

# The Ministry of the Holy Spirit and the Church - Part 4

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of embodying the aroma of Christ through humility, service, and the transformative work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.*

**Duration:** 1:14:26

**Scripture:** Proverbs 29:25, Matthew 10:7-8, John 3:30, Acts 20:29, Romans 12:6, 1 Corinthians 14:3, 1 Corinthians 14:29

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Growth"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking the gifts of the Holy Spirit for the edification of the church, focusing on prophecy, discernment, and sensitivity in conscience. It warns against seeking significance, honor from men, and security in others rather than in Christ. The goal is to glorify Christ, be transformed, and have a deep connection with Him.

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## Transcript

Let's turn to 2nd Corinthians in chapter 2 and verse 14. 2nd Corinthians 2:14 Thanks be to God who always leads us in His triumph in Christ and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved, among those who are perishing, to one an aroma from death to death, to another an aroma from life to life.

To be a witness for Christ on earth. You know these were the last words that Jesus spoke before He went up to heaven. He said, when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be my witnesses.

And like I said before, there is a difference between bearing witness, which is just with words, and being a witness, which is life plus words. And I think that's beautifully expressed in this expression, the aroma of Christ. That means when people get near me and smell me, spiritually I mean, they get the aroma of Christ.

There is something about Jesus that unconsciously comes off. You know how when people use a perfume, they don't have to sort of talk about it or anything. You just pass by them and you get it.

That's aroma. It's a beautiful expression. The aroma of Christ.

I want to encourage all of you to meditate on it. And if you are married, ask your husband or wife first of all whether they are getting that aroma. And then others around us.

It's good to ask ourselves. What's the aroma people are getting when they hear us, when they meet us? Not just with our words. You see, words can, those who are more gifted can speak more anointed words.

But I've seen the aroma of Christ in humble brothers and sisters who have no gift of ministry. There is something about their bearing and the way they conduct themselves. I've seen it in, they are being so alert to see a need somewhere and immediately step in to do the job.

You know there is a lot of controversy in Christian groups about what did Jesus mean when he said you got to wash one another's feet. And there are some churches that actually take a bucket of water and get everybody to take off their socks and again wash their clean feet which are already clean. And that's not what Jesus did.

Jesus was washing dirty feet. They were wearing sandals those days. Nobody wore socks.

And the point is there was a job to be done and Jesus spotted it and quickly jumped to do it. When all the others were sort of sitting around, either they didn't think about it. I mean it was common custom among the Jews to wash people's feet.

And I know living in India if you walk through the villages, your feet are really dusty by the time, the roads are all full of dust. And it's very refreshing to have your feet washed before you sit down for a meal. And that was a custom there.

And that's why there was a basin of water there and a towel. But the point is to see a need and quickly jump in to do it. That's the meaning of you must wash one another's feet.

If you want to understand the meaning of that. To be alert. To see a need somewhere.

In a person. Or when you are visiting a home or in a church. To always be alert.

Now we are very alert to see our own need. Very, very alert. I mean the race of Adam doesn't need any education in that.

But to be alert to see a need there which I can meet. And it may be a dirty job I have to do like washing people's feet. Sure.

To immediately do it. So that's an example of the aroma of Christ. I've seen that in some people who have no gift of the word.

And they've challenged me. They ministered to me without their knowing it. Think of that.

So don't think it's only those who can preach the word who can bless people. You can bless people if you allow the Holy Spirit to so fill you with Christ. You meditate on the life of Jesus.

Every aspect of the life of Jesus. And you see your need. Acknowledge your need.

And allow the Holy Spirit to transform you till you become like Him. Little by little by little. It's not going to happen overnight.

But if you work at it, you'll make a lot of progress before Christ comes back. And that's my goal. And that should be your goal as well.

So keep this phrase. The aroma of Christ as something you want to pursue. Not just something you meditate on at the end of this message.

But something you want to pursue all your life. The aroma of Christ. It's been a very challenging phrase for me for many, many years.

And if you pursue it, we'll get there. If you don't pursue it, we'll be our own stinking self. Which aroma has probably already been given out a lot to many people.

The wonderful message of the Gospel is that can be changed. The aroma of Christ. So when we think of the aroma of Christ.

You know, the Bible tells us to look at Jesus as our example. There are two passages of scripture. One is Hebrews 12.

I've always said to people, whenever you read the Old Testament. Remember Hebrews 11.40. Very important verse. When you read of the great saints in the Old Testament.

Remember Hebrews 11.40. Which says God has provided something better for us. Because Hebrews 11. Is called the great chapter of the heroes of faith.

All Christians know Hebrews 11. As the chapter of the heroes of faith. And imagine hearing about the heroes of faith.

And at the end of the greeting in the last verse. But God's provided something better for us. Something better for us than Joseph or Daniel or David.

Or anybody in the Old Testament. And that better thing is. Described in the next four verses.

That we can run the race. Chapter 12 verse 1 and 2. Looking unto Jesus. The author and finisher of our faith.

Who endured the cross. And that's the way the aroma comes out. It says I crucify the nature of Adam.

Which is called the flesh. I crucify that. The aroma of Christ comes forth.

Whatever there's a death. There'll be a resurrection. The aroma of Christ is manifested in resurrection power.

And if I am willing to go down into death. There'll be a resurrection. And if the aroma of Christ does not come forth in me.

It's because I have not consciously. Put to death. What the Bible calls the flesh.

And where there's no death. There's no resurrection. And the aroma is only in the resurrection.

So there's a root to this aroma. Through death. To resurrection which brings the aroma.

And I have a choice. In that every day I'm tempted. I have the opportunity to put.

My flesh to death. Galatians 5.24 Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh. With its affections and lusts.

That is the role of the spirituality. And the aroma of Christ. And it's almost as though God.

When God is asking me. Will you exchange. The stink of Adam.

For the aroma of Christ. And do you realize. That in the moment of temptation.

If I yield to temptation. I'm saying to God no. I prefer the stink of Adam.

That's actually what a person is saying. When he yields to any temptation. Whether in his thoughts.

Or the way he responds to somebody who's angry. Or he watches something filthy on the internet. Or whatever it is.

Anything or when you keep a bitterness. Or wrong attitude towards somebody. Or when you're going around gossiping.

What you're telling God. I prefer the stink of Adam. To the aroma of Christ.

I know you've asked me to crucify it. But right now I don't feel like doing that. Because I prefer that.

And then we wonder after so many years. Why in the world is the aroma of Christ. Not coming forth from me.

It'll never come. Not in the next 50 years. Because it's a moment by moment choice.

And the decisions you have made. In those moments of choice. In past years.

Have determined what you are today. Every one of us. Is as holy.

As we decided to be. In the past few years. In the decisions we made.

In the moments of temptation. So if you find someone is holier than you. Or that man or that woman.

Has made certain decisions in the past. Concerning crucifying the flesh. Which you didn't make.

You preferred the stink of Adam. He preferred the aroma of Christ. So that's the reason.

And God's always putting that choice before us. Like Adam had a choice. You can go to this street or this street.

And we have that choice before us. Every single day. And that's the meaning of taking up the cross.

That means taking up the cross. Means putting something to death. In Jerusalem.

Two thousand years ago. You know where it was going. He was going to be killed.

So taking up the cross means putting something to death. So the aroma of Christ can come forth. That's why when it says here.

We are to run the race. Looking at Jesus. And there could be a hundred and one things.

Mentioned about Jesus like. He raised the dead. He fed the five thousand.

The Holy Spirit ignores all that. And says one thing. All the things that Jesus did.

That's emphasized here. As the thing that we must remember. When we run this race.

You think people are pursuing that. The Christian world is full of people. Who are trying to find out.

How to do miracles. And how to heal the sick. And how to preach like Jesus.

And how to do all kinds of things. And that's why you find. There's so little of the aroma of Christ.

That you find in. Even so called great saints and great preachers. I found on my fingers.

The number of people I've met. Who manifested the aroma of Christ. That total freedom from the love of money.

And humility and approachability. And all these things. It's so rare to find in great preachers.

Which shows that. They haven't pursued after Christ. So.

That's one passage. The other is 1 Peter chapter 2. And verse 21. It says.

Christ suffered. You've been called for this purpose. What have I been called for? I've been called for this purpose.

In the previous verse. Which it says. To do what is right.

And suffer for it. And that's the last. Sentence in verse 20.

When you do what is right. And you suffer for it. And you patiently endure.

Endure it. And you didn't do anything wrong. You did what was right.

And yet you suffered. And you didn't make a big issue over it. You endured it.

You find favor with God. And then it says. You were actually called for this purpose.

Because Christ who never did anything wrong. Also suffered. And He has left an example.

For you. To follow in His steps. Who committed no sin.

Who when He was reviled. Verse 23. Did not revile in return.

When He suffered. He did not utter any threats. He just kept committing His cause.

To Him who judges righteously. It's a great example to follow. So.

There are these two passages at least. Which tell us that we have to follow in Jesus' footsteps. So therefore.

We must look at the earthly life of Jesus. And study it. And meditate on it.

It's very important. Because. You know.

That is the light. Which gives us direction in the world. John chapter 1. Verse 4. Says.

In Christ was life. And that life. Was the light of men.

So if I don't look at His earthly life. I have no light. I can study the scriptures.

You'll never know the scriptures better than the devil. He knows it better than everyone else. So.

The study of scriptures is good. If it leads you to the life of Christ. If it leads you only to the knowledge of scripture.

And the knowledge of theology. Like multitudes of. Bible study groups and fellowships sit down studying.

It's always. Interests me how. People spend hours studying the Bible.

And still lose their temper. And. Fight and quarrel.

At home. They don't see the disconnect. Between the way they are living.

And they study the scriptures. So that's because. They've not studied the scriptures.

To see the life of Jesus. You study the scriptures. You get knowledge.

In the old testament. That's all they could do. God's word was a lamp to the feet.

And light to the path. But in the new testament. The light is not just God's word.

It was the light of man. So. I don't have much respect for a man who knows the scriptures.

Because then I've got to respect the devil. Who knows the scripture better than anybody else. I respect a man in whom.

The life of Jesus is manifest. Because that's the light. The light is not just knowledge of the word.

That's one of the great deceptions of our day. And you find a whole lot of carnal Christians. I've seen that in every country in the world.

Who sit down regularly to Bible study. This doctrine. That doctrine.

Concordances. And this and that and the other. And they think they are great saints.

Because they study the scriptures. And they are lovers of money. They lose their temper.

They have dirty thoughts in their mind. These things don't seem to bother them. I'm absolutely amazed.

What a work the devil has done. In fooling these Christians. To think they are spiritual.

Just because they come regularly for Bible study. And because they study the portion of the Bible. I've studied this Bible for 53 years.

But I've tried to see the life of Jesus in it. And not just some doctrines and etc. etc.

So. You must. I want to encourage you to study the scriptures.

I believe that you should take a Bible with you for every single meeting. I see so many people in America now. They come without a Bible to a meeting.

I'm amazed at that. We must have a Bible whenever we go to a meeting. And we study the Bible to see the life of Jesus.

When I see the life of Jesus. I see He lived on earth for 33 and a half years. And all those 33 and a half years.

He lived without sin. That's what we read in 1 Peter 2 if you remember. To follow in His steps who committed no sin.

Not to follow in His steps who raised the dead. To follow in His steps who committed no sin. So that's the main thing emphasized there.

The 33 and a half years He manifested the fruit of the Spirit. That's the aroma of Christ. He manifested love for the unlovely.

He manifested such joy that before He went to the cross He said I want to share my joy with you. Peace and long suffering and all the fruit of the Spirit was manifested for 33 and a half years. And we also see He had a ministry.

Where He fulfilled the Father's will with mighty anointed preaching and miracles and everything else that the gifts of the Spirit. So He had the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. So there's no need to argue which of these two should we have.

And Christendom is full of people emphasizing this or that. You know some people are always talking about the gifts of the Spirit and some people say that's not important. The fruit of the Spirit is important.

Actually let's get the answer from Jesus. What did He have? Did He have the fruit of the Spirit or did He have the gifts of the Spirit? The answer is He had both. But He had the fruit of the Spirit for 33 and a half years and He had the gifts of the Spirit for three and a half years.

So you get an idea of the relative importance of one over the other. He had the fruit of the Spirit for ten times as long as He had the gifts of the Spirit. And I found that you know I've talked to as a teacher of God's Word.

I tried to balance my teaching by looking at the example of Jesus. You know emphasizing the things He emphasized in His life and in His preaching and studying the New Testament to see what are the things emphasized in the New Testament. I remember once as an aside let me say this.

Somebody asked me, Brother Zach, why don't you preach a message on healing the sick? I say, if you can show me one message that Jesus preached on healing the sick, I'll preach it. Or if you can show me one message that any of the apostles preached on healing the sick, I'll preach it. Show it to me.

In some episode, somewhere. In fact there's only one verse on healing the sick in the New Testament episode and that's in James chapter 5. Everything else is about holiness. I want to have the same proportion in my life as God's Word.

Because it's the Holy Spirit who inspired that Word and the Holy Spirit when He fills me will give me the same proportion of truth. And I also tell them this. I see Jesus healed thousands of people but He never preached a sermon on healing.

Today we have thousands of sermons on healing and hardly anybody healed. I say, that's the difference. And you see how completely topsy-turvy and upside-down Christendom is.

I believe in healing if you can heal the sick. I remember one brother came to our church and was very zealous and said, Brother Zach, we need to have more healing. I said, go right ahead.

Heal the sick. Nobody's going to stop you from healing the sick here. But don't keep complaining why somebody else is not doing it.

If you have a burden, go ahead and heal the sick. I mean, if a sick person is healed by you, you think he'll object? Certainly not. But this complaining, why don't you have the gift of healing, why don't you have the gift of healing, it's a lot of rubbish.

If you have a burden, I remember reading in scripture how Nehemiah had a burden. You know what for? He said, O Lord, the walls of Jerusalem are broken down and I'm really concerned about it. Really, Nehemiah, go and build them.

So that's exactly what I told this brother. You have a burden that there's no healing, go right ahead and heal the sick. And if God's called you, He'll do it.

But if you've got a question, why isn't somebody else doing it? I say, brother, why aren't you doing it? That's the question. So I see in the life of Jesus, if I get the life of Jesus in its correct proportion and balance in my life, I'll be truly Christ-like and I'll have the aroma of Christ in my life. Otherwise, I can be so influenced, you know, like in the media.

I'm convinced that journalists in the secular media are all trying to influence our opinion about various things that happen, particularly in the political world. And the same way I find with a lot of Christian preachers. The way they preach is to try and influence our thinking along the line that they believe is right.

So I don't allow these fellows to brainwash me. I won't allow any preacher to brainwash me because I immediately compare what he says with Jesus Christ. And because I know, I've read the scriptures, I know what Jesus taught.

And I look at the life of Jesus and I say, is this guy preaching in the same proportion, emphasizing the same things that Christ emphasized? Or is it a bit imbalanced? Imbalance makes us ugly. Even if it's a good thing. For example, an eye is a very good thing.

But if I had one eye this half an inch size, another eye about six inches size, well, I'd still have two eyes, but it'd be pretty ugly. That's what I mean by an imbalanced emphasis on something which is found in scripture. I've spoken to, I believe in speaking in tongues, for example, I think it's a very good gift.

But I've spoken to Pentecostal people and I say, the speaking in tongues is like my little finger. You guys make it 12 foot long and you're a nuisance wherever you go with it. You're hurting everybody with it.

I mean, if you imagine, if you had a 12 foot long little finger, everywhere you go, you're going to be a nuisance. It's going to stick out like anything. And then you have the brethren and Baptist people say, this

is a bit of a nuisance, let's cut it off altogether.

We don't want this. I say, no, I don't cut it off altogether. Just keep it the right size, two and a half inches if God made it, then it'd be perfectly okay.

This is what I mean by the proportion of truth. So, I believe that we honestly need to seek the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I believe we honestly need to seek the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

And, you know, Jesus used illustrations often and I like to use illustrations. If I want to offer somebody water, a thirsty man water, I need two things. I need water and I need a glass.

I can't offer him water on my hands. The glass is the gift. The water is the life or the fruit of the Spirit.

So, it's no use having a golden glass or a huge glass which symbolizes a fantastic gift of the Holy Spirit. You look inside, there's nothing in it. I mean, people are impressed by the glass, but the guy doesn't get me water for his thirst.

At the same time, you can have life. Maybe you're a wonderful Christian and you got water, but this thirsty guy, you don't have a glass to give it to him because you never sought for the gifts of the Holy Spirit to serve. So, if I can see the balance there, the glass is important, but that's not as important as the water inside the glass.

And so, I want the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Definitely, when somebody comes to my house for a glass of water, I immediately reach out for a glass and then fill it with water and give it to him. It must be like that.

That's how I need to seek for the gifts of the Holy Spirit in order to serve other people. And I see that Jesus prayed for it as we saw the other day. He prayed for the anointing of the Holy Spirit when he was baptized and he received it.

There's a reason why Jesus' prayers were answered. And I'll just show you that in a moment in Hebrews, in chapter 5. It's always been a challenge to me. It says his prayers were heard because... You know what it says? Hebrews 5, verse 7. Hebrews 5, verse 7. In the days of his flesh, he offered up prayers and supplications, loud crying and tears to the one who was able to save him from death.

And he was heard because of his piety or godly fear. There was a reverence for his father. I find a tremendous lack of reverence for God among Christians today.

Tremendous lack of reverence. It means they don't live in God's presence. If you lived in God's presence, you would have a reverence for him, a sense of awe.

We say he's an awesome God, but we don't have a sense of awe in his presence. We just treat him like an old buddy whom we can put our arms around and say hi. And it's this lack of reverence in our life that ensures that our prayers are not answered.

Even Jesus, his prayers were answered because of his reverence. There was a reverence in his life. Because of that, his prayers were answered.

He did not dare to think that he could serve the Father in his own ability. He sought for the gifts of the Holy Spirit to serve. Just like I said, I would reach out for a glass when somebody's thirsty.

But that's because Jesus had a compassion for people around him. If I don't have a compassion and a desire to help people around me, I mean, this guy comes for a glass of water and says, well, sorry, I don't have a glass. Go look for it somewhere else.

That shows that I don't care for him. And I never even seek to get a glass in my house because I'm not bothered about other people. See the story that Jesus said in relation to seeking God for the Holy Spirit.

Let me show that to you in Luke chapter 11. In Luke 11 where Jesus spoke about seeking for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In Luke chapter 11 verse 13.

If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to all those who ask him? That's the subject, the theme, asking God for the Holy Spirit. And he's telling us here how to ask for the Holy Spirit. Hebrews 11 verse 5. Now I've got both, a glass and water.

Suppose one of you shall have a friend. And another friend comes to him at midnight. This is the story of a man with two friends.

One friend comes to him at midnight, Luke 11 verse 5. In the middle of the night he comes to his house. And he asks him, have you eaten? He said, no, I haven't eaten. And he doesn't say, well, sorry, I've already eaten, let's go to bed.

He doesn't say that. He's concerned. This is where it all begins.

Remember, the ultimate aim of this parable is to teach you how to pray for the Holy Spirit. Don't forget that as we read this, as we study this parable. Because it concludes with how much more will your Father give you the Holy Spirit.

So if you're interested in receiving the power of the Holy Spirit, you better pay attention to this parable. It starts with a concern for a person who is in need. And not ignoring his need.

I mean, your stomach is full, you're okay. But this guy is not okay. He's hungry.

And of course you could send him to bed and say, well, we'll see about it tomorrow. Or you could be concerned and say, hey, I've got to give him some food and some fresh food. Not some stale old stinking stuff that will make him sick.

I want something fresh to give him. And what does he do? He doesn't have it. He doesn't have anything in his house.

That's the second thing you need to realize. First of all, a concern for people around us who are in need. And I'm not talking about physical need, I'm talking about spiritual need.

People are defeated. People are discouraged. People are unconverted.

People who don't know the Lord. Or people who are demon possessed. Whatever their problem is, the Lord can solve every problem.

And I have a burden for them. I have a concern for them. And I don't just go and pray for them and say, okay, see you later.

No, I go to this other friend of mine, who's my neighbor. And it says, I knock at his door and say, hey, can you give me some free loaves of bread? Because somebody has come, in verse 5 and 6. Another friend of mine has come and I've got nothing to say before him. I, verse 6, I have nothing to say before him.

It's a very important recognition of our lack. Before we can seek for the power of the Holy Spirit. I have nothing.

Almost every time I get up to speak, I seek to have that attitude. I have nothing to set before them except my cleverness and my knowledge of the Bible. Which will just leave them thirsty and hungry still.

See, knowledge of the Bible is like showing people pictures of food. If you show a hungry man pictures of food, he's going to end up more hungry than before. Knowledge of Scripture is not food.

It's the life of the Spirit as you communicate it. And that's why I say, in all these, I've been to so many Bible study groups where people get up and share their clever thoughts. Clever thoughts, and the more clever they are, the cleverer their thoughts are.

It's all pictures of food, people holding them before others, and everybody goes home just as hungry as ever. That's not the way a New Testament church should be. It should be a place where people share under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Where people go and say, hey, I met with the Lord there. He met a need of mine. He didn't just awe me with this beautifully painted picture of food.

So, I have need. I have nothing to set before Him. And that guy from inside says, don't disturb me.

My children are in bed. Get away. I don't think any of us would continue knocking at a neighbor's house if he heard that answer.

But this man is shameless. It's shameless persistence. And of course, Jesus is not telling us to go to a neighbor like that.

He's telling us to go to God like that. He says, I tell you, verse 8, even though he won't get up and give him because he's his friend. Because of his persistence.

That's the point. Because of his persistence, he will give him as much as he needs. I like that expression.

There are two expressions here that we've got to keep in mind. One, verse 6, I have nothing to set before Him. And second, because of his persistence, he will get as much as he needs.

This is in relation to the Holy Spirit. I like that. A concern for others.

And then the Lord says in verse 9, I say to you, ask like this and you will be given it. Why haven't you got it so far? You've never asked like this. You didn't have a concern for others.

You've never recognized that you have nothing to set before them. You are so clever. You thought you had plenty to set before them.

And the Lord saw that. Of course, you prayed a nominal prayer. Lord, please give me the word.

But the Lord saw the hollowness of all that. And third, you didn't have that persistence to wait on God until you got what he had to give you. But, if you ask like this, you'll get.

If you seek like this, you'll find. And if you knock like this, it will be open to you. It's a promise.

Because every single one, no exception here. Everyone who asks like this will receive. Everyone who seeks like this will find.

And everyone who knocks like this, it will be open. Just like a father would give only what is good. And if earthly fathers know how to give good gifts to their children, verse 13, how much more should a heavenly father give the Holy Spirit? This, my brothers and sisters, is the way to seek God for the power of His Holy Spirit to serve others.

Every gift of the Spirit is to serve others. If I keep that in mind, it all begins with a concern for others. Lord, I want to be a witness to others.

Not so that they can see what a wonderful Christ-like person I am. That would be seeking my own honor. And that would be a sin in itself.

But so that I can draw them to Christ. You know, one of my favorite verses is John chapter 1 in terms of ministry. And I've got many favorite verses.

But that, in relation to the ministry, it is this. I long that this will be true of my ministry. John chapter 1 and verse 37.

They heard Him speak and they followed Jesus. Wouldn't you like that to be true of your life? They heard Him speak and they didn't follow Him. They heard Him speak and they followed Jesus.

Boy, what a ministry you can have if that's your goal. Lord, give me a ministry like that. That people will look at my life and long for Christ.

Be thirsty and hungry for a life which they don't have. And where they get sick and tired of empty Bible knowledge. And empty meetings where they discuss the Bible.

Instead of being gathered around the person of Jesus. So many churches, they don't gather around Jesus Christ. They gather around the Bible.

And they worship the Bible. Do you know that God gave us this world so that we can see Jesus here? Not for us to worship this and study this like some chemistry book or science book. I remember I used to be in my younger days in a church.

Where the leader, he was a very godly man. He taught all of us to never to get out of bed without kneeling down. And we had to read our Bible on our knees before getting out of bed.

First thing in the morning, kneel down. Read your Bible on your knees and pray. Get up.

And last thing before you go to bed, kneel down. Read your Bible on your knees before God. Pray and go to bed.

Very good instruction. I mean you don't have to do it. But the thing what I was coming to was I'm not saying that you should follow that.

But I used to be with these other workers in this church. And we'd see all of us, you know, we were in a dormitory. We'd all be kneeling down on our, we'd sleep on the floor.

On our mattresses and kneel down and reading the Bible. And then during the day, I would see them losing their temper and behaving in many un-Christlike ways. And I was very young.

And these guys were all much older than me. And I said, Lord, this puzzles me. I mean I have sometimes spent five minutes with a man of God.

And that's gripped me and changed the direction of my life. Five minutes. How is it these people spend a half an hour with Almighty God and it doesn't seem to change their life? That puzzled me.

Five minutes with a man of God has challenged me and half an hour with Almighty God doesn't challenge someone? And then the Lord showed me that these folks weren't spending time with Him. They were just spending time with a book. It could be a chemistry book or a science book or the Bible.

It's all the same. You get information on what is in that book. It doesn't mean that you're spending time with God.

And that opened my eyes. That you can study the Bible for hours and never meet with Jesus. Dear brothers and sisters, I mean, as I said, I've studied the Scriptures.

So I would never discourage the study of it. I study it even today. I never go to a meeting without a Bible.

Because I'm always looking for something God wants to say to me. I respect His Word. That's why I take a Bible to a meeting.

Because I say, Lord, I honestly say, I'm not trying to be humble. I say to God, Lord, I haven't plumbed the depths of your book yet. It's the only book you ever gave for man to know you.

And I want to know more about it. A lot of us say we're eager to be Christians. Well, if you don't study the Scriptures, I don't believe you.

I mean, it's just biased words you're saying. So I'm all for studying the Scriptures. But beyond it, to see Jesus.

And to have His aroma manifest through the Holy Spirit in my life. This should be our passion. And let me turn now to 1 Corinthians chapter 12.

Where He speaks about some of these gifts of the Holy Spirit. It says in 1 Corinthians 12. That, verse 4. There are many varieties of gifts.

But it's the same Holy Spirit. Now you know that the one passage in the one portion of Scripture. That speaks of the church as a body of Christ.

And uses the example of different parts of the body. It's 1 Corinthians 12. It says, for example, in verse 13.

That we are baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body. And then He uses the illustration. He says, the body is not one member but many.

And He says, if the foot should say, I'm not a hand. Does it mean it's not a part of the body? Or the ear should say, I'm not an eye. Verse 16.

Is it not a part of the body? And verse 17, if the whole body were an eye. If everybody were a preacher. That would be terrible.

Thank God everybody has got a different gift. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? And if everything were hearing, where would the smell be? But God has placed the members, each one of them. In the body just as He desired.

He's the one who determines which part of the body you should be. What gift you should have. He may never allow you to be a preacher in your whole life.

And yet fill you with the Holy Spirit. And make you fulfill a fantastic function. As important as any preacher.

I often use the example of the heart and the tongue. If I am like a tongue. Speaking, speaking, speaking in that ministry in the body of Christ.

I see there must be a heart that pumps the blood. To keep this tongue speaking. If my heart stops right now, my tongue will drop dead.

And that speaks of a whole lot of people in secret. You know I see the heart. In secret who pray for those who are ministering the word.

And it looks as if they are not doing anything. Because they are not busy. It looks as if the tongue is doing all the speaking it is.

But do you really believe that your tongue is more important than your heart? There are many invisible ministries like this in the body of Christ. And it's our lust for honor. That makes us seek for the visible ministries more.

And where we think that the visible ministries alone are important. So that's what we got to bear in mind here. God has placed the members each one of them as he desired.

And I believe that from birth. If God knew that one day you are going to give your life to Christ. I mean he knew that before you were born.

And so when you were conceived in your mother's womb. You read about these old testament prophets like Jeremiah. God says I chose you before you were in your mother's womb to be a prophet.

And if he chose you to have a particular ministry. Then from your mother's womb he began to equip you with natural gifts and abilities. And later on with spiritual gifts to fulfill that ministry.

I believe that with all my heart. God determines the part you should play in the body. And then he goes on to say that I cannot say to the hand I don't need you.

This is the superiority complex that some people have. Well I don't need you. I'm okay.

And you incertainly pick a little colors whether you are here or not. It doesn't make a difference to the church. But I'm important.

See such a person is like a huge eye. See the whole body is an eye. Where is the hearing going to be? And here is the most humbling thought of all.

Verse 21 the last part. The head. Who is the head? Christ.

Does not say to the feet. The lowest member in Christ's body. I don't need you.

That's absolutely humbling. Lord Jesus. You turn around to the weakest lowest member in the body.

And say I need you. How shameful. And I don't recognize my need of these weaker members.

And it says here that God has given verse 24 last part. More abundant honor to the member which lack. Now here is a picture of a body functioning.

And in relation to the body functioning. He talks about gifts. Now we can go back to verse 5. There are varieties of ministries.

Varieties of effects. All these means that the same gift can have different effects in different situations. But everything, every gift is given for the good of everybody.

It's not for the promotion of one individual. Verse 7 is very clear. To each one is given some manifestation of the Holy Spirit for the good of everybody.

Unfortunately that's not being followed. A lot of people use the gifts of the Spirit to promote themselves. And then he says to one is given the word of wisdom.

Now I don't want to go into details about these gifts. But I think the word of wisdom means. You know the God gives us an answer to someone who comes to us with a complicated situation.

And in one word I give him a suggestion and that solves the problem. I find it sometimes in instances like when the Pharisees wanted to stone the woman caught in Adolphi. Jesus said well fine.

He was without sin. Throw the first stone. That is the word of wisdom.

It solved the problem. He didn't need a half an hour sermon on legalism or any such thing. Another time they tried to test him saying do we have to pay tax to Caesar.

He said show me a coin. Fine. Give to Caesar what belongs to him and give to God what belongs to God.

Solved the problem. No need of a big lecture on taxation or money or any such thing. That's what I mean by word of wisdom.

And I've sought for it so often in different situations and I find God has given it to me. You know sometimes to shut a person's mouth. I remember I was in an Amish community once.

They made the mistake of inviting me to speak there. And I said the word. Most of them are not very happy with what I said.

And I was sitting down with lunch. Lunch with all of them. And every single person had a beard.

Except me. And I was sitting there and one of them wanted to humiliate me. Maybe he was upset with what I said.

He said Brother Zach. Did God make a mistake when he gave you hair on your face? Or did you make a mistake in cutting it off? I said Lord. Word of wisdom.

I need something now. And I said to him. The Lord gave me a word.

Brother. Did God make a mistake in giving you nails? Or did you make a mistake in cutting them off? And he didn't know what to say. And because I knew he was embarrassed.

And I don't like to embarrass people. I changed the subject. And began to talk about something else.

But I've seen different situations like that. And more important than that. Sometimes a person facing a complicated problem.

And you don't know how. It could be a marriage problem. Between husband and wife.

Or a problem with a difficult child. Or something. What a wonderful thing it is.

To seek God. For a word of wisdom. That's a great need.

Not a great sermon. Just one little suggestion. It's a wonderful gift to have.

And if you go back to the story I said. Have a concern. Acknowledge that you don't have it.

Go and keep knocking till you get it. And you get it. Word of knowledge.

Now I personally believe. Despite what all the books on the gifts of the spirit say. That a word of knowledge.

Is. The ability to expound scripture. To communicate spiritual knowledge.

To others. Of God's word. And glorifying Christ through it.

To another faith. Now there's a fruit of faith. Which everybody must have.

You know by grace you are saved through faith. Saving faith by which we get our sins forgiven. That's not a gift.

That's what everybody should have. Faith comes by hearing. And hearing by the word of Christ.

It says in Romans 10.17. If you read for example that Christ died for your sins. It's up to you to believe it or not. If you read for example that sin will not rule over you.

Because you are under grace. It's up to you to believe it or not. That's saving faith.

Salvation from guilt. Salvation from sin. But here it speaks of a gift of faith.

Where God gives people a supernatural ability. For a ministry. For example I don't know whether you've read of this great man of faith in England.

More than a hundred years ago. Called George Muller. He was a man who looked after two thousand orphans.

And you know trusted God to provide their needs. And I've heard of days when all those two thousand orphans would. Or hundreds of orphans would sit around the table.

And with empty plates because there was no food. And he would say okay let's give thanks. He would give thanks for his empty plates.

And all types of things would happen. Some bread man would break down outside his house. And the man would say well I can't deliver this bread.

So I might as well give it to the orphanage. And somebody's milk man would. All types of things would break down just outside their gate you know.

It's amazing how God provided the needs of this man. He had a gift of faith. He didn't say that everybody must look after.

If you have faith you look after two thousand orphans. It was a gift. And some people have a supernatural gift to do a ministry.

For example to go into the jungles of Africa. And go and start a church there. And that's a particular gift.

To go into those risky areas. To risk one's life. And you don't have to feel guilty when you read such stories.

Oh I wish I could do that. Well if God gave you the gift of faith you'd do it too. But we can start with the faith for the things written in scripture.

But this is speaking about the gift of faith. And then to another the gifts of healing. There are different gifts of healing.

God gives that to some people. And I believe that. You know.

It's one of those gifts which is very rare. I have to admit that. A lot of people who claim to have the gifts of healing don't really have it.

How do we know whether we have a gift or not? I remember in my early days I sought to be an evangelist. And I went around preaching the gospel here and there. I found very few people converted.

Even though I stood in the streets and preached. And witnessed in the trains and buses. And gave out tracts.

I found very very few people converted. And I discovered that I was not an evangelist. And then I started teaching the word.

And I found if ten people were sitting there all ten got something. When I shared the word. And I say hey I discovered my gift now.

It was through trial and error. So when somebody says he's got the gift of healing. I say just go and pray for a hundred people and you'll find out pretty soon.

Whether you've got the gift of healing or not. For a hundred sick people. And if nobody's healed you know that's not your calling.

Go and seek for something else. But don't go around fooling people. That you have a gift which you don't have.

There's a verse in Proverbs which says. He who boasts about a gift that he doesn't have is like clouds without water. They pretend to give rain but there's no rain.

So there is a gift of healing. God gives it to some people. I've sought for it in India.

Because there's so many sick people. And I asked the Lord why he didn't give it to me. I'll give you the answer he gave me.

He may give it to somebody else. But the answer he gave me was. I've called you to make decisions.

And if you have a genuine gift of healing. I know that you will never claim to have a gift if you don't have a genuine one. And if you have a genuine gift of healing.

And people you pray for are all healed. Thousands of people are going to come to your church. Thousands of people are going to disturb you day and night in your home.

You'll never be able to make decisions. Then I understood why. Jesus would heal people and say don't tell anybody.

One would think he should say tell everybody. Tell them all to come here and see. I am the man of God here sent by.

No don't tell anyone. So I understood why God restricts this gift. I'm speaking about myself.

Because I see that he's called us to go and make disciples. Sometime when you get time. Read the commission the Lord gave to his disciples in Matthew 10.

Where he told people. Go heal the sick. Raise the dead.

Cleanse the lepers. All that and don't go anywhere outside Israel. That's in Matthew 10.

After the resurrection. He told his disciples. Now.

That commission is cancelled. Luke 22 it is cancelled. Then he says in Matthew 28.

Now I'm telling you to go into all the world and make disciples. And he never told them to heal the sick. Or to cleanse the lepers.

Or to raise the dead. He said teach them to do every single thing I've commanded you. The commission has changed.

So if you go back to Matthew 10. You're really going back to the old covenant and trying to reach Israel. But there is a gift of healing God gives to some people.

It's very limited. It's affecting your miracles. And to another prophecy.

Now this is a gift which we are all told to seek for. I'll come to it in a moment. And then there's the discerning of spirits.

This is very very important for leaders. To be able to discern. Spirits operating.

Trying to imitate the Holy Spirit. Discernment of spirits. Very very important if you're a leader.

It's so important to seek for this gift. And then tongues. An interpretation of tongues.

Tongues I believe is like a. I call it a private. Love language. Between a person and the Lord.

It's not primarily for public use. Sometimes there's an exercise in public. And if there is there must be an interpretation.

But when you come to chapter 14. See 1 Corinthians 12 is speaking. Just before we get there.

Is speaking of the worldwide church. And that's where it speaks in verse 28 about apostles. Apostles are number one in this church.

Prophets are number two. 1 Corinthians 12 28. Teachers are number three.

Miracles by the way are number four. And healings are number five. These gifts are necessary.

When you are reaching out. To unreached areas. When you read the Acts of the Apostles.

You say hey there's healings over there. But notice one thing which you may have missed. It was always in a place where the gospel was going for the first time.

And that's happening even in India today. Where the gospel is going for the very first time. What I call frontier evangelism.

There you know. In fact I wouldn't dare to go to one of the villages of India. And preach the gospel to people who have never heard about Jesus.

Without the gift of healing. Because can you picture. How it would be if I go to one of these villages.

And these people have never heard about Jesus. They don't know what a Bible is. They've never even heard of Christianity.

And I sit down with these people. And I say listen I want to tell you something. There's a land called Israel.

They've never heard about Israel. They haven't seen a world map. They don't know what Israel is.

And I say there's a land many hundreds of miles away called Israel. Two thousand years ago. A baby was born there who didn't have an earthly father.

Now they're absolutely convinced I'm off my head. When I tell them that story. But a mother had a child without a father.

And he grew up. And he healed the sick. And raised the dead.

And walked on the water. And multiplied bread. Now they're absolutely convinced I'm off my head.

And they killed him. He died for your sins. He's wondering how two thousand years ago.

Somebody knew about the sins he's committing today. I'm talking about a raw heathen. And then three days later he came up from the dead.

And he went up to heaven after forty days. They're absolutely convinced I'm fit for the lunatic asylum. And then I say.

Now I prove to you he's alive. Bring your demon possessed people. Bring your sick people.

And I'll show you what the name of Jesus can do. And then. When they see healing and casting out demons.

That's how they believe. That's how they did it in the old Acts of the Apostles. And that's what's happening today as well.

In frontier evangelism. But that comes after Apostles, Prophets, Teachers. And.

Because the Apostles are the ones who finally. The whole purpose is not to do some miracles. The whole purpose is to plant a church.

And that's what the Apostles did. And now we come to Chapter 14. Where.

Which speaks about the meetings of a local church. That's described in Chapter 14. See Chapter 12 those gifts we saw was for the whole worldwide church.

Now we come to Chapter 14. Where in other words. Every church does not need to have Apostles.

And healers and miracles. And the worldwide church has them. But the local church meeting is described in Chapter 14.

And if you look at this chapter. There's not a single mention of healing or miracles. It's talking about.

Let everything be done for edification. That's the word that's spoken here. Whatever you do.

Let everything be done for edification. Where is that? It comes somewhere here. I can't find it immediately.

Whatever you do. Let everything be done unto edification. So the whole purpose of the meeting of the local church.

Is to build one another up. So that we can be edified. And when it says when you come together.

Verse 26. One person has something to share. Another person got something to share.

And let those who are gifted as prophets. Those who have the word of God. Verse 29.

Speak first and let the others pass judgment. Judgment means. Don't just assume that everything that person says.

Is from God. Compare what he says with scripture. Like the Buryan Christians.

That's the type of judgment. And say. Is that according to scripture? I must discern and then decide whether to receive it or not.

And then. Once those gifted with the word have spoken. All can prophesy.

Verse 31. One by one. So that all can learn.

And all can be exhorted. He says in the end. Whatever you do.

Let everything be done properly. Verse 40. And in an orderly manner.

So. This is the way. Local churches meets.

And I want to draw your attention to one particular verse here. Which I have always called. The mark.

Of a new covenant church. And. For years I studied the Bible to see.

What is the mark. Of a new covenant church. It's not.

You know hymn, prayers. Message, hymn. No.

It's not necessarily all those things. But. 1 Corinthians 14, 24 and 25.

If one after the other. Different ones who really sought for the anointing of the spirit. And prophesied.

And I want to say prophecy is described by the way. In verse 3. This is prophecy. It's not talking about the future.

It's speaking to people. To build them up. To challenge them.

Or comfort them. That is prophecy. And everything.

That is part of verse 5. Can receive edifying. That means that the church can be built up. In verse 12.

Whatever gifts you seek. This is a wonderful verse. Since you are zealous of spiritual gifts.

Seek to abound. For the edification. Of the church.

What are the gifts you are going to seek for? That which will lead to the building up. Of the church into Christ likeness. And if you are seeking like that.

And God gives you this ability. In Romans 12 it says. Prophecy according to the proportion of your faith.

Which means. The proportion of your life. Some can prophesy for a longer time.

And some for less. Depending on their life. And if all prophesy like that.

With Mark of the New Testament church. People sitting there. They are convicted of sin.

Verse 24. And the secrets of their heart are disclosed. That means.

They discover. As God exposes through His Holy Spirit. Their selfishness and corruption and pride etc.

And they are convicted. And they worship God and say. God is here.

So I see that the Mark of the New Testament church. Is that I go away from a church meeting. Saying hey.

I met with Jesus. The Lord was there. He spoke to my heart.

And He not only challenged me. He comforted me. He encouraged me.

He showed me my sin. But He encouraged me by saying that I could be free from it. That I met with the Lord.

You know. Where two or three are gathered together. There I am in the midst.

So the Mark of the New Testament church is. That in every meeting. We go away feeling.

Hey I met with Jesus. Not. I got a new interpretation of that verse.

From scripture. Well that was a nice illustration. That's not it.

But I met with Jesus. He spoke to my heart. He showed me my need.

And I met with Him. Imagine if all of our meetings were like that. So.

That's what I wanted to share. And I also thought I would share just a little bit. In Acts chapter 20.

Of. You know the Apostle Paul said. Something to the elders of Ephesus.

Just before he left. Now. I'm not saying that's going to happen here.

But. I'm just using that example where he says. Verse 29.

Acts 20 verse 29. I know that after my departure. Savage wolves will come in among you.

And from among your own selves. Men will arise speaking perverse things. To draw away disciples after them.

The Apostle was warning them. About. Some of the dangers that could happen.

And it's good to be alert. To the dangers. So I just want to give my opinion.

About some things that you've got to watch out for. You've got to be careful. That you don't end up building a club.

By the church of Jesus Christ. A club is where. You care for one another.

You know. And you help one another. You have a good time.

With each other. But a church. Is something which glorifies Christ.

And which accomplishes Christ's purposes. Where lives are transformed. Where the word of God changes lives.

Changes families. Changes family relationships. Etc.

And our homes are transformed. And our days become like the days of heaven upon earth. That's a church.

Clubs just give us a nice feeling. And our lives are not changed. We still continue to be defeated by sin. But we long to come together. Just to have a good time together. You've got to be very very careful. And. Another danger is. You know. Many of us. All human beings look for significance. They want to be recognized. From the time we have children. Even children you find. Want to be recognized. That's why when. You go to a church. Because it's not getting the attention of the mother. As much. As it was getting until this little baby came along. So we look for significance. And so if you go to a big church. Where there are thousands of people. You're just a nobody. You walk in there. And maybe they greet you. And you go home. But when you come to a smaller church. You. Though you're an insignificant person. Suddenly get significance. We like people making a fuss over us. I mean children like people making a fuss over them. And believe it or not. You like people making a fuss over you. And making you feel important. And. That is one of the dangers of coming to a small church. Hey here I feel important. In the other church that I went to. I was just a nobody. Or people had no time for me. Here boy. Even the elder brother takes time to talk to me. I'm important. I'm a significant person. Because there. You're not thinking of being connected to Christ. And becoming more like him. You're thinking of your own importance. John the Baptist said. If Christ is to increase in my life. I must decrease. And I must be so free from myself. That I'm taken up with Jesus. So the purpose in our coming together. Must be that. I want to glorify Christ in my life. And. I thank God that I can come together with others. Who are also seeking to glorify Christ. And I find that coming here. Helps me to glorify Christ in my life. And helps me to be a functioning member. Along with others. Of a body. I don't want to be everybody. I don't want to be everything in the body. I want to be my little part. And I thank God for others of like mind. That's another thing. And. I was also. I wrote a couple of things down here. You know. It's kind of security in our brothers. We have security. In a good fellowship. And not in Jesus himself. God is a very jealous God. And he finds that I'm looking for my security.

In. Other people and not in him. There's a verse that says cursed is he.

Who leans upon the arm of flesh. And who trusts in man. Blessed is the man.

Who trusts in the Lord. So that's why I always say. The most useful member in the church.

Would be the one who's got a very good connection with the head. Because when you got a good connection with Christ. You're not looking for things for yourself.

You're not worried whether you're significant or insignificant. Whether you sat in a church with 10,000 people. Or a church with 10 people.

It's the same because your relationship with Christ is fundamental. You're not looking for significance. It's a danger.

I want to warn you about. Be careful it may not apply to everyone. And.

Seeking for honor from men. Another danger that we can face. You know where.

As we share the word. We can try to say. Clever things.

To get honor. Or. Sometimes just keep quiet.

You know some people say. Well. I can't say anything very profound.

And even my prayer is not going to be very profound. So I better keep quiet. Then you're seeking honor too.

You don't realize that by keeping quiet you're seeking honor. Because. You don't want people to see.

How immature you are. Would you ask your little one-year-old child. Two-year-old child to keep quiet at the breakfast table.

Saying you're in. Because everybody says. You'll be all grammatically wrong.

In the English you speak. No. I mean.

A father is not bothered. I love to hear the two-year-old. The three-year-old talk.

You're a family. And. Don't seek honor by keeping quiet.

When you're invited to pray. I'll tell you. There should be a rush to pray.

Not a long silence. Open your mouth. Young people.

Open your mouth and pray. It doesn't matter if people think. You're pretty carnal.

Maybe you are. Let them know it. It doesn't matter.

Maybe it was not the most spiritual prayer. It doesn't matter. You talk to your father.

And I tell you, you'll grow. And if you're asked to share a word. Don't seek your own honor.

But something that God spoke to you. During the week. I often tell people in our church.

Did God say something to you during the week. If you read the Bible in one day of this week. Something God said to you.

Just share that briefly. Don't take too much time. And the other thing is.

Light on ourselves. I believe one purpose of our coming together. Is we see Jesus.

Is we get more light on ourselves. To me that's been one of the wonderful things of fellowship. I sit in meetings sometimes.

And listen to young brothers. Get up and share the word. And I get light on myself.

That's precious to me. Because that's my goal. I want to be more like Jesus.

And it's a wonderful thing that we can come together. And as we hear one another. We get light on ourselves.

We don't necessarily have to point out each other's sin. As we grow we get light on ourselves. And I don't mean light on sins like.

Adultery or theft or stealing. We don't need light on all that. But things which we don't see as Christ like.

As un-Christ like rather. There are things in our life. Which we don't see as un-Christ like.

Because we're a bit blind. I'll give you an example. I remember many years ago.

Visiting a home. Of a good God fearing Christian family. And I spent one hour there.

And a good brother, good sister. And that sister spoke for about 54 minutes. I spoke for about 4 minutes.

And her husband spoke for about 2 minutes. There was no gossiping. There was no evil speaking.

She was just expounding on the verses she got from scripture. And how she was blessed. And this that and the other.

She went on and on and on and on. I mean in a court of law you could prove. There's nothing evil there.

Nothing unscriptural. But I just kept quiet. I didn't say anything to her.

I mean I'd feel ashamed. If I sat in the presence of a person much older than me. And took 54 out of 60 minutes of the time.

But obviously she didn't have that light. I went to the same house. Some years later.

And boy you should have seen the change in that sister. She was so gentle and quiet. Eager to hear.

More than to share all the wonderful verses she got for 90% of the time. Did she commit a sin in that first visit? No I don't believe so. But I believe it was unchrist-like.

An area of unchrist-likeness in dominating a conversation. Which she didn't have light on. So that's why I didn't say a word to her.

I knew that if she walked in the path of self-judgment. One day she would get light on it from the Holy Spirit. And that's a better way.

You know that's just an example of where you can talk about scripture. And not realize that there's a dominant spirit coming forth from you. Which is intimidating others who are maybe more introverts.

And you're the great extrovert. And you think extrovertism is spirituality. It isn't.

I tell you I'm scared of the extroverts in the church. They're the ones who can dominate a conversation. And think it's spirituality and destroy a church.

So wherever I have leadership. I quietly nip these people in the bud. To save the church from being destroyed.

In a gracious way. You know so that. You know say brother.

We'd like to hear some others as well. Some nice words like that. That's you know it's just one example.

And there will be other examples where we get light on ourselves. And all of us need more light on ourselves. Because the only one who says I don't need any light on myself.

Is the one who thinks I've already become like Jesus completely. But I haven't. I need light on myself and I'm on the way.

One more word I want to say. And that is there's a danger of a gradual. Decline of sensitivity in our conscience.

Just because we happen to belong to a good church. Because I'm in a good church. I can say yeah I can take it a bit easy.

No you can't. I have to be very very sensitive in my conscience. In fact the whole purpose of coming together and being built up.

Is to become more sensitive in my conscience than I was last year. So there could be other dangers too. God will give us light as we go along.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. Our heavenly father as we seek to glorify you as a church. Give us wisdom.

Grace. To pursue earnestly. Especially the gift of prophecy.

That we can encourage and build one another up. Even if we begin just with ABCs and in the kindergarten. To begin there and slowly work our way up.

And that in our lives and in our homes we can manifest the aroma of Christ. Find our security in you. And not in one another.

Help us Lord we pray. Build this church. Make it a testimony for you in this area.

We are not in competition with anybody else. But we want to be a light for you. And we pray there will be many other lights in the Bay Area.

We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

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