

The New Covenant Emphasises Godly Families

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of building godly families and living a life that reflects Christ in our homes. It highlights the significance of being filled with the Holy Spirit daily to manifest a heavenly atmosphere in our families, demonstrating love, humility, and unity. The speaker challenges individuals to prioritize their family life over external achievements, focusing on raising godly children and cultivating a Christ-centered home.

Scripture: Malachi 2:15, Matthew 11:12, John 14:12, Philippians 3:13, Psalm 139:23, Mark 9:24, Isaiah 43:18, Malachi 2:16
Topics: "Building Godly Families", "Living a Christ-Centered Life"

Description

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Transcript

I travel to many parts of India and now the world also. But I am happiest when I come to Tamil Nadu. More than any part of the world.

That is the truth. And I don't go to other places and say the same thing there also. No, I speak the truth.

I fear God and I will not tell a lie. And so when I say I am happiest when I come to Tamil Nadu, it is the truth. Because for 30 years, I have travelled to numerous places in Tamil Nadu for conferences.

30 years ago, we didn't even have one church in Tamil Nadu. But God has raised up so many churches. And it has always been a joy to me to go because there is a simple receptivity to God's word among the people in Tamil Nadu.

And the other thing is that in so many other places, I have so many problems with those churches but not in Tamil Nadu. But God has been very good to you. We can't take credit for ourselves saying we are good people.

We can say God is good to us. Every good and perfect gift comes from above. And so anything good that happens in us, it is from above.

But we must not be satisfied with the past. At every stage in our life, there is the danger that we can look back and say, oh I have done quite well so far. At every stage in our life, there is the danger that we can look back and say, oh I have done quite well so far.

That's what the devil wants you to do. He wants you to look back and see how well it has gone in your life so far. He wants you to look back and see, oh what a lot I have accomplished for God so far.

Or some of you elders, oh what a good church I have built. I hope you can recognize the voice of Satan there. Many years ago, God taught me one thing.

Never look back and congratulate yourself for what you have done for me. Never look back and congratulate yourself for what you have done for me. You must forget about everything you have accomplished in your ministry till today.

If you want to remember something, remember your past failures. That will help you to repent and be merciful to others. But don't look back at your successes and accomplishments.

Do you feel that is a word for some of you sitting here? Do you feel that is a word for some of you sitting here? Many of us have to say that many things have gone well in our life. It's gone well with our families. But I hope you fall down before God and say, Lord it is all your mercy.

I hope you don't compare yourself with others and say, oh it's gone well with me but not with him. I hope you don't compare yourself with others and say, oh it's gone well with me but not with him. So let me show you the example of a very godly man.

The Apostle Paul. He was more wholehearted than all of us. Philippians chapter 3. None of us have given up as much for Christ as he did.

He says in verse 7, everything that was gained to me, I gave up and counted as loss. Philippians chapter 3. And he says, all those things I don't feel I have made a sacrifice. You know sometimes we look back at our life and say, oh I have made so many sacrifices for the Lord.

Paul made more sacrifices than you. He was beaten, imprisoned, suffered so many things. He gave up getting married for the sake of the Lord.

That's a very big sacrifice. How many people have you met who have given up marriage for the sake of the Lord? And been beaten and imprisoned for the sake of Christ. But he doesn't think of all those things.

He says in verse 9, all these things are loss compared to knowing Jesus. The most important thing in his life was to know Jesus Christ as a personal friend and Lord. I fear the danger with many of us is that we know people in the church.

We must know Jesus better than anybody in the church. I want to know Jesus better than I know my wife and my children. That's how Paul knew Jesus Christ.

This was not a Christian faith, it was a relationship with Jesus Christ. And in order to know Jesus, he says in verse 8, I have suffered the loss of everything. He lost everything in his life.

And he says, it's all rubbish so that I can gain Christ. If you have suffered some earthly loss because of your following Jesus, can you say it's rubbish what I have lost? Some of you have suffered coming out of non-Christian homes. Can you say, oh, it's all rubbish, I've got something in Jesus Christ.

Christ is the real gold, all that was rubbish. I want to say to you, don't meditate on what you have sacrificed for Christ. The more you think about that, the less you will value Jesus Christ.

Determine in your life that when the devil reminds you of what all you have sacrificed for Christ, you are not going to think about it. I'm sure many times in your mind, you think about the things you have lost because you became a disciple. Maybe you lost some things because you left the denominations and came to our church.

Don't let the devil remind you of that. If the devil reminds you, and he'll do it, say it is rubbish what I have found in Jesus. It's such a treasure, all that is rubbish.

It's not what you found in CFC. No, in Jesus Christ. If you know CFC better than you know Jesus Christ, something is wrong with you.

CFC was only like a postman who brought a message to you from Christ. Yeah, we must be connected to Jesus. This is my great burden that all of us will have a personal deep connection with Jesus Christ.

When I wake up in the morning, before I get out of bed, I always talk to Jesus. I don't call it prayer, I talk to my bridegroom. That's very precious.

I hope you do that, all of you. It's the best way to begin the day. You don't even have to get out of bed, kneel down, nothing.

As soon as you wake up, build your devotion to Jesus. Don't let your connection with the church or people become more than your connection to Jesus Christ. Jesus said eternal life is to know Jesus.

It's very important. It's good to esteem elder brothers and godly brothers. But not more than Jesus Christ.

We value an elder brother who can lead us to Jesus Christ. A lot of people love Paul so much, Paul once said they would even pull out their eyes and give it to Paul. Imagine how much you must love a person to even pull out your eyes and give it to him.

That is how much the Galatian Christians loved Paul, we read in Galatians 4. But Paul said, I am concerned that you will be connected to Christ. And that is my burden also. We must not get so connected to the church that we lose our connection with Jesus.

All our backsliding comes because we are more connected to the church than to Christ. We value the church, we value godly brothers but Christ must be supreme. In our traditional Indian culture, we are taught to respect our parents.

That's right. We value our brothers and sisters in our families. We all love our children.

That's good. 2000 years ago when Jesus lived in Israel, that culture was very similar to the village culture of India. That's really true.

If you want to know the culture in which Jesus lived, go to some village in India, it's the same culture. The girls are dressed modestly. The type of culture you see in the cities, that is not the culture in which Jesus lived.

But to such a culture Jesus said this, If you want to follow me, you must love me more than you love your father. You must love me more than you love your mother. You must love me more than you love your wife.

You must love me more than you love your children. You must love me more than you love all your family members. You must love me more than you love all the brothers and sisters in the church.

That is the number one condition to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. In the whole Old Testament, no prophet asked people to love God like that. There was a commandment in the Old Testament to love God with all your heart.

It meant this, but nobody explained it like this. Only Jesus explained for the first time. To love God with all your heart means this.

To love God with all your heart means this. That in your heart there is no place for your father. No place for your mother.

No place for your wife. No place for your children. No place for your job.

Or your house. Or anything on earth. There is a place only for Jesus Christ.

When you give a place like that to Christ in your life, I will tell you something. You will love your wife perfectly even if she is imperfect. Why do so many of you fight with your wives? Because you don't love Jesus with all your heart.

That is the reason. Why do so many of you fight with your husbands? Because you don't love Jesus with all your heart. In the world they will say it is because you don't love each other.

I say no. It is because you don't love Jesus with all your heart. If you love Jesus with all your heart, you will never fight with your husband or wife.

If you love Jesus with all your heart, you will never fight with your husband or wife. Everything will go perfectly in your life if you say, Lord Jesus, I want to love you more than anyone on earth. Jesus loved his father more than he loved his own disciples.

That is why when one of his close disciples Peter said to him, Don't go to the cross. The father sent Jesus to go to the cross. Peter said, Don't go to the cross.

Jesus said, Get away Satan. How could he speak like that? He didn't say that to Judas Iscariot. He said that to Peter.

He didn't say that to Judas Iscariot. He said that to Peter. Because he loved his father more than anything.

I want to tell you this is the real secret of the Christian life. It is one of the things I discovered very early in my Christian life. That I must love Jesus more than any human being.

That no human being must be so precious to me that he has become more precious than Christ. I work with some wonderful elder brothers in our church. But I love Jesus Christ more than I love all of them.

That is why I have no hesitation in correcting them if they are wrong. I don't have a fear that they may leave me and go away. Let them go.

I will love them. But I am not going to keep quiet if they dishonor Christ in their life. Dear brothers and sisters.

This is the way we are to go. This is the way all our CFC churches must go in the days to come. If you are an elder brother, you must lead people in your church to love Jesus more than they love you.

To respect Jesus Christ even if they don't respect you. Then you are a good elder brother. So, in 2 Peter 1. Before I go there, I want to show you Philippians 3. One more verse.

I told you we must not think of how much we have progressed. I told you we must not think of how much we have progressed. See what Paul says in Philippians 3. In the last part.

I forget what lies behind and I reach forward to what lies ahead. I forget what lies behind and I reach forward to what lies ahead. What was Paul trying to forget? He never tried to forget the way he persecuted Christians.

He never forgot that. Five years later, he writes 1 Timothy. I persecuted the church.

And you say, Paul, I thought you forgot everything in the past. I don't forget my past failures. I remember I was the greatest sinner.

I persecuted the church. I endorsed the murder of Christians. I will never forget it.

Then Paul, what do you forget? I forget all my accomplishments. See what all Paul accomplished, more than all of us. He healed the sick.

But he never thought about it. Do you find in any of his letters, he writes about all those healings? He wrote at least 13 letters in the New Testament. He never writes there about healing the sick.

He never writes about how many people he raised from the dead. He never writes about how many churches he planted. He never writes about how many demons he cast out.

Or how many churches he planted. Nothing. All those things, he has forgotten.

But he says, I persecuted the church. I am the chiefest of sinners. So that's what he means here when he says, I forget the things that are behind.

He doesn't think of how Christ-like I have become in 30 years. Sometimes you may think like that. How spiritual I have become.

That's how the devil wants you to think. That's why you don't progress anymore. So listen to this word of the Apostle Paul.

Forgetting the things that are behind. And pressing forward to the things that are in front. Verse 14.

I press toward the goal for the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. In verse 12. He says, Christ laid hold of me.

Christ laid hold of me. On the road to Damascus. And he laid hold of me with a purpose.

And I want to lay hold of that purpose. That's what it says in verse 12. I want to lay hold of the purpose with which Christ laid hold of me.

That was his goal. There was a time in your life when Jesus Christ laid hold of you. You may think you laid hold of Jesus.

Jesus laid hold of you. Don't think you chose Christ. Jesus says, you did not choose me, I chose you.

Jesus says, you did not choose me, I chose you. So don't say you chose Jesus. A humble person will always say, Christ laid hold of me.

There was a time in your life. When you were only interested in sin and the world, Jesus laid hold of you. And turned your life around.

Why did he do that? So that you might lay hold of his purpose. And that purpose was not just to join some CFC church. That was only a small part of it.

God brought you to a CFC church so that you could lay hold of his purpose. So I'm not interested to know whether you joined a CFC church. I want to know whether you laid hold of his purpose.

And if you want to lay hold of that purpose. Let me give you one advice. Don't think of how much you have progressed.

When that thought comes to your mind, reject it. But look ahead to see how much more you have to go to become like Jesus Christ. God, Paul knew that Christ laid hold of me.

That I might become completely like Christ. Do you feel you have become completely like Jesus Christ? Do you think like him? Are your thoughts as pure as his? Is your attitude to money like his? Can you look at women like Jesus looked at women? Are you zealous for God like Jesus was? Are you humble like Jesus? Can you love your enemies like Jesus loved them? What a long way we have to go. Oh, what a long way we have to go.

No matter how good you are, no matter how much you think you have become like Jesus, you will never attain that goal. No matter how good you think you are in the church, you will never attain that goal. That may be true, but you are not to think about that.

God might have done many things through you, but you don't have to think about that. You have to think about that, and that thought itself is a hindrance. That is why he says here, I will call Christ Jesus to become like God, and I will call him to touch me.

What is that? It is to become like Jesus in every part of our being. To behave like Jesus Christ in your home. When you live in a home, it must be like Jesus living in that home.

Dear sisters, Your husband must feel, having my wife in the house is like having Jesus in the house. Your children must say, having mummy in the house is like having Jesus in the house. You brothers, your wives

must say, having my husband in the house is like having Jesus in the house.

You know, if Jesus is in the house, we could go to him with any problem. And he doesn't get into a panic, oh, I don't know what to do. Whatever the problem, Jesus would say, don't worry, God can solve it.

Whatever the problem. And the husband must be like that. Psalm 46, it says, even if the mountains fall into the sea, we will not fear.

We will be silent and trust God. That's how a husband must be. Your children must feel, having daddy in the house is like having Jesus in the house.

We go to him with any problem, he will say, let's trust God, he will answer us. When your children or your wife come to you, You always say, don't worry, we got a father in heaven. You keep saying that, whenever a problem comes.

Gradually, your wife and children will say, wow, it's like having Jesus in the house. It's no use just going to church and singing songs. It's in our home that we have to manifest Christ.

That's why we have a theme here for this conference, building godly families and the church. They couldn't do that in the old testament. You look at all the great men in the old testament.

They never had a family life. They could not demonstrate their wife and children and say, see what God has done in our home. You know, Jesus said in Matthew chapter 11, He said in verse 11, He said, from the time of Adam, Every child born among women, of all the human beings, John the Baptist is the greatest.

Nobody. Jesus gave that certificate, from Cain was the first child born, right up to Jesus, the greatest person was John the Baptist. But he said, The least person in the kingdom of heaven is greater than him.

The kingdom of heaven is the new covenant life, which we keep preaching in the church. We say, when the Holy Spirit came, he brought heaven into our hearts. Till then, people were occupied with an earthly life.

Nobody could live a heavenly life on earth. They lived good earthly life. They were rich.

God blessed and prospered them financially. But it was not a heavenly life. Nobody in the old testament could say, We have a heavenly life in our home.

But he says, now in the kingdom of heaven comes, The least person can have that life. That means the youngest brother can have such a family life here. You look at all the great men in the old testament.

You think of Noah. Or Enoch. He walked with God.

But we don't know anything about his family. We don't know how he lived with his wife. We don't know how his children grew up.

He walked with God alone. Noah walked with God. Even though he succeeded to bring his family into the ark, When they came out of the ark, One of his sons became cursed.

Because he began to criticize his father. His name was Ham. You read that in Genesis 9 and 10.

That's very sad. He could not say, Look at how I brought up my children. Or you take Abraham.

He could not speak about his family life. He produced a child through his maid servant. What do you think of a man who has a child through his maid servant? Can he point to his family as an example? And his two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, Fought with each other just like Cain and Abel.

There is no example there. Or Samuel. His two children grew up and they took bribes And were corrupting themselves.

No family life. David. He had seven wives.

Each child was through a different wife. Do you know that about David? It says in 1 Chronicles 3. 1 Chronicles 3. Verse 1. These are the sons of David. First one was Ammon, Born through one wife.

Second was Daniel, Who was born to Abigail. The third, Absalom, Was born to another woman. And the fourth, Adonijah, Was born to Haggith.

The fifth to another woman. The sixth to another woman. Have you heard of any man like that, Who has got six children through six women? And he was still not satisfied.

Then he married Bathsheba And got some more through her. Sometimes we say, Oh David, man after God's own heart. He wrote so many psalms.

He was a great preacher. But look at his wives. He had no family life.

People like Elijah and Elisha, Mostly they were single. They had no family. So, either you had to be a brahmachari Or have a messed up family life.

That's why John the Baptist Decided best to be a brahmachari, Don't get married. But Jesus said, When the kingdom of heaven comes, It's going to be different. We are going to have godly families.

See the last book of the Old Testament. In Malachi chapter 2. One of the last things that God said to Israel Through the prophet Malachi. There were many things he criticized in Israel.

He said, you people love your money so much, You give me all the worthless offerings. You people love your money so much, You give me all the worthless offerings. In chapter 1, The first thing he said was, Secondly, All your leaders have gone astray.

He says another thing. Verse 13. Another thing that you do is, Before you offer your sacrifice, You cry, you weep, you pray, But God listens to that.

Why doesn't God listen to you? You are not worthy of your wife Who you married at a young age. Why did God create a wife Who can't be with you? Because, verse 15, he wanted godly children. And you have not produced godly children.

You have been unfaithful to your wife. And there are many ways you can be unfaithful to your wife. You don't have to divorce her and send her away.

You can just sit in your office and lust after some woman sitting there. Or sit in front of a computer and see some filthy naked women there. Or sit in a bus or a train and lust after women.

And you are unfaithful to your wife. And the Lord says, that is why I don't listen to your prayer. You are wondering, Oh God, why are you not listening to your prayer? And the Lord says, Malachi 2.14, you are unfaithful to your wife.

And verse 15, you have not brought up your children in a godly way. And he says, now take heed to your spirit, verse 15, that you don't deal treacherously with the wife you married when you were young. And that is why he closed the entire ministry to Israel with Malachi.

He says, I have finished with your nation. And for more than 350 years, he never spoke to Israel. And then finally, he sent John the Baptist.

And that is what he said in chapter 3, verse 1, I am going to send John the Baptist. But they never knew, that will come after another 350 years. And when John the Baptist came, he was a forerunner for Jesus.

And Jesus said, the Old Testament is finished with John the Baptist. Turn to Matthew 11, And verse 13, all the prophets and the law prophesied unto John. Finished.

After that, verse 12, now the kingdom of heaven is being preached. And it says in verse 12, violent men have to take the kingdom by force. What does that mean? True Christians are men of peace on the outside.

Old Testament people were not like that. David was killing all the Philistines. Samson killed the Philistines.

Elijah, he killed 450 false prophets of Baal. All these great prophets were killing people. But Christians, we don't even kill the people who try to kill us.

Stephen said when he was being killed, Lord please don't punish them for killing me. That shows that the Old Testament period was over. If you wish judgment on those who hate you, you are back in the days of David.

You tell me, hasn't somebody done evil to you? Do you wish some evil for them? Then you are like David and all those Old Testament people. If you want to be like Jesus and Stephen, Then you have to say, Lord please don't punish them for killing me. Nobody has killed you yet.

But still you may be wishing evil for somebody. That is the mark that you are under the Old Covenant. Maybe somebody has done great harm to your children.

And you cannot forgive them. You hate them. Brother, you are under the Old Covenant.

Maybe your mother-in-law did harm to you. And you hate her and wish something evil for her. You are not a follower of Jesus.

Some Old Testament prophet you are following. From John the Baptist onwards, the kingdom of heaven is being preached. In heaven, nobody wants to kill others.

Nobody wants to do good to others. Nobody wants to do evil to others. The spirit of heaven you see on Jesus on Calvary saying, Father forgive them for they don't know what they are doing.

And in the kingdom of heaven, It's not just individual holy godly people like Elijah and John the Baptist. It's families. In the Old Testament, God could point to Job and say, Satan, have you seen Job? Or he could

point to his servant Abraham.

Or my servant Moses. Or my servant Elijah. My servant Elijah.

My servant John the Baptist. My servant John the Baptist. But could he ever point to any family and say, There is my godly family.

Not even one. From the time of Adam to Christ, not even one. Because people could not have victory over sin in their own lives.

Because people could not have victory over sin in their own lives. So they were all fighting with each other at home. But one of the wonderful things that happened when Jesus died, He not only took our sin, But Romans 6 says, He took our old man and put him to death on the cross.

You say, I can't understand that. You don't have to understand that. I don't understand it also.

But I believe it. In the Christian faith, you don't have to understand everything. You only have to believe.

I believe, not only he took my sins, He took my old man also. That means this nature that I got from Adam, That keeps on fighting with people, And my wife and neighbors and all, He put it to death on the cross. This nature I got from Adam, That hates people who harm me, That hates people who harm my family, Jesus put it to death on the cross.

This nature that makes me love only people in my church, But not love people in other churches, Jesus put it to death on the cross. I may not agree with everybody, But I can love everybody. I can't work with everyone, But I can love everyone.

Even Jesus could not work with everyone. Most of the people in Israel, He could not work with. He loved all of them.

That's the spirit of heaven. Jesus said in John chapter 14, Verse 12, He who believes in me, The works I will do, And greater works than these will he do. What is the greater work, Which Jesus himself could not do? He lived the holiest life, Anybody could ever live.

But you know, There was something that Jesus could not, Demonstrate. For example, Jesus could not show, See how I am married, And I have lived with my wife, Or brought up my children. He could not say that.

He was the son of God, He could not get married. He was the son of God, He could not get married. So there was one thing, That Jesus could not demonstrate.

He could teach people how to do it, But he could not show it in his own life. He could show in his own life, How to live a really, Life pleasing to God. But people say, Lord, you are alone, That is easy.

Like somebody once said, Jesus never had a wife like mine, So it is easy for him to live a holy life. So that is what some people say. So Jesus said, In the days to come, When the Holy Spirit has come, I am going to, You are going to do something greater.

See, because as I said, Because Jesus was the son of God, He could not get married. Even Paul could not demonstrate. See, how well I live with my wife, And brought up my children.

See, most of you sitting here are married. What a tremendous honor we have, To be able to demonstrate something to the world, About what God can do. How fortunate we are, To be able to build a good family, And live a good life.

Do you see that, As a tremendous honor and privilege? That I can show something, Which even Jesus could not show. What John the Baptist could not show. What Paul could not show.

You and me, ordinary people, Can show something. What is that? How to live in a humble, Heavenly way, With your wife. With your husband.

Because at home, There are so many things, That can happen to irritate each other. There to show, Heaven has come. And then you know, How difficult it is in this world, To bring up even one child, In a godly way.

Paul could not demonstrate it. John the Baptist could not demonstrate it. David's son, One murdered another.

But you and I, Can manifest. Why did God unite you, With a wife? We read in Malachi, Not that you might have children, But that you might have godly children. Anybody can have children, Even terrorists have children.

Godly children, That is why God united you, With your wife. That is one of the great callings, That we have in the church. And with many such godly families, We can demonstrate a godly church.

That is also what Jesus could not do, In his life. Because this small church, They were all fighting with each other, On the last day, Who is the leader? This is not because of Jesus' fault. It is because the Holy Spirit, Did not come into the hearts, Of those twelve people.

And this is why, The coming of the Holy Spirit, Is the greatest event, After the death of Jesus Christ. Christendom has preached about, The death and resurrection of Christ. Praise the Lord for that.

We need to equally see, How important it is, That the Holy Spirit, Came to this earth. Do you know, That to be forgiven of your sins, And to be filled with the Holy Spirit, Are both equally important? Many of us see the importance, Of having our sins forgiven. We say, And it is correct, You cannot go into God's kingdom, If your sins are not forgiven, Through the death of Jesus Christ.

There is one more thing, We have to say. Without being filled with the Holy Spirit, You cannot live for Christ, On this earth. You can go to heaven, But you won't be able to live, For Christ on the earth.

So if your desire, Is to be a witness for Christ, You have to be filled with the Holy Spirit, Not once, But every day. Husband and wife, Must be filled with the Holy Spirit. Then only, Can we build a godly home.

Only when the influence, Of the Holy Spirit is in our home, Then only your home, Can be heavenly. Then only there can be, Humility, And love. So that your home can be, A demonstration of heaven.

Please see that, In this conference, As a challenge for yourself. And God wants to do that, In all of our homes. In the old testament, As I said, God could point out certain people, To Satan.

See Enoch. See Noah. See Job.

Satan, see Abraham. Don't look at his family life, But see him. See Elijah.

Don't look at him, When he is discouraged over there. But see so many things in his life, Elijah, Elisha. See how Elisha rejects, The money of Naaman.

Or John the Baptist. Satan, look at him. Or Job.

But where could, Jesus, Heaven, From heaven, God point out to Satan, And say, See that family there. See that man's family. Not even, One.

Now, That is what, God wants to show. I don't know whether, You have taken that seriously. Some of you brothers, Are very zealous, In the church meetings.

You are quite proud, That you can get up, And share a word, In the meeting. When, If the, God were to say to Satan, See how that son of mine, Is preaching in the church. Satan can say, But God, Do you know how he lives at home? That is more important.

Not how well, He can preach in the church. How does he live, With his wife at home? How has he brought up, His children at home? That is much more important, Than how well you can preach, And how many people admire you, As the great prophet, Standing in the church. Dear brothers and sisters, God is trying to teach us, In this conference, The importance of a family.

I did not choose that subject, The Coimbatore elders, Only chose that subject. I believe God led them. Let's listen to what God is saying.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. Heavenly Father, Please help us to hear, What you have to say to us, In these days. You said, He who has ears to hear, Let him hear.

We want to hear Lord. Here we are sitting before you, We want to hear your word. Let your Holy Spirit, Move upon us, Throughout these two days.

We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

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