don't come to a life of victory over sin. So let me show you this passage here in 1 Timothy 3. In 1 Timothy 3, it speaks about the church in the last part of verse 15, 1 Timothy 3.15, the church of the living God, which is the pillar and support of the truth. And that truth is mentioned in verse 16.

And he says that is a great mystery. It's the mystery of godliness or the mystery of how you can live a godly life or the mystery of how you can have the new wine in your life instead of the old wine. And what is that mystery? Jesus Christ was revealed in the flesh and was pure in his spirit.

That is the mystery. That there was one man who walked on this earth in a flesh like ours, and throughout his life, his spirit was pure. Nobody had ever done that.

From the time of Adam, every person who came in the flesh sinned. The spirit was impure from their very first year. But Jesus came in the flesh, and his spirit was righteous or pure.

The Holy Spirit vindicated him. So this is called the secret of godliness. Like the Living Bible paraphrases it like this, It is true that the way to live a godly life is not an easy matter.

We all agree there. But the answer lies in Christ who came to earth as a man and lived a pure life. I want to ask you, have you seen that revelation? I never saw that revelation for 16 years of my Christian life.

And all those 16 years I was defeated. Because the secret of godliness I did not understand. See, when Jesus was on earth, the question was not whether he was a man.

Everybody could see he is a man. In fact, that time the question was whether he is God. And when he claimed to be God, they wanted to stone him saying, You are blaspheming, saying you are God.

But Peter got revelation. This is not just an ordinary man. He is actually the son of God or the second person of the Trinity, almighty God.

That was the revelation needed when Jesus walked on earth as a man. There was no doubt that he was a man. Because they found him sleeping, eating, getting tired and perspiring.

Everything that men did, he did. But he was pure. Today, see because Jesus is both God and man.

And when he was on earth, the fact of his humanity was clear. But deity, they had a doubt. Today, among Christians, every Christian believes in the deity of Christ, that he is God.

There is no doubt about that. But very few Christians have seen his humanity. That he was a man, just like you and me.

But he didn't sin. So you say, what's the significance of that? See, because he is God, we pray to him. We worship him.

We bring our requests to him. We know that he can answer them. He has all authority in heaven and earth.

We respect him. What about because he is a man? How does Jesus being a man help you in your life? The way it helped me was this. If Jesus was a man just like me, and he never sinned once for 33 years, then it must be possible for me also to overcome sin.

That's the first thing. And secondly, if he could live as a man like me, tempted like me in every point, and did not sin, then there is no excuse for me sinning. If you look at your life, you'll find that the devil is always giving us excuses for our sin.

Oh, you were tired today. That's why you got angry. That's not the reason you get angry.

You got angry because you didn't die to yourself, not because you are tired. Tired people can die to themselves and overcome anger. But always the devil has given an excuse.

Oh, somebody behaved like this and that's why you did this. No, no, no. You behave in a bad way because you don't die to yourself.

Jesus died to his self-life every day. That's why he overcame sin. And he says to us, if you want to follow me, you must die to yourself every day.

That is taking up the cross. You must reckon yourself to be dead to sin. Even though that's written plainly in the Bible, most Christians are not even interested in understanding that.

They don't seem to have any interest in understanding because they are not really interested in living a godly life. And this is not a secret for going to heaven. This is a secret for living a godly life.

So supposing your interest is only to go to heaven when you die. God is not going to reveal the secret to you. Why should he reveal the secret to you when your only interest is to go to heaven when you die? I told the Lord a long time ago, Lord, I am not interested in going to heaven when I die.

That doesn't even interest me. I want to live a godly life on earth now and glorify Christ in my earthly life now. To live a life of purity, mercy to others and goodness now.

Then after I die, it's up to God to decide where I go. I want to be with Jesus now. I want to walk with Jesus every day now.

So only such people are going to get an understanding on this secret. To all the other people, it will be a secret. How to live this life? No, it's a secret.

You won't understand. So you have to recognize that just like Peter got revelation on Christ and Jesus said, on this rock I will build my church. I've come to see that if we don't get this revelation of who Jesus really is, we won't be able to build the church.

We'll just be part of a congregation coming along with all the others, attending the meetings and just being a good person. What you call the church can be like a club. You know, if you go to these worldly clubs, there's something that unites them.

Maybe they come together to play golf, or they come together to play cards, or they come together to drink, or they come together to play billiards or table tennis. There are clubs for different things. Or they come together to study the Bible.

It's also a club. They have a common interest. And the common interest can be table tennis, or tennis, or golf, or the Bible.

But it's still a club. And in the clubs in the world, they're very helpful to each other, I'll tell you. Club members are very loyal to each other and help one another and help each other financially.

And so many things in clubs. How is our fellowship here better than a club? That's what we need to ask ourselves. How is it better than that Old Testament congregation in the wilderness of Israel? It can only be if each of us has seen Christ in our heart, that it was God who became a man.

Became a man, not just to die for our sins, but to show us by his earthly life how God wanted man to live, and how by the Holy Spirit, it's possible for you to live that way. And the devil keeps saying, no, it's not possible, it's not possible, it's not possible. And the Holy Spirit is always saying, it's possible, it's possible.

And I want to say that the vast majority of Christians are listening to the lie of the devil. It's not possible to live this life. The real reason is they don't want to die to themselves.

That's why they're not free. I heard a story of a little girl who's put her hand, small hand, inside a very narrow flower vase, and it got stuck inside. And she couldn't pull it out.

And the mother came and said, pull it out, pull it out. And she says, no, I can't pull it out. So she says, okay, I'll tell you what to do.

Straighten your hands, your fingers. And she said, mommy, if I straighten my fingers, then I lose the coin that I'm holding inside there. That's why you couldn't pull it out.

And that's why we are not free. Maybe it's money or something else. You're wondering why I'm not free.

You'll never be free. Not in a hundred years. Then you'll be part of a club.

Nice club, nice people, good people. You'll never be the church. We have to see Christ as a man, God who became a man.

We worship him because he's God. We love him supremely because God has to be loved supremely, more than anything else. And we know that because he lived on earth just like us, with the power of the Holy Spirit, we can follow him.

So then verses like 1 John 2 verse 6 won't be verses that we just ignore. Now I have a feeling that most Christians ignore 1 John chapter 2 verse 6. 1 John chapter 2 verse 6 says, the one who says he abides in Christ must walk in the same manner as he walked. Walk in the same manner as Jesus walked.

Now how do you react to that statement? Is it possible to walk in the same manner as Jesus walked? That doesn't mean to be a carpenter or to be a bachelor. No, no, no, no. To walk in the same manner as he walked means to walk by the same principles that guided his life.

There were certain principles by which Jesus lived his life. The first principle was that he was to love his father with all his heart, soul, and strength. He would never do anything that would displease his father.

That's a principle. And he would always act in love towards every human being. Every time.

Even towards his enemies. Always in total obedience to his father and always in total love to every human being. Those are the two basic principles by which Jesus lived his life.

To walk as Jesus walked means I live by those principles. Or at least I'm seeking to live by those principles. If I say I abide in Christ, I must walk in the same manner as he walked by the principles.

For that I have to see that Jesus was like me. Turn to Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 17. Hebrews 2:17 says Jesus had to be made exactly like his brothers in all things.

A lot of people don't believe that. They say he was made like Adam or something else. But the Bible says he was made like his brothers in everything.

But then only he could be our merciful and faithful high priest. And it says in Hebrews 4:15, the last part, he was tempted like us in all things. So put those two verses together.

Hebrews 2:17, he was made like us in all things. Hebrews 4:15, he was tempted like us in all things. But he never sinned.

This is the real Jesus. Many people believe in an imaginary Jesus. What I mean by that is they believe in a Jesus who could not be tempted like us.

And not one who became like us in everything, tempted like us in everything. That's not the real Jesus. The real Jesus is one who became like you in everything to be your savior.

And was tempted like you in everything so that he could be your example. So that you could never say to him, Lord, you don't know what I'm facing. You don't know the struggle I have.

He had that struggle. It says in Hebrews 5.7, in order to overcome sin, he prayed with loud crying and tears to the God who was able to save him from death. And he was heard.

He was heard means he was saved from death. Have you ever understood that verse? He prayed to someone who was able to save him from death and he was heard. That means he was saved from death.

Which death was Jesus saved from? He was definitely not saved from physical death. There are two deaths the Bible speaks of. Physical death and spiritual death.

Spiritual death is the result of sin. That is the death that Jesus prayed. He never prayed, Father, save me from physical death.

He came to die. But don't let me sin, which will bring spiritual death. And how did he pray to be saved from sin? It says he prayed with loud crying and tears.

Why did he have to pray with loud crying and tears if he could just walk through this world without sinning as if it were a very easy thing? It was not an easy thing. If it was an easy thing for Jesus, he would not have to pray with loud crying and tears to be saved from death. Many people say, Father, I really want to overcome sin, but I'm not able to overcome sin.

I say, have you ever prayed with loud crying and tears? No. If Jesus needed to pray with loud crying and tears, how do you think you're going to overcome without praying with loud crying and tears? It's not going to be easier for you. Jesus, the perfect man who walked on the earth, had to pray with loud crying and tears, which means he was earnest.

God has made it like that. It says in Jeremiah 29, Jeremiah chapter 29 and verse 13, the Lord says, You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. What about some Christian who does not seek God with all his heart? He will not find him.

And that is the problem with so many Christians. They want to get the answer without seeking him with all their heart. Their heart is set on so many other earthly things, and they also want to find God.

It doesn't work. I've been to charismatic Pentecostal meetings where the preacher would say, All those who want to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, come forward. I never say that.

I'll tell you why. Because I've been to those meetings and I've seen what happens. Everybody wants to be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

But these bunch of half-hearted people who've got their interest in 101 things on earth, they want to have the experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. And this foolish preacher goes around putting his hands on people and pushing somebody down and says, babble something, and says, you got it, you got it, you got it. And what did they get? They got a cheap counterfeit.

Didn't change their life one bit. No, it's not easy. You know when Elisha told Elijah, Elijah asked him when he was going up, What do you want? Elisha said, I want a double portion of your spirit.

I want you to see that example there in 2 Kings. 2 Kings, we read in chapter 2. There's a day that Elijah was going to be taken up to heaven, and Elijah knew that. And it says here, 2 Kings 2, verse 1, When the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven, Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.

And remember, Elisha is a prophet, a prophet of God. And Elisha was only his servant. He was not a prophet yet.

And he told Elisha, Stay here, please. Now listen to it. There's a prophet telling his servant, You please stay here.

Because the Lord has sent me to Bethel. And Elisha says, I will not stay here. Imagine saying that to a prophet.

I will not leave you. So Elijah kept quiet and went to Bethel. When they came to Bethel, Elijah said to Elisha, verse 4, Please stay here.

For the Lord has sent me to Jericho. Elisha says, I will not stay here. Second time.

Then they reach Jericho, and Elijah says in verse 6, Please stay here. The Lord has sent me to Jordan. He said, I will not go.

As the Lord is alive, I will not leave you. Then Elisha took his mantle, and they struck the river Jordan, and the waters parted, and they went across. And when they had stepped over to the other side of Jordan, verse 9, Elijah said to Elisha, Okay, why are you following me? What do you want? And Elisha said, What do you think I've been following you all this time? Why is it I refuse to listen to you when every time you tested me? Elijah, he was being tested.

Ah, you've come to Gilgal. Now, I don't want to go into the history of that. Gilgal was the place where the reproach of Egypt was rolled away.

It's like forgiveness of sins. Okay, you got that? Are you happy? He says, I'm not happy. I want to go to Bethel.

Bethel is called the house of God. You've come to a fellowship. Are you happy now? He says, No, I'm still not happy.

Then he goes to Jericho. Jericho is the place where the walls fell down, the power of God. You've experienced the power of God in your life.

Are you happy? He says, No. Then I go to Jordan. Jordan is a place where you're baptized, symbolizing death to self.

Are you happy now? He says, No. What do you want? And Elisha says, There's only one thing I want. I want, verse 9, a double portion of your spirit to be upon me.

I want a double portion of your spirit to be upon me. He was so eager to be filled with the Holy Spirit. That's what he wanted.

There was a person, you know, saying, No, no, no, no, no. He was seeking with all his heart. And what did Elijah say? He didn't say what today's preachers say.

Oh, come here. Come forward. I'll lay my hands on you and you'll get it.

No. When Elisha wanted a double portion of that anointing, you know what Elijah told him? Verse 10, You've asked for a very hard thing. Where do we hear preachers say? You want to be baptized in the Holy

Spirit, is it? You've asked for a very hard thing.

I'm not going to ask you to come forward and lay my hands on you and you think you've got something, you babble something, you think you've got the Holy Spirit, you've got nothing. I've seen multitudes of people go to such meetings, go forward and get some type of what they call experience of fall down. It's all counterfeit.

And you can see in their lives, there's absolutely no change in their lives the next day as it was before. What did they get? Nothing. I saw so much of it in my younger days that I went to the Lord and said, Lord, I don't want that.

I'm not interested in that. If I have to wait 10 years to get the real thing, I'll wait 10 years. And God made me wait 10 years to see whether I would be satisfied with some cheap counterfeit.

So, we can find God, I'll tell you this, Jeremiah 29, 13. The Lord says, You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. You will experience the genuine baptism and immersion of the Holy Spirit when you seek it with all your heart.

You will experience real overcoming of anger and dirty thoughts and murmuring and grumbling and bitterness and complaining. You'll really overcome it when you seek it with all your heart. If you don't seek it with your heart, you won't find it.

And that is the main reason why most Christians have not found it. They want to get it cheap. Lord, how much is it going to cost? How much is it going to cost? Imagine coming to God and saying, How much is it going to cost? The Lord says it's going to cost everything.

It's going to cost you your reputation, maybe it'll cost you your money, it'll cost you your time. You want it? Can I get it cheaper? No, you can't get it cheaper. Then you don't want it.

It's like you go to a shop and there's a wonderful thing there you want to get which would be a great help to you. See how much it's going to cost. It's going to cost you everything.

No, I don't want to pay so much. See the story Jesus said in Matthew 13. Matthew chapter 13.

Look at this verse. Many parables he spoke only once to illustrate a truth. Matthew 13 is full of parables.

But one parable he repeated twice, two different ways to emphasize the same truth. Matthew 13 and verse 44. The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field.

Which a man found and hid. Boy, there's a treasure here. You know it's like land is being sold for so much a square foot.

Pretty expensive. And people say it's too much of a price to buy this land here. Who's going to pay so much for this land? But this chap discovered that underneath there, there's a treasure.

He hides it so nobody else will find it. Goes to the real estate agent and says I want to buy that land. It's going to cost so much.

Huge price. He says I'll pay it. Because he knows when he buys it there's a treasure that he's going to get.

So what does he do? He sold all that he has. He sold everything. Emptied his bank account, sold his property to buy that.

And he got it. And Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is like that. Some of us would like to get the kingdom of God without paying that price.

Can't you give it to me cheaper? Sorry. It's going to cost everything. And then second parable is teaching the same thing.

The kingdom of heaven again verse 45 is like a merchant seeking for fine pearls. And then he finds one pearl which is of great value. I mean he was an expert and he knew this pearl has got a fantastic value.

What does he do? Again the same expression. He sold all that he had and bought it. Jesus is that pearl of great price.

Jesus is that treasure hidden in a field. The field with the treasure. My question is are you willing to give up everything you have to get this Jesus or not? You say the price is too much.

Forget it then. You can't get it. You will go and get some counterfeit Jesus from somewhere some counterfeit experience of the Holy Spirit and satisfy yourself that you got it.

You got nothing. I've seen plenty of that and I said Lord I don't want it. I don't want any counterfeit experience.

Because I don't want to stand up in a meeting and testify Oh God fill me with the Holy Spirit. I spoke in tongues. I'm not at all interested in that.

What is that to impress people? It's like getting up and saying when cancer is destroying my body I'm free from cancer. What's the use of testifying to that when cancer is destroying your body in a year you're dying. I'm not interested.

If I've got cancer I want to be free from it. Not just testify about it. I want to ask all of you my dear brothers and sisters are you really serious about really wanting God's best in your life? Are you willing to pay any price for it? Or is there a limit to how much you'll pay? Not all that I have but so much but not more.

I've got plans for myself. I've got a lot of things I want to do in life. If I can't do all that I'm sorry.

I don't want this. You will get a third rate Christianity like the vast majority of Christians have. I'm telling you the truth.

I read these verses as a young man and I said Lord I want this. I've got only one life on earth. I don't want a third rate Christianity.

If I don't have the real thing, the very best, the real fullness of the Holy Spirit, the real presence of Jesus with me all the time, revelation of Christ inside me, revelation on his word, I don't want it. I don't want any cheap counterfeit because I'm not trying to get something to testify to people. No, I'm not interested in giving a testimony to people.

I want the real thing. So many people want to be baptized in the Holy Spirit just to testify. But I'm also baptized in the Holy Spirit.

What's the use of that? Just to convince people? The opinion of men is fit for the trash can, the rubbish bin. If you're not convinced of that, I want to tell you you'll never be able to follow Jesus. Let us say Lord the opinions of all the people in the world is fit for the trash can.

I want the real thing from you. Then you will get this new way. Otherwise you know what you'll do? Like Jesus said, Luke chapter 5, we saw that.

You take a patch of new cloth, verse 36. You know that your garment is torn. Your garment is torn and you want to repair the garment.

Now, nowadays we have so much synthetic material with which pants and clothes are made that we don't understand this parable. Only those who use cotton can understand it. You know, cotton has got a peculiar characteristic.

If you make a pant out of cotton, exactly fitting you, and you wash it once or twice, it won't fit you anymore. It's a miracle. If you don't build it, try it.

No, don't try it. You'll waste money. Just believe me.

It's an absolute fact. Because cotton shrinks. It's not like the terry cotton, synthetic material.

They don't shrink. You take the measurement, you wash it any number of times, it's the same size. Cotton is not like that.

It shrinks. So, maybe you children don't know it. Because nowadays hardly anybody buys cotton pants and cotton clothes.

So, we don't understand what it means. In Jesus' days, there was no terry cotton, synthetic stuff. A garment means made of cotton.

Or any material that will shrink. So, he said, you got a hole in your old pant or skirt, and you buy a new cloth, the same color, everything, and stitch it with that new cloth, and you give it for a wash, what will happen? The old garment has already been washed so many times, so it cannot shrink anymore. But the new patch shrinks.

So, what happens? It tears, the garment. So, this is, he was saying, when you take a little bit of New Covenant Christianity, and patch it onto your old covenant life, it will tear your life. A lot of people who come to CFC, that's exactly what they want.

They say, this is a great church. We learn such wonderful truths here. We'd like to take this little patch and patch it onto our old life.

And they wonder why they don't have a satisfying Christian experience. No, you won't have it. It just tears it out.

It doesn't satisfy you. You've got to get a completely new garment. The whole garment must be made of cloth.

Then it shrinks, so you make it a little bigger, and it shrinks, it fits you. Or the best thing most people do, this is what sensible people do, they wash the cloth first, make it shrink, and then stitch it. You've got to do

that when you do it with cotton.

So, Jesus was saying, you cannot put an old, new patch in an old garment. And you need to ask yourself, when you come to a church like this, are you trying to put a new patch, something you've never heard in another church, this is a great truth that we've heard here, some particular truth you're gripped by, not everything, but some particular patch of this truth, really you're blessed by, maybe family life, or some other overcoming anger, one particular thing, I see it, I like that. And I patch it onto my old life, where I've lived for myself, and I don't want to die to myself, what'll happen? It'll tear.

And you wonder why you don't have this satisfying Christian experience that some people have really entered into this life experience. Paul could sit in a prison in Philippi, and write to the Philippians, rejoice in the Lord always. Hey Paul, where are you? I'm sitting in a dungeon, in a prison, and you're rejoicing always.

Sure, if I was not rejoicing always, I wouldn't be writing that. How did he come to that life? Because he didn't take a patch and put it on. He wanted the whole thing.

The whole thing or nothing. Seek God with all your heart, and you'll find him. That's radical Christianity.

Where you say, Lord, I'm willing to pay any price to get you. To have you. See what Paul said in Philippians in chapter 3. I've thought of this passage often.

Philippians in chapter 3 we read, verse 6. I was a persecutor of the church. According to the righteousness of the law, I was blameless. But all those things, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

And now, I count everything as loss. Philippians 3.8 When I compared it to the value of knowing Jesus Christ, my Lord. And listen to this.

This is the phrase I want you to see. For him, I have suffered the loss of everything. Everything means like the man who sold everything to get the pearl of great price.

The man who sold everything to buy the treasure hidden in a field. In other words, Paul said, Jesus, now I've seen Jesus. It's worth everything.

All that I've collected in my life, I can throw away. Because I've found him. All my ambitions and plans for the future.

No more interest in that. I want Jesus. And he says, for him, I've suffered the loss of everything.

Last point of verse 8. Listen to this. Paul lost everything that he counted dear. And he called it all rubbish.

So that he may gain Christ. Paul called things rubbish. Fit for the trash can.

It's not my expression. It's Paul's first of all. He called it rubbish.

Everything outside of Christ is rubbish. I want to ask you whether you've seen it like that. Have you seen everything outside of Christ is rubbish? All the honor of this world.

All the money you can accumulate in this world is rubbish compared to Christ. All the honor of men you seek for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Without Christ it's rubbish.

Everything is rubbish outside of Christ. He wanted the real thing. And he was willing to pay the price.

Now when you gather people together in a group who are not willing to pay this price, you will not have a new covenant church. What you'll have is a congregation. Because, I'm not saying people have to be perfect.

Perfection is, maturity is a long way off. I'm talking about being healthy. A baby is not mature, but it can be healthy.

Free from sickness. So that's what I mean. There's a difference between being mature and being healthy.

You can be born again and be healthy. Because you say, Jesus Christ is everything to me. Nothing is more important to me in my life than Christ.

That's a healthy baby. You were born again only today. It may take you 50 years to be mature, but you're healthy.

But when you're born again, if Jesus Christ is not everything to you, you're not healthy. You're a sick baby. See what the psalmist said in Psalm 73 in verse 25.

This is a healthy baby. One who can say this. And I remember, when I was a young Christian, this is the verse the Lord showed me.

And said, your life must be like this. Every day, till the end of your earthly life. You must always be able to say, from your heart, Psalm 73, verse 25.

This is true worship. Just look at Jesus and say, Lord, I desire nothing on earth but you. The last part of that verse.

I desire nothing on earth but you. Now, dear brothers and sisters, I'm not preaching a sermon here. No.

I'm giving you a scan for you to examine your own life and to ask yourself if you're not having a satisfying Christian experience. To try and find the reason. Like you go to a doctor and say, Doctor, I feel something wrong with my health.

I'm not able to sleep properly. I'm not able to. I'm always restless and disturbed.

Okay. The doctor says, I'll tell you. That's all the Lord is saying.

You're having an unsatisfying Christian experience. Ask yourself, have you ever said to Jesus, I desire nothing on earth but you. Whatever you give me, I'll take.

But I don't desire. If you take it away also, it's fine. That's what God was testing with Abraham when he told Abraham to kill Isaac.

There was nothing wrong with Isaac. Isaac was a very healthy child. But Isaac was becoming like an idol to Abraham, coming between Abraham and God.

Once upon a time, Abraham was face to face with God when he didn't have Isaac. But then Isaac was born, the son of his old age. And as that child grew up, he came between Abraham and God.

That is an idol. That's the thing that you need to ask yourself. Is there something that has come between you and God? God said, kill it.

And he said, take three days to go to that mountain. So I'm not going to ask you to decide in a hurry. Take three days to think of it.

He could have told Abraham, go around the corner and kill Isaac. Why did he give him three days journey to Mount Moriah? Because he never wants any of us to take a decision in a hurry. He says, sit down and count the cost.

That's why in my meetings, I never say, come forward, I pray for you right now. No. Because that's emotional decision of the moment.

Sit down, think about it for three days and then decide. Sit down and count the cost. Are you willing to kill this? To say, Lord, I desire nothing but you.

And when Abraham said that, did God kill Isaac? No. God said, I was just trying to remove him and put him behind me. Right now he's in front of me.

Put Isaac behind me and let me be in front of you. Abraham had Isaac for the rest of his life, but he was no longer an idol. So don't think that when you give up something to God, you'll take it away.

You'll take it away if it's destroying you. But if you say, Lord, you're first in my life, won't take away anything that's good for you. Look at this verse.

Psalm 84, 11. It's a beautiful verse. All of you must remember it.

All of you children must remember this beautiful verse. Psalm 84 verse 11. The last part.

No good thing will God withhold from those who walk uprightly. Let me paraphrase that. If you walk uprightly, God will always give you the best in life.

Every day. Everywhere he'll give you the best in life. I've experienced that for 58 years.

That doesn't mean I'm the richest man in the world. I'm not. I don't want to be.

But he's given me the best in life. When Jesus walked on the earth, he was not the richest person in the world but he had the best in life. It's not money that makes you have the best in life.

Don't fool yourself. Most people who have a lot of money are pretty miserable. I have done a lot of research on this.

Most people who have a lot of money have a miserable family life. They're constantly fighting in their homes. Many of them divorce their wives because they have too much money.

God gives the best to those who will say, Lord, I desire nothing on earth but you. You think he'll make you starve? Never. Jesus never starved.

You think he'll leave you without clothes to wear or you may not have money to buy all the fancy clothes you want but Jesus will clothe you well. Jesus said, see how your father clothes the flowers. Flowers are not all black and white.

They're red and they're green and blue. God will clothe you like that. God's not a miser.

But you have to come to him and say, Lord, I desire nothing but you. Then he will never withhold any good thing. Not even one good thing will he withhold from you if you walk uprightly.

If you say, Lord, I desire nothing but you. That's the type of church we want to build. You can't build that overnight.

But it can be built over a period of time if there are humble people. Now there's no church in the world that's perfect. And there's no church in the world where we can say everybody has put God first in their life.

There'll always be somebody who's not. For example, the best church in the world. You know which was the best church in the world? The one that Jesus had.

Twelve people. Was it perfect? Children, was it perfect? No. Why? Because there was one crook there.

The best church in the world had one crook. So one out of twelve means, if you know mathematics, 8%. So if you have 8% crooks in your church, it's a pretty good church.

It's as good as Jesus' church. If it becomes more than 8%, you should work towards 8%. You'll never make it zero.

Impossible. Even Jesus' church was not zero. 8% were crooks.

So I'm not disturbed if there are some crooks in some of our CFC churches. They'll always be there. But I want to try and keep that percentage down to less than 10%.

Not perfect, but crooked people who are in with wrong motives, who have no desire to live according to what they hear from the pulpit, but just come along because they like to listen to a good message or like to be with some good people. But they're not serious about their Christian life. Who are not even serious about living at peace in their home as husband and wife.

Who are not even serious about asking forgiveness from one another when they hurt one another. These are all crooks. And there are crooks like that in every CFC church.

There were crooks like that in Jesus' church. But we want to make sure that the percentage increases of those who are serious and wholehearted who say, Lord Jesus, I want nothing other than you on this earth. And I believe if all of you humble yourself, it will go better and better and better.

And the moment anyone tries to take credit to himself, if I take credit to myself that I did something, God has set me aside. He has no respect of persons. And that's what happened in the early days when people began to take credit to themselves as if they were the ones who were building the church.

God removed them. And I pray, Lord, remove everybody who tries to take credit and glory to himself. Remove them.

Kick them out. We don't want any such person in the church because in the church only Jesus Christ must be glorified. There's a great verse in 1 Corinthians 1. Meditate on it and you'll see a great truth there.

1 Corinthians in chapter 1. It says here that God chooses, verse 27, 1 Corinthians 1, 27, the foolish. God chooses the weak. God chooses the base, verse 28, low things of the world.

God chooses those who are nobody's. Why? Verse 29, that no one should boast in God's presence. I'll tell you, I'll paraphrase that verse.

If anybody boasts, he's not in God's presence. Got it? That's from that verse. The moment you hear somebody boasting, I did this.

The Lord used me. Write him off. He's not in God's presence.

Be very, very careful because God says, I'll give you my power. I'll give you my nature. I'll give you my wisdom.

I'll give you my life. But he says in Isaiah chapter 42 and verse 8, I will never give you my glory. Did you know that? See Isaiah 42 verse 8. My glory I will never give to another.

I'll give you my power. I'll give you my nature. I'll give you my wisdom.

I'll give you my love. I'll give you my humility. I'll give you everything but not my glory.

The moment you begin to take credit for something, God becomes your enemy. And I've seen that happen again and again and again. Particularly in people who lead churches and they begin to think that God is using me.

God pushes them down. They keep talking about it. Remain humble.

God's grace will be upon you all the time. Be a nobody and give all the glory to Jesus. You'll be safe till the end of your life.

Many people we all of us know how before you go for some ministry we pray. Lord I'm going for this ministry. Maybe I'm going to preach somewhere or I'm going to do something for the Lord.

I pray. But very few people pray after the ministry is over. Have you ever heard of anybody praying after the ministry is over? That's Jesus.

Luke chapter 5 we read here the news about Jesus verse 15 was spreading further and further and great multitudes gathered to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. That is a tremendous ministry. So many people were healed and he himself would slip away to the wilderness to pray.

Why should he pray after the meetings are over? Why should he pray after everybody is healed? After the healing meeting. You know what he was doing? Father I give you all the glory for what you did. Jesus the son of God lived on earth as a man and he would not touch the glory.

He would give it to his father. What an example. You know when I see these little examples.

It's there in your Bible too. If you look carefully you'll find it. It says the Holy Spirit will show you the glory of Jesus.

And I'm so excited when I read the Gospels and I see these little sentences here and there where the Holy Spirit shows me the glory of Jesus and says I want you to be like that. I say Lord I want to be like that. I

want to walk like Jesus walked.

To be quick. It says here he would slip away. You see that word? He would slip away into the wilderness to pray.

Do you know what that means? It's something like this. Ten of us are here talking talking talking and talking and Jesus is also with us and after about half an hour you look around and say hey where's Jesus gone? Quietly he disappeared. He didn't announce hey fellas I'm going away to pray now.

Please excuse me. No no no. That's not slipping away.

That is honor seeking. I have to fast and pray tomorrow. Excuse me.

I have zero respect for such people. Jesus would slip away. You wouldn't even know him.

Later on they discover oh he even talked to the wilderness to pray. Be like that. Be like that.

Never touch the glory of God. Never take credit for something God gave you. Are you intelligent? Give God the glory for it.

Don't take credit for yourself. Are you healthy? And many are sick. Give God the glory.

Lord it's your gift. You have some ability which others don't have. Give God the glory.

Don't try to show off and show that you're better than somebody else. Do that work quietly and disappear. You know Jesus is called a priest after the order of hey? Melchizedek.

The old covenant priests were called priests after the order of Levi. But Jesus you read that in Hebrews in chapter 1 like to show you these references so the young people here will all know it. Hebrews 7.17 it is witnessed of Jesus that he was a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Now who is this Melchizedek? Verse 1 Hebrews 7.1 Melchizedek was a king of Salem and a priest of God who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and he blessed Abraham. So I want you to turn to that passage in the Old Testament where Melchizedek comes up. I'll tell you why.

Aaron was the high priest after the order of Levi and all his children were junior priests after the order of Levi. So Jesus is the high priest after the order of Melchizedek. All of us are priests according to the order of Melchizedek.

Junior priests. Just like the tribe of Levi. Children of Aaron.

Aaron was the high priest and all his children were priests. Jesus is the high priest after the order of Melchizedek. I am a junior priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

So are you. So when you read something like that in Hebrews it's New Testament. Don't just skip it over and say oh well I don't know what it means it doesn't matter.

It does matter. If God sees that you're eager to find out the meaning of it you'll get a spiritual blessing out of it. But if God sees that you're too lazy to find out what that means you'll miss out on something.

Be like that man who searched for pearls and found it. Who searched for hidden treasure in the Bible and found it. That's how I've studied the Bible.

So I want to understand what does it mean for me to be a priest after the order of Melchizedek and I go to Genesis in chapter 14 and I read here that Abraham had gone with let me tell you the story his cousin Lot was captured by the enemy so when Abraham heard it he took his 318 servants.

Genesis 14 verse 14 when Abraham heard that his relative had been taken captive he took out his trained men 318 men so including Abraham 319 went and fought and divided the forces and he defeated all the enemy and he brought back all the goods including his delivered Lot verse 16 and when he returned verse 17 with his 318 servants and after defeating all these kings Melchizedek verse 18 came to him with food he brought food bread and wine means he brought food and drink for Abraham not only for Abraham for his 318 servants that must have been a huge imagine bringing food for 319 people that must have been a caravans and caravans of food that Melchizedek brought and then he blessed Abraham with just two sentences it's one of the most powerful sermons that I've ever heard in two sentences

it's a very powerful sermon if you meditate on it all he said was two sentences now why am I studying this because I'm a junior priest according to the order of Melchizedek and I have to learn something from this guy Melchizedek that's why I'm trying to understand this how did he know that he should take food for this guy called Abraham he had never met I'll tell you he was a priest it says he must have been praying and God said I want you to take a huge feast for about three four hundred people and go in that direction okay Lord whom am I supposed to meet there you go there and I'll tell you and he goes there and he finds Abraham with these 318 servants and he realizes God sent him there with all this food for these hungry people so the first thing I learn about the priesthood of

Melchizedek is that I must be sensitive to listen to God if I want to make the best use of my life I must be sensitive to listen to God and God will send me to bless somebody who is needy maybe physical need maybe spiritual need whatever it is and I must have enough resources that I have prepared laid out to take and bless that person maybe spiritually that's why I really need to study the word and be prepared and say Lord where do you want me to go God says there's a person there and very often it's not by a voice from heaven unconsciously he leads us most of the time in my case I don't hear a voice from heaven it's almost unconsciously I say Lord I want to be a blessing to others the Lord leads us somewhere gives us the resources and we give it to people and 318 people or 3000 people

are fed and then that's the first thing and I want to tell you all of you can become junior priests of the Order of Melchizedek if you have a heart that is willing to serve others that's all if you have a heart that's willing to be inconvenienced to serve others God will use you but if you say Lord I want to serve you but no inconvenience at all don't ask me for all that then you will never be a priest after the Order of Melchizedek then priests after the Order of Melchizedek don't have to preach big long sermons that is necessary for teachers but it says listen to this verse 19 look at his sermon it's the most powerful sermon I've heard in two sentences blessed be Abraham he blesses him blessed be Abraham of God most high you belong to God most high what an encouragement that was to

Abraham possessor of heaven and earth that is the first message why is that the first message because Abraham verse 16 had brought all these goods which he recovered from the kings millions and millions of Durham's worth of property and those days the rule was that if you have defeated the enemy his property is yours that was the law in battle it was like your earning you defeated the enemy all his property is yours

and all of a sudden Abraham became a billionaire and Melchizedek comes and says one little sentence remember your God is the possessor of heaven and earth but your God is nothing that's why later on when the king of Sodom came to Abraham verse 21 and said Abraham I know the laws of battle what you have won is for yourself so you can keep all the riches just let me take my

people and go and Abraham said I have sworn to the Lord possessor of heaven and earth where did he get that title from Melchizedek just told him my God is the possessor of heaven and earth I will not even take a shoelace from here see the blessing of Melchizedek how he blessed him he gave him a one line sermon your God is the possessor of heaven and earth and Abraham was delivered from covetousness boy what a wonderful thing it is to preach one line sermons that deliver people the anointing of the Holy Spirit so that was the first thing and Abraham got the message my God is the possessor of heaven and earth this is not, I don't want this if the king of Sodom says give it to you he says take it because you are right to it you won the battle he said no I will not even take a shoelace from

here not a thread or a shoelace and then he said here the next thing Melchizedek said to Abraham was verse 20 blessed be God most high who delivered your enemies into your hand what was he trying to tell Abraham there don't be proud that you with your 318 servants killed so many kings in the army no no no those kings are so strong they defeated the whole city of Sodom the number of kings the list of kings is mentioned in verse 1 and 2 so many kings Abraham you didn't defeat them God delivered these enemies into your hands so humble yourself so there were two messages that came to Abraham through two sentences one don't covet all this property your God owns the heaven and earth why do you want this little stuff here secondly don't take the credit to yourself for what you did give the glory

to God and Abraham remained humble and gave the glory to God so I see something of the blessing of the priesthood of Melchizedek here first of all I must be sensitive all the time to hear what God is saying to me and God may send me here or there always to bless somebody never to curse people no to bless somebody here to bless somebody there and when I go there just sometimes to give one sentence you know somebody comes to your home for a visit and you can bless him with one sentence before he goes away you talk about many things but before he goes away one sentence from the Lord can change his life when you speak to somebody on a cell phone or you write an email adding one sentence that God gives you can really bless that person that's the priesthood of Melchizedek two sentences Lord

what else shall I write in this email before I send it off what else shall I say to this person on the phone before I turn off the phone I'm talking about when somebody is talking to you and you have a conversation is there something you want me to say it's a tremendous thing and don't say, oh well I never hear God don't say that God is a God who speaks and if you tune your ears you'll be able to hear you won't hear it in this voice but you feel something and you say it and later on that person will come to you and say you know that thing you mentioned to me at the end of our conversation I couldn't forget it it just rang and rang and rang in my ear and it encouraged me so much, thank you for saying that it's a wonderful thing to be part of the priesthood of Melchizedek every one of us

can be, men and women and that's why over the last few years God is bringing you together to become a family all I'm trying to say is don't glory in the number of years you've been functioning that's not the important thing it's carnal people who always boast in that silver jubilee, golden jubilee and all that you know how we've been married for 50 years will they also tell you we've been fighting for 50 years? no no no, we've been married for 50 years they've been fighting every one of those years golden jubilee what golden jubilee?

Rubbish so many things like this churches also can glory 25 years what have we been doing these 25 years? those of you who were here 15-20 years ago know what a mess this place was you're glorying in that? we need to hang our heads in shame Lord thank you for bringing us out of that wretched mess that was called CSC Dubai once upon a time over a period of time when our mind is carnal we think in a carnal way in the world people always think of numbers numbers God is always thinking of quality you can have a pile of wood, hay and straw or a little bit of gold, silver and precious stones that's what God wants and that's what God's looking for in this church and in every church a little bit of gold silver and precious stones as I said you will not have a perfect church there is no perfect

church anywhere in the world there will always be some crooks in the best church, just make sure you're not the crook say Lord deliver me from being a Judas Iscariot here I'll tell you this if you glory in numbers you will be a Judas Iscariot but if you glory in quality Lord have we become a family? do we love one another? what did Jesus say? all men will know you're my disciples when you boast about how long you've been meeting together garbage all men will know you're my disciples when you love one another today when you become a family and you care for one another when everybody is a servant and seeking to serve the others like Melchizedek and the best part of it is Melchizedek blessed Abraham and disappeared you know you'll never read about him in the rest of the Bible never what

happened to this man? this wonderful man after whom Jesus was going to be named later on you read you never read of him after Genesis 14 20 where did he go? he just disappeared he blessed with a word two words from God and plenty of food practical blessing and spiritual blessing and disappears that's the priesthood of Melchizedek where you bless people and disappear you don't want anybody to know wonderful if your goal in life is to bless this church and not let anybody know that you did it you can be a priest after the order of Melchizedek if you can do quietly things in secret and don't want anybody to know that you did it you can be a priest after the order of Melchizedek you want to bless people and you don't even want them to know that you're the one who did it or do you want people

to know by the way I was the one who did that it's wonderful and even better if you did something and they give the credit to somebody else by mistake ah praise the lord they gave the credit to that to somebody else they never discovered that I was the one who did it this is true Christianity when you think of the Holy Spirit the Holy Spirit is moving in the midst of his people very few people recognize him but he's quite happy he's not every one of them shouting out hey by the way I'm here, Holy Spirit I'm here no, he's just quietly moving in the midst of God's people God's people don't even recognize his moving sometimes and he's quite happy is this the Holy Spirit, I'm filled with the Holy Spirit that means I can quietly move around and do things and nobody even knows that I'm here,

nobody gives me any credit just like nobody gives credit to the Holy Spirit but I want to be like that this is the Christian life this is the way the church of Jesus Christ is built I will build my church Jesus said and it will have the same nature as Christ himself, that's why it's called the body of Jesus Christ so I have shared my heart with you because I was concerned about some things that people were talking about in this church which is completely out of place to get our focus on the right thing which is to see that Jesus is glorified that when people come here, my prayer always is this, Lord when people come to a meeting and go away they must go away saying I heard Jesus today I met with the Lord today He spoke to my heart and He showed me something I'd never seen in myself the

light of God shone into my heart every meeting of the church can be like that if we walk in humility if we are quick to give the glory to God whenever He does something wonderful and not to take the credit to

ourselves always, Lord it's what you did I have nothing to do with that, I happen to be there but it's you who did it it's you who are building the church let your name be glorified let man be humbled let Christ be glorified, many times I shut my eyes and I meditate on heaven and I meditate and I see a huge crowd of millions and millions and millions of believers as far as the eye can see in every direction I see the heads of millions of believers and nobody's head is standing up above the others just multitudes of heads and I'm also like that, all there where's Paul?

I don't know where he is Peter? Can't find him John? I don't know where he is if you look for Zach Bonin, you won't find him Jesus He's the only one you'll see because they sing, Lord thou alone art worthy I close my eyes sometimes and meditate on that, I say, Lord I'm looking forward to that day and all believers will be equal today some are more gifted, some are more special, some are more honored and some have done a great work but that day it will only be Jesus and I'm looking forward to that day I hope you are and that day is coming very soon be ready for it let's pray Heavenly Father what a wonderful salvation this is it's so exciting just to know it and I pray that everyone here will be gripped to see your glory to partake of your glory always to remain a nobody so that Christ alone can be glorified and the devil be put to shame I pray in Jesus name Amen

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