

The First Body of Christ

by Zac Poonen

The New Covenant is about submitting our bodies to the Holy Spirit and having faith that He will do the impossible.

Duration: 56:36

Scripture: Matthew 1:21, Matthew 2:1-2, Matthew 3:11, Romans 12:1

Topics: "Body Of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of surrendering to God and allowing Him to produce a transformed life in believers. He highlights that it is not our own efforts or achievements that make us pure, good, and effective in serving God, but rather it is God working through us. The speaker challenges the notion that God's work is lacking because of a lack of money, stating that God is not a beggar in need of financial support. Instead, the speaker encourages believers to offer their bodies as a living sacrifice to God, allowing Him to control every aspect of their lives. The sermon also references the story of the wise men in Matthew 2, highlighting their obedience and guidance from God in bringing expensive gifts to Jesus.

Transcript

We were looking at the New Covenant, how God introduces it in the first chapters of Matthew. You know, we call these, the second part of our Bible, the New Testament or the New Covenant. And it's very interesting when you look at what we've been looking at, how, as it were, hidden in these early chapters are truths about the New Covenant for those who want to see.

We saw in chapter one itself, the first promise that He will save His people from their sins. And we saw in our last study about the baptism in the Holy Spirit in Matthew 3, 11, which, by the way, is the second promise in the New Testament. And these two are connected.

He will save His people from their sins and He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit. Remember all your life that these are the first two promises in the New Testament. And these are things which we can experience only in the New Covenant.

They experienced an anointing of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. Many people experienced it. But that's not similar to this baptism in the Holy Spirit that Jesus gives us because Jesus referred to this as something that starts from the innermost being.

When Jesus spoke about the Holy Spirit, He said in John 7, 37-39, the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant is this will be from the inside, from your innermost being, rivers of living water will flow. And there it says in John 7, 39, the Spirit could not be given like this because Jesus was not glorified. So the Spirit was given in Old Covenant times but not like this, not from the innermost being.

And we see lots of examples in the Old Testament of Samson who could kill lions on the outside but not the lust inside. Gideon who could have the Spirit upon him and he could kill the Midianites but then he went and worshipped idols. Or David who could kill Goliath but was defeated by Bathsheba.

So this is the difference. If we don't understand this, we will not understand the baptism in the Holy Spirit. And in fact the very first reference to the Holy Spirit in Matthew 1, right in Matthew 1 you read about the Holy Spirit and it's referring to the child Jesus being born within the womb of Mary.

Matthew 1 verse 18, she was found to be child with the Holy Spirit and the angel told Joseph, don't be afraid because the child that has been conceived in her, verse 20, is of the Holy Spirit. So the first reference to the Holy Spirit in the New Testament is for what? It's to produce Jesus' body inside Mary's womb. And that is the purpose of the Holy Spirit in the New Covenant, to build the body of Christ today.

Just like there, there it was done in Mary's womb, now it's being done in the church. And also just like Jesus was born in Mary, the Holy Spirit comes in us so that the life of Jesus is born in us individually. That's how he makes us part of the body.

See that creation, that body being formed inside Mary's womb was the work of the Holy Spirit. But it wasn't entirely the Holy Spirit, it was the Holy Spirit plus Mary. Mary had a part in the body of Jesus.

And so also, today, the building of the body of Christ is not something which the Holy Spirit does entirely on his own. It's with us. The church today is the mother through which this body is built.

And so each of us has a part in that. See just like in the Old Testament you read in Genesis chapter 1, the very first reference to the Holy Spirit in verse 2 is like a mother, the Spirit of God brooded over the waters. It's like a hen brooding over its chicken.

And what did that Holy Spirit brood over that earth for? Because the earth was so dark and corrupt and empty. The Holy Spirit brooded to bring light and fullness and shape into that dark earth. So we see the first chapter in the Old Testament, the first chapter in the New Testament, you see the emphasis on the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

And that's why we must recognize that the Bible begins in Old Testament and New Testament by teaching us that the Holy Spirit can do anything. That shapeless, useless earth in Genesis 1-2 became so beautiful by the end of Genesis 1. And that which is impossible for a woman to have a child without a man. You know what Gabriel told Mary in Luke chapter 1 when she said, how can this be? How can this be? You know when you hear about the beauty of the life of Jesus and you see that your calling is to reflect that purity and that humility all your life.

And to live in love and forgiveness and overcome all anger and all lust and all bitterness and all love of money and all jealousy. And to live a life where we have complete control over our tongue and our thoughts. What do you say? You say what Mary said.

How can this be? How can? I mean just like she says no woman ever produced a child without as a virgin. And you say this is impossible for a man to live this life. The Holy Spirit says that's right.

What's the answer? What the angel told Mary was nothing shall be impossible with God. So that's very important to remember that. Luke chapter 1. Let's look at that verse.

We see it's connection to the Holy Spirit. Luke chapter 1. What did the angel tell Mary in verse 35? When she said how can this be? Verse 34. Since I'm a virgin it's never heard of that a virgin has a child.

And we say the same thing. How can this be? How can a man overcome all his dirty thoughts and his anger and control his tongue? Such a thing has never happened in the human race. And the answer is the Holy Spirit will come upon you.

Verse 35. The power of the Most High will overshadow you. And therefore the Son of God will be born through you.

It's the same word to us. The Holy Spirit comes upon us and fills us. And the power of the Most High will overshadow us.

You know this is the shadow spoken of in Psalm 91. Blessed is the man who dwells in the shadow of the Almighty. That's the Holy Spirit.

Like a shadow over us. And it is power. Notice the connection between the Holy Spirit and power.

In the birth of Jesus. In Acts 10.38. It says God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and power. And before he left he told his disciples when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.

Just like he came upon Mary. 33 years ago. You also will receive power.

See there's a connection between Holy Spirit and power here in Luke 1.35. And the Holy Spirit and power in Acts 1.8. Where Jesus said when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you'll have power. Not power to do anything we like. What did Mary get power for? Not power to become rich and famous.

She didn't get a better house or a chariot. No. She didn't become a millionaire.

She got power to bring forth Jesus. That's what she wanted. What do you want? What do you want the Holy Spirit's power for? A lot of people in the world today are seeking for other things.

But remember the new covenant is all about power to bring forth Jesus in our life. And then you notice this other word also which the angel spoke here to Mary. Further down she said verse 37.

Nothing will be impossible with God. Nothing will be impossible with God. And Mary said, as it were, if I were to paraphrase his words.

Okay Lord, verse 38, here I am. Let it be done to me according to your word. Do you think she had to struggle to create a baby inside her womb? What do you think? Do you think any woman can struggle and produce a baby inside her womb? No.

Certainly not a virgin. It was the Holy Spirit. But he required Mary to submit her womb and say, okay.

I'm willing to accept this. I know it will bring me tremendous shame and reproach. I know people will misunderstand me.

They'll speak behind my back. Now I'll tell you something. If you really enter this new covenant life, you're not going to be the most popular person in the world.

You won't get the Nobel Prize for anything. You'll be despised and rejected and misunderstood. And people will speak behind your back.

In a flash of a moment, all that must have gone through Mary's mind before she said, okay Lord, I accept it. Jesus always said, sit down and count the cost. Don't just rush into it.

Yeah, yeah, this is a wonderful life. Well, it is a wonderful life, but you've got to be willing to pay the price. There is a price to be paid.

And that price is the reproach of the world, which does not understand life in the Holy Spirit. The reproach of Christendom, which doesn't understand the true life in the Holy Spirit. They talk about it, but they don't know it.

And they don't manifest the life of Christ. That's the tragedy in today's Christendom. But for those who are willing, who will say like Mary, yes Lord, I submit to you.

The word is fulfilled. Nothing will be impossible with God. This is how the new covenant began.

The new covenant began with a promise. Nothing will be impossible with God. You hear a word like Romans 6.14, sin shall not have dominion over you.

Because you are not under law, but under grace. And you say, how can this be? Nothing will be impossible with God. And if you can say like Mary, okay, I submit my body to you.

No, she had to give her body. God didn't want her money. God didn't say, Mary, you got to pay our tithes.

That's what a lot of people preach today. It's not what God wants. In Romans, after explaining this wonderful gospel in the first 11 chapters, Paul says in Romans 12 verse 1, In view of these wonderful mercies of God, what are you going to give to God? Are you going to give him some money? Are you going to give him 10%? Even if you give 100% of your money to God, there's something else God wants.

He doesn't want your money. He's got plenty of money. Do you know what God lacks in the world today? It's not money.

A lot of Christian work gives people the impression God's work is suffering because we don't have enough money. Oh brother, give money, because God's work needs money. I tell you, and I don't mind saying it aloud, it's all garbage.

The God of this universe is not a beggar going around with a tin can saying, give me your money. What are your millions of rupees? It's like putting 10 paisa into a beggar's tin, as far as God is concerned. But do you know what God lacks in the world today? He does not find something which He wants.

And that is people who will give their body completely to Him, just like Mary. That's how the New Covenant began. You know, in the Christian world, people are told, give your heart to Jesus.

Give your heart to Jesus. That's easy to say, give your heart to Jesus. In fact, that expression is never used in Scripture.

Give your heart to Jesus. Always it's believe in Him, lean upon Him, trust Him. I'll tell you what the Scripture does say.

Give your body to Jesus. Romans 12.1 In view of the mercies of God, present your body. And that reminds us of Mary.

That's the New Covenant. In the Old Testament, nobody was asked to do that. Nobody in the Old Testament was asked to give his whole body to God.

This is a New Covenant invitation in Romans 12.1. And when, in the Old Testament it was pictured, it was pictured in Leviticus chapter 1 with the burnt offering. In the burnt offering, they had to bring a bullock, and they had to cut that bullock into pieces, and put it piece by piece by piece by piece by piece on the altar. And once the last piece was put, the fire would fall.

That's the picture of the Holy Spirit. Okay? So, we take our body today, that's the fulfillment of that Old Testament burnt offering. And we don't just put our body, we cut it into pieces, then only we know what it means to give our body.

Lord, I give you my eyes. I don't want to look at anything anymore, which I want. My eyes are yours.

What would you think of a wife who is married to someone and gives her body to somebody else? What would you call such a woman? A harlot. That's exactly what the Bible calls Christians, who use their body parts for something in the world. Harlot.

James says in 4.4, you adulteresses. Revelation 17, it speaks about Babylon the harlot, the mother of harlots. Who is a spiritual harlot? It's not those who belong to some particular church.

I wish it were so easy. Then you leave that church, you escape. No, you don't.

It's those who give their body to the world instead of to God. If you give your eyes to the world, you're a harlot. If you give your tongue to the devil, you're a harlot, because it belongs to God.

He purchased it on the cross. If you do things with your hands, which Jesus wouldn't want you to do, you're a harlot. But if you give it to God and submit like Mary and say, God, what would you think of Mary after the Holy Spirit came upon her and produced Jesus in her womb? Suppose she went around and slept with some other man.

Even Joseph, it says, he didn't touch her until Jesus was born. He recognized her body. I'm married to her, but I can't have any sex with her until Jesus is born.

Mary didn't even give her body to Joseph. It was totally for God. That's a picture of how we are to give ourselves to God, our body.

Lord, it's totally yours. And it's because a lot of people don't give themselves to God like that, that they don't experience the real power of the Holy Spirit. They want the power of the Holy Spirit to tickle them and excite them and give them some gifts and show off and have some visions and see angels and all that.

I'll tell you this, I don't want to see, I've never seen an angel in my life and I don't want to see. I've seen Jesus in my heart and that's enough. Why do I want to see angels? Yeah.

It's a tremendous amount of deception going on in the world today as a substitute because people don't give their body. Follow Mary, who gave her body and believe that nothing will be impossible with God. It's not your responsibility to produce the life of Jesus in you.

That's the responsibility of God. He says in the New Covenant, I will write my laws upon your heart and your mind. It's not your responsibility.

In the Old Testament it was. You shall not murder and you shall keep the Sabbath and you shall not worship idols and you must honor your father much is our responsibility. But in the New Covenant, God says, you can't do it.

You can't do it any more than Mary could produce a baby on her own. But nothing will be impossible with God. I will write my laws upon your heart and your mind and boy, you'll be amazed when you become an overcomer.

It's just like way back in Genesis 1. What did the earth do? You think the earth could struggle and produce fruit trees by itself? No. It's just the Spirit of God brooded upon that earth and God said, let the fruit trees come up and the earth said, sure. And the fruit trees came forth.

If the earth could speak and you went to the earth and said, boy, how did you all of a sudden produce those apples and pomegranates and grapes and oranges and all that? I didn't do anything. I just submitted to God. That'll be your testimony too.

When people see your life and say, how did you become so pure and how did you become so good and how did you be so effective in your service for God and at the end of it all, how are you so humble? I didn't do it. It's God. It's God producing the life of Jesus.

Was Jesus like that? Yeah, Jesus was like that. And the same Holy Spirit that was in him has come upon me. Do you believe that? Nothing will be impossible for God.

I'll tell you this. 99% of Christians are living substandard lives. They're like people are living in a slum.

The people who are living in the slum are living on earth, right? But there's a lot of difference between living in a slum and living in a palace. It's like that. There are Christians who are part of the church, but they're living in a slum.

They need not. Because they have not submitted to the Holy Spirit. This is a word which is so important.

Nothing will be impossible with God. And she said, OK, I accept that. I submit my body to you.

And the angel said, OK. The angel departed. And she went and visited Elizabeth.

And Elizabeth gave her a word. Because it says here in verse 41, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And filled with the Holy Spirit, she said something to Mary.

Which is very important. Verse 45. Blessed is she who believes.

That means blessed are you because you believed that there will be a fulfillment of what the Lord has spoken to you. OK. When you read a new covenant promise, do you believe that there will be a fulfillment of what the Lord has spoken to you? Or do you say, well, I'm not so sure.

Think if Mary had come out saying, well, I don't know. I'm not so sure whether Jesus will ever be born from me. She said it.

I know the angel said it. But I don't know. I know God said it.

I know the promise. Nothing is impossible and all that. But I don't know.

You know, God required faith. And that is the verse that tells us that Mary had faith. Not only submission, but faith.

It's not enough to submit and say, OK, God, I give my body to you. You must have faith. Faith for what? That there, verse 45, there will be a fulfillment of what the Lord has spoken.

So many Christians, they surrender, surrender, surrender. But they don't believe that there will be a fulfillment in their life of what God has spoken in His word. They say, yeah, I know it's in scripture.

But will it be fulfilled in my life? I don't know. Here is a word from the Lord for you. Nothing is, verse 37, impossible with God.

You know, back in the Old Testament, also, if you turn to Genesis and chapter 18. Genesis chapter 18. It's sort of similar words you find here that the Lord spoke at the beginning of the Old Covenant.

You know, the Old Covenant really began with Abraham. I mean, though it was proclaimed by Moses 430 years later. It began, the nation of Israel began with one man and one woman.

Abraham and Sarah. That's how that whole Old Testament nation began. And they had the same problem.

How can we have a son? How will the nation come out of our womb? I mean, Sarah is barren. And it says here in verse 11, Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age. And Sarah was past childbearing.

And the Lord told her, you'll have a son. And she said the same thing, somewhat like Mary. She laughed and said in verse 13, shall I indeed bear a child when I'm old? And what did the Lord say? Is anything too difficult for the Lord? Is anything too difficult for the Lord? Nothing is impossible for God.

That's how the Old Covenant began. And that's how the New Covenant begins. That is the message of the whole Bible.

Old Covenant or New Covenant. That which looks impossible in man's eyes is fulfilled. Earlier on we read in Genesis 15.

The Lord said to him, in Genesis 15 verse 5, look at the heavens and count the stars. Your descendants will be like that. And it says just like Mary, what did he do? He believed in the Lord.

And it was reckoned to him as righteousness. So you see a lot of similarity between the beginning of the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. In both there was a case of a woman for whom it was impossible for her to have a child.

And the Lord did it supernaturally. And in both cases he expected them to have faith. And so this is important for us to see in the New Covenant too.

The whole ministry of the Holy Spirit is so important. So turning now to Matthew chapter 3. Before I come into that, let me also say something else. In Matthew chapter 2. We see something else about the New Covenant which is also distinctive.

And that is, the first people who came to worship Jesus and to recognize him were not the great Bible scholars. There was a man called Gamaliel running a, or other scholars like that running a Bible school in Jerusalem. But none of them had a clue.

They studied the Bible. If you ask them, where is the Messiah to be born? They'd say, yeah, yeah, he used to be born in Bethlehem. They knew that because they had studied Micah.

In fact, King Herod asked the scribes and they knew the answer. But the people who actually saw Jesus were some poor shepherds and some Gentiles. That means non-Jewish people who came from a far land in Matthew chapter 2. Led by God to see Jesus.

So here were the shepherds and here were the wise men from the East. Signifying that in this New Covenant, there's not going to be any distinction between Jews and Gentiles. There's not going to be any special group like in the Old Covenant.

That's why right at the beginning, you see the shepherds coming in Luke chapter 2. And you see the wise men coming in Matthew chapter 2. Those are the ones whom God, to both of them, God supernaturally revealed. To the shepherds by an angel coming and telling them. And to the wise men by a star.

They couldn't have known otherwise. You know, who led them? And there were lots of babies born that day. Even in Bethlehem there were lots of babies.

But the Lord led them. And you see, when you think of the way the shepherds were led. It's very wonderful to see this.

It's not just, you know, poor shepherds and some wise men from another land. Jews and Gentiles being brought. I think it was prophetic that this is going to be a new age.

When all people from far away and from near can receive the Holy Spirit. Can come and see Jesus and be a part of His salvation. And how they were led by the Holy Spirit to, you know, to minister to Jesus.

The shepherds, for example, they had nothing to give. But it's very wonderful to see how, let's look at the shepherds first in Luke chapter 1. How were they led? All this has got many wonderful truths for this new covenant. You know, when we think of the body of Christ.

That was born through Mary. Remember, is a picture of the new covenant church. Which is called the body of Christ.

So right from the beginning, you see truths about the church. How the church is born through the Holy Spirit coming upon. How the church is born by men and women who believe, who give their bodies to God.

And become one body. Who allow the Holy Spirit to come upon them. Who face reproach, misunderstanding, backbiting.

And who just keep their mouth shut. They will not reply. Mary wouldn't say anything.

Whatever people said about her. You know, if you really follow the Lord, I'll tell you this. You'll be misunderstood.

If you're a popular type of person, well, I doubt whether God's leading you. How can you be popular in a world that rejected and crucified Jesus? Not possible. And I'll tell you, most of Christendom today has also rejected and crucified Jesus.

They're more interested in the world. They're more interested in money and houses and lands and movies and entertainment and music. And everything the world can give.

But these shepherds, it says here, the angel appeared in Luke chapter 2 to these shepherds. And it's very interesting that both these groups were, you see an activity going on at night. The wise men, they were led at night.

You can't see the stars during the daytime. I hope you know that. So when do you think the wise men traveled? Do you know the wise men couldn't travel during the day? Did you know that? They had to sleep during the day.

I mean, they were traveling from hundreds of miles. I think they must have taken a few months to travel. And the only time they could travel was at night.

They slept during the day, traveled again at night, slept during the day, traveled at night. And the shepherds are also like that. Here they were at night.

There's something about that. I've seen through the years that God speaks to many people in the night season. When he called Abraham, as you read in Genesis 15, and said, look up and see the stars.

Was it daytime or nighttime? It's not written there. What do you think? Sure. And when God told Abraham to offer up his son, he tested him.

Was it daytime or nighttime? It was nighttime. Next morning, it says, he got up and went. And here were the shepherds at night.

See, because I see it like this, that night when everybody is asleep and the world is quiet, here and there, around, you know, it's not night all over the world, but wherever there is night in the world, God sees a few people crying out to him on their beds. God, I want you. Jesus spoke about that in Luke chapter 18, where he said, Shall not God avenge his elect who cry out to him day and night? So, that's just an interesting thought.

People who long for God in the night seasons. Anyway, the angels appeared to them at night and said to him that you're going to find a baby. And the way you're going to identify this baby, when they go to Bethlehem and they find all these babies there, how will they know which one it is? There's no halo around Jesus' head like you see in these pictures.

Not at all. How to find which of these babies is Jesus? All the babies look exactly alike, especially when they are born. He said, this baby, you'll find wrapped in swaddling, in cloths.

Well, all babies are wrapped in cloths. So, that is not the distinguishing feature. You'll find it lying in a cow shed, in the manger, which is the trough in which the cows eat.

You go to Bethlehem and search and you'll find only one baby in all of Bethlehem that is lying in a cow's eating trough. All the other babies are better off. But this one will be so poor that he'll be placed by his mother with the cows and the donkeys and the eating trough.

Their mother just cleaned it out and he'll be there. You'll only find one baby like that. That's how they could find out.

Otherwise, how would they know? So, it was very easy for them. They had to go just looking around for cow sheds in Bethlehem. That's a house, it can't be there.

I hear a baby crying there, but that's a house, it can't be there. Ah, there's a cow shed. There's another cow shed.

Let me look inside the cow sheds. Let me look inside the eating troughs. In all of Bethlehem, there was only one baby.

See, that's the mistake the wise men made. The wise men followed the star, followed the star, followed the star, finally landed up in Jerusalem. And they thought, well, the king of the Jews, where are kings born? The palace, of course.

So, they said, we don't need the star now, goodbye. Let's go and ask in the palace. Herod, what about the king of the Jews? The king of the Jews? I haven't heard of it.

That was the one place where those wise men were foolish. It's always foolish when we don't follow the star. You know, that star is a picture of God's word.

God's word will always lead us to Jesus. But when you stop following God's word and use your reason and say, Ah, now I know. That's where you'll go astray.

That's where the wise men went astray, where they stopped following the star and used their own reason and said, Ah, now we don't need the star. In this area, I don't need the star. Kings are born in palaces, of course.

And they discover. People in the palace don't know. It's the same with the body of Christ.

Where is the body of Christ born today? A lot of people look for it in big cathedrals and huge buildings and say, Oh, Christ must be there. Maybe He's there. We hear 10,000 people are meeting in that building.

He must be there. No, He isn't. He's not in the midst of the rich and the famous.

And He's not in the midst of huge buildings. The body of Christ, even today, is born in despised little rooms in the houses of poor people who are unknown. Do you think the neighbor is there next door to the manger? You know, Bethlehem must have been a crowded place.

And crowded people coming in for the census and all that. Houses, houses, houses, cowsheds, cowsheds, cowsheds. There were people all over.

Do you think any of them knew that the fantastic event that was prophesied was happening right there in that town, in that cowshed over there? Do you think anybody knew that? The people living next door didn't know. It's like that today when the body of Christ begins to be formed in some house, in some place. The neighbors don't know what's happening there.

The neighbors don't know that the body of Christ, God, is building a body here. Just like the neighbors in Bethlehem did not know. So don't look for Christ in the big fancy buildings amidst the great and the rich and the big and the famous.

You won't find Him there. Don't make the mistake otherwise. There may be a lot of there who are scribes and who know the Bible, but Christ is not there.

They had great knowledge of the scriptures because when Herod asked them where should He be born, He said, yeah, yeah, we know He's in Bethlehem, but they didn't even know that He was already born. So it's like that. You can miss the body of Christ today if you look for it in the wrong place.

The body of Christ is born not with trumpet sound and great pomp and show. No, no, no, no, no, with big flashlights and all that. No, it'll be born in some small little place where just a few people meet together who love Jesus, who have given their bodies to Him.

And that'll be the beginning of a body. So all these things are there. This is what God was after in the New Covenant, to build the body of Christ.

And you can be a part of that, not by sitting in a church, but by giving your body to Him and let Him control every part of your body like that Old Testament bullock when it's cut and laid on the altar. The moment the last piece is laid on the altar, the fire falls, definitely. And if the fire hasn't fallen, it means some part of the bullock has not been laid on the altar.

Maybe one's job or money or time or house or something precious is held back. And so, the other thing I want you to notice here is about the wise men in Matthew chapter 2. See how they were led by God even in bringing those very expensive gifts. They didn't know.

They brought gold and frankincense and myrrh. And, of course, we don't know how many wise men there were. It doesn't say there were three.

The gifts were three, but it says here they brought these very, very expensive spices, verse 11 of Matthew 2, and gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. These were men who were led by God. The shepherds, of course, were so poor, they didn't bring anything.

See, the wonderful thing I see here is you see the shepherds, the Israelis, and you see the wise men, the Gentiles. God is bringing people of all nations together. The other thing you see is the poor shepherds who come with, what do they have? Nothing to give to Jesus.

They would have gladly brought some little lamb or something, but that's no use for a child. And then you have the rich people, wise men, to teach us that in God's church it's not only rich people, and it's not only poor people. Sometimes we can think, oh, it's only poor people in the church.

It's garbage. It's the poor and the rich, extremely rich people, who can give gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh and other poor shepherds who also come to worship who can offer nothing. This is the wonderful thing in the church, that Jesus accepts them equally.

He's not looking for gifts. Those who have enough, they give. It's the same today in the offering boxes.

We find that those to whom God gives plenty, they give to the Lord. And there are other poor brothers in the church and sisters who don't have much. They don't care.

They don't have to give. God, they're equal. The shepherds and the rich people are equal at the feet of Jesus.

And, you know, the wise men didn't know that Joseph would need a lot of money for the next few years. That he would not be able to work as a carpenter. Because Herod was going to kill all the babies and he would have to flee to Egypt with the baby and then he would need money.

See how God provided that money through these wise men bringing I don't think they just brought one little ring or something like that. Gold. They brought a lot of gold and frankincense and myrrh and all these boxes with which Joseph could go to Egypt and no fear now about how to live there for some years before Herod dies and they can come back.

See, I see something wonderful here that in the New Covenant God prepares everything for His body. He cares for us like we sing in that song as He cared for Jesus. He will care for you.

I have experienced that so many times in my life. It says that Herod sent his soldiers to kill Jesus but by the time they came to the door he wasn't there. The policemen come to the door and you're not there.

God's warned them and taken them away before the people come. Because you can't fight with God. It's a wonderful thing I tell you to give your body completely to the Lord.

Say, Lord, all of my life I just want my feet to take me where You want me to go and I want my hands to do what You want me to do. I want my eyes to read and look at only what You want me to read and look at. I have no other interest on earth except to do Your will.

If you will give your body like that to God it says in Romans 12.1 Present your bodies to God that you may prove and let your mind be renewed that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. It's a perfect will of God. When you give your body like that to Him you will not lack anything.

Before the need comes people will come with gold and frankincense and myrrh to help you for that future need. The need may be great. It doesn't matter.

All the silver and the gold in the world belongs to God. Joseph didn't have to go begging for money. God doesn't.

God will never allow His. Even a helpless Jesus will not have to beg. It's not only He didn't have to beg when He was 30.

He didn't have to beg when He was a baby. Because long before He was born, months before He was born God prompted some rich people you better collect a lot of gold, frankincense and start a journey. You got to help somebody in my body.

That's how He sends people today. Rich people were prompted by God. If you trust in the Lord it's a wonderful way to live.

Not only He will provide all your need provision like He provided for Jesus here for all the expenses He would have in Egypt. But protection also. Provision and protection.

Isn't that wonderful? I can't understand why anybody would not want to live this life. These are earthly needs. Does God care for our earthly needs under the new covenant? Sure.

Does God protect us from earthly enemies who try to kill us? Sure. How could Jesus die as a baby when He has to die when He is 33 and a half? How can you die if you have surrendered your body to God before God's time? The whole world nobody will be able to kill you. No.

And if God sees that you are going to come into a situation where you are going to face famine or starvation God will send some rich men along with gold and frankincense or myrrh or whatever it is that you need to support yourself. It's a life of faith. That's how the church is supposed to live.

That's how the church is supposed to grow. When I think of how the Lord has led us as a church I mean do you know when we started way back 32 years ago I remember days when in our offering box we had two rupees. That's it.

That was the total offering in the offering box that Sunday. That's all we needed. We didn't need more than two rupees.

That week. So He gave us two rupees. We haven't changed our policies on that through the years.

We never sent reports or asked anybody or told anybody what we were doing or any such thing. But as the needs increased now we find people come along with the gold and the frankincense and myrrh. He is the same today as He was for that first body of Christ that was born in Bethlehem.

And likewise through the years many of you may not know so many people have tried to kill us. I mean spiritually and attack us and take away this building and all types of things. You think God doesn't know that? He has made provision for that too.

He takes care of everything. What a wonderful life this new covenant life is. What a lot we can learn from the example of Jesus as He was lying there so helpless.

I mean when you are grown up at least you are smart you can be alert. What about a helpless baby like Jesus? How could He do anything? And some of you may say, well I am not so smart I am not so capable. I don't know anybody influential and I am pretty helpless.

Well you are like Jesus when He was a baby, right? Who took care of Him? To teach us that it doesn't matter if you are helpless. It doesn't matter if you are not smart. It doesn't matter if you don't know influential people.

Which influential people did Jesus know? With whom did Joseph know? He had God. That's the way we are supposed to live. And I want to say another thing.

It's not that God is not against the poor. He is not against the rich. He loves all of them.

And neither is He against those who have studied a lot. Because there was a great scholar also who found Jesus and that was Simeon. You know it says in Luke chapter 2 I want you to see that.

He was another person who found Jesus. So there are scholars like that who find the body of Christ also if they are humble. That's the point.

In Luke's gospel chapter 2 we read about Simeon. Verse 23 Luke 2 verse 23 There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. And this man was righteous and devout.

Yeah, not every scholar. But those who are righteous and devout looking for the Messiah. Looking for Jesus.

And the Holy Spirit was upon him. And he came to the temple one day. He came in the spirit.

Verse 27 What a wonderful way to come to church. It says he came in the spirit. I'll tell you there's a lot of difference when you come in the spirit to the church and when you come, don't come in the spirit to the church.

If he had gone that day not in the spirit, if he had seen all those babies he would have missed Jesus. Can you remember days when you came in a bad mood to the church and you missed meeting the Lord all together? Don't let it ever happen again. He came in the spirit to the temple and he saw so many babies being dedicated.

And the Spirit of God said that one there see that one, that poor family there holding that baby, that's the Messiah. He looked just like any other baby if the Holy Spirit led him. That's how the Holy Spirit leads people to the body of Christ in the midst of so many churches.

Which is the body of Christ in the midst of so many babies that day in the temple? Which one is Jesus? You got to have the Holy Spirit on you. Then you'll know. And there was another woman also there who met Jesus.

See men and women, men and women, doesn't make a difference whether you're rich or poor, doesn't make a difference whether you're Jew or Gentile and it doesn't make a difference whether you're a man or a woman. Because it says here that there was an old lady verse 36 called Anna daughter of Fanuel. Her husband died seven years after she was married, verse 36, and then she was a widow to the age of 84.

And she was always fasting and praying. I tell you, God meets with those who fast and pray. It's another thing we see people fast and pray looking for Jesus and God leads them to the right place.

God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. These are the people who found Jesus. Man or woman doesn't make a difference whether they're holy, devout, they fast, they pray.

They're seeking for God. They're not seeking for things on this earth. And then I want to say one more thing that we see in Matthew chapter 1 and chapter 2. You know, some of the things at the beginning of the new covenant, that's what we've been looking at.

Notice the number of ways in which supernaturally God guides. When Joseph was concerned about Mary being pregnant and didn't know the real reason. And it says here, Joseph was a righteous man verse 19 and he did not want to disgrace her.

Verse 19. Righteousness is the main message of the new covenant. And I want you to notice one thing, that the first mention of righteousness in the pages of the new testament is about a man who would not expose the sin of another person which he thought was sin.

If you're a righteous man or a woman, you will not disgrace others. You may know something evil about somebody, you'll let it bury inside you. You won't even tell your wife or husband about it.

Why should they know? Look at the amount of gossiping, backbiting going on. No wonder such Christians will never see the new covenant in a hundred years. Joseph was a righteous man.

You know, very often the people we criticize, we may discover later that we were wrong. Have you seen that sometimes? I've noticed that. I've made mistakes like that in my younger days.

Where I thought something was wrong with somebody, afterwards I discovered it was not true. Don't be so quick to speak evil about somebody. Imagine if Joseph had gone around Nazareth and said, ah, this woman, this Mary, I thought she was holy, but she is pregnant.

I don't know which Roman soldier she went after. And then he discovers later on it was not a Roman soldier, it was the Holy Spirit. Can you imagine what remorse would have come into him if he had spread that story to one person, because he would have gone all around Nazareth, and how could he have stopped it then? Some of the stories we spread don't stop with the one person we tell them.

Follow Joseph's example. How they were led by God. Take her.

And how the wise men were led to bring these gifts, and later on the wise men were told by God, don't, don't go this way, go back another way, in Matthew chapter 2 verse 12. Go another way. Supernatural leading, they obeyed.

And then the angel of the Lord appears in verse 13 to Joseph and said, take the child and go. Again, supernatural leading. And he goes off to Egypt.

And then after some time, he appears to him in Egypt and says, okay, now you can come back. And that also we read in verse 19 and 20 of chapter 2. So you see this supernatural leading of God for the protection of the body of Christ. There, go this way, go that way.

That's a very simple principle. In the body of Christ, to build the body of Christ, we need to listen to the way God is leading us. Be not to your own understanding.

That's what we see. All those supernatural examples, that's how the body of Christ was protected. And if we have ears to listen, we'll be able to hear what God is saying to us.

It's such an exciting life. I'm amazed that more Christians are not interested in living this life. They live such a boring Christian life and there's this exciting new covenant life offered to all of them.

I hope all of you will enter in and not just understand it in your heads. Let's pray. We thank you, Lord, that the mysteries of God are revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.

We thank you. Thank you, Heavenly Father. Help us to walk this new covenant life, to build the body of Christ on earth in these days and to prepare ourselves for your second coming.

As those people were ready for your first coming. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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