

Those Who Give God Their Best

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of giving God our best through sincere heart attitudes rather than mere obligation.

Duration: 1:09:27

Scripture: Philippians 2:2-3, Philippians 2:5-8, Philippians 2:19-21

Topics: "Humility In Service", "Christian Unity"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of humility, unselfishness, and unity in building a true church. It highlights the example of Jesus Christ, who humbled himself to the lowest place, becoming a servant and dying like a criminal, as the ultimate model of humility. The message encourages believers to overcome selfishness and pride, treating others as more important than themselves, seeking the interests of Christ, and being united in purpose and spirit.

Transcript

I want to show you two streets from the beginning of man's creation in Genesis and let it flow all the way up to Revelation. I want you to see that all of us are in one of these streets. I'll show you where the street began, where both streets began.

And sin entered into the world in Genesis chapter 3. And in the last verse of Genesis 3, toward the end, we see that Adam was driven out, Adam and Eve were driven out of the garden. And life outside the garden of Eden began in Genesis chapter 4. This is the beginning of human life on this earth as we know it today. And the very first thing you read there is Adam and Eve had two children.

Perhaps had many more, but two are mentioned here. I'm sure there were others also, but the two mentioned here are Cain and Abel. And each had a different profession.

Cain was a farmer, that's okay. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, two different professions. And they'd been taught by Adam that you must show your thankfulness to God by once in a while coming and bringing an offering to him from the particular profession you are engaged in, from the prophets of that, come and bring an offering to God to show your gratitude to him.

So they decide to bring an offering. And Cain, we read in verse 3, brought an offering to the Lord from the fruit of the ground. Abel brought the firstlings of his flock.

Now there are many Christians who teach. And it says that the Lord accepted Abel's offering, verse 5, but he did not accept Cain's offering. And there are many Christians who teach, and it's a false teaching, that the Lord accepted Abel's offering because there was blood in his offering.

He killed a lamb or something, and Cain's offering was just grain in which there was no blood. But that's not what the Bible says. Because this was not a sin offering.

There were some offerings in Leviticus which were offerings of thankfulness. Thank offering. So this was a thank offering.

When people gave their tithes under the law, there was no blood in the tithe, but it was acceptable. So, and the tithe was, by the way, let me tell you, in the Old Testament, tithe was, you know what tithe was? It was grain or flocks, it was not money. Whatever you worked in, and you brought 10% of that.

So anyway, so the issue here was not who brought blood. So now the question comes, why did God accept Abel's offering and not accept Cain's offering? If you read carefully, the way you should read the Bible, slowly, carefully, you'll find it right there. Read it again and see if you can make out.

It's there. Cain brought an offering, not to some strange idol, to Jehovah, to the Lord. And Abel brought on his part the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions.

Do you see a difference? The difference is, Cain brought an offering. Abel brought the best of his flock. Here are the two streams in Christendom and in the Jewish community.

There are some who, when they come to the Lord, they give their very best to Him. There are others who, to ease their conscience, they give something. These are the followers of Abel and Cain.

And every one of us sitting here is doing one of these two. That's why I told you all of us are in one of these streams. Those who, when they come to the Lord, give Him the very best, because they know that God gave His very best for us.

And there are others, I'm talking about so-called born-again Christians, they are giving to ease their conscience. Oh, I have to give something to God. And let me give something.

And they ease their conscience. Okay, I gave something. I'm not talking just about money.

I'm talking about time, energy, our life. Many, many things that God has given us that we give to Him out of gratitude. And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering.

So, it was not the offering that made the difference. It was Abel's heart attitude that brought that very best. That's what you got to see.

Because it says in verse 3, it doesn't say the Lord had regard for his offering and therefore for Abel. Then we could say perhaps it was the blood. This is the advantage of reading Scripture carefully.

If it had said the Lord regarded his offering, therefore he accepted Abel, then you say, oh, that's because he brought blood. And the Lord did not regard Cain's offering, therefore he didn't accept Cain. But read carefully what it says.

The Lord had regard for Abel first, and therefore for his offering. And the Lord did not have regard for Cain, and therefore for his offering. So the problem was not with the offering.

So many people, their wrong doctrines come because they don't read the Bible properly. And such people deserve to go astray. Because they disregard God's Word.

They read a legal document with much more accuracy than they read the Bible. They deserve to go astray. If you don't read the Bible carefully, I'll tell you, you deserve to go astray.

If you don't respect God's Word and say, this is the Word of God, I want to take every word seriously. Here's one example. That's how this false teaching comes, that the Lord had regard for his offering, therefore he accepted Abel, even though that's exactly the opposite of what the Bible says.

Just one classic example. You'd be surprised to know how many people believe that the Lord accepted Abel's offering, therefore he accepted Abel. Go and look up any commentary.

You'll see that. So, when you read the Scripture carefully, you'll find that a lot of these so-called Bible scholars are not really teaching the truth. Anyway, here are two streams that began to flow from that.

What is it that the Lord saw in Abel's heart? You know there are offerings that people can bring, which God doesn't accept. You remember that story, not story, the command Jesus gave in Matthew 5? He was speaking about anger. In verse 22 onwards, he says, You should not be angry.

Supposing you do get angry and you call your brother a fool. You're in danger. And then he says in the next verse, You come and bring an offering to God.

Next verse. And your brother is upset with you. Why is he upset with you? Because you called him a fool.

The Lord says, Leave your offering there. Let me show you that. Sometimes I find people are not familiar with Scripture.

Turn with me to Matthew 5. Verse 22. I say to you, everyone who is angry with his brother will be guilty before the court. And whoever says to his brother, Raka, which means something like, You empty head, or something like that.

You fool. You empty head. You're good for nothing.

And then he goes further and calls him a fool as well. He'll be guilty. And then, what does he do next? He ignores the fact that he's hurt his brother.

And he comes to present an offering at the altar. And then he remembers, I called my brother a fool. Leave your offering there.

God will not accept your offering. Go and be reconciled to your brother. Because, why can't he accept your offering? Because he can't accept you.

He could not accept Cain's offering because he could not accept Cain. That's what we see here. It's not the offering.

It's the person. You are wrong. So, however good your offering may be, God won't accept it.

And it says here, Go and be reconciled to your brother. Then come and present your offering. That's why we have a notice near our offering box.

In all of our churches, we keep it. Saying, if you got something unreconciled with your brother, please don't put money in that box. You might as well put it down the toilet and flush it down.

It's just as good. God won't accept it. Now, not many churches will teach that to you.

Because they are covetous and they want your money. We are interested in your salvation, not your money. That's why we put verses like that up there.

If you're in debt to somebody, the Bible says, don't owe anybody anything. I'll tell you why we put that thing up there. Saying, if you're in debt, don't put your money there.

Supposing you owe some money to Mr. X. And you put money in the box to God. Mr. X says, God, how can you take his money? He owes me money. Tell him to pay my debt first before he gives you anything.

And that'd be right. And if the Lord comes and you're in debt to somebody, somebody will say, Lord, you can't take him. Let him pay his money first before you take him to heaven.

So it's a serious thing. That's why we put those conditions up there. Because we are interested in your salvation, not your money.

So here we have an example of where God would not accept a person's offering because he wouldn't accept the offering. He wouldn't accept the person. So what we read there is, God accepted Abel because he saw his heart attitude.

And his heart attitude was seen in one thing. That he brought the very best to God. And Cain's heart attitude was seen in he brought the minimum required to God.

Now the same thing you find in the last book of the Old Testament. You turn to Malachi. What you see in Genesis, you see in Malachi also.

It's very interesting to compare scripture with scripture. You see in Malachi chapter 1. Now this is almost the end of the Jewish age. And the Lord says in Malachi 1 verse 6. A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master.

If I am a father, where is my honor? Don't just say father, father. Do you honor me? If I am a master, don't say master, master. Where is my respect? You priests who despise my name.

You say, how have we despised your name? He says, I'll tell you. Verse 8. You present the blind for sacrifice. And you present the lame and the sick.

You know, they had to bring certain offerings like sheep and oxen for sacrifice. But so this guy had to bring a sheep. He'd look around the sheep and say, this one is lame.

Been a bit of a nuisance for me in any case. Let me offer it as sacrifice. So he would take that, you know, just like Cain, an offering, not the best, an offering.

And he'd offer it. And he'd think it is okay. God said bring a sheep.

But God didn't say just bring a sheep. He said it must be a sheep without any defect. They ignored that part.

Another guy got an ox which is blind and is a bit of a problem for him. Let's offer this. So they offered to God an offering.

But it was not the very best they had. They gave that which was cheap and cost them nothing. The principle is when they gave a lame, a sheep or a blind ox, it cost them nothing.

God did not accept it. He says, I wish you priests will shut the gates. Don't allow these people to come in there with these sick sheep and blind oxen.

Shut the gates and say no, you can't bring your offering to the temple. I wish there were some priests like that. I read that, Lord.

And those warnings inside the offering box are like shutting the gates. Sorry, you can't give your money. You haven't settled things with your brother.

You're not born again. Sorry, you can't give money. You owe that fellow some money.

Go and pay back his debt. This is the principle there. Oh, that there were some servants of mine, God says, who will shut the gates when somebody brings an offering and say you can't bring that offering here.

I'll tell you, you won't find many churches like that. They are eager. Come, bring whatever you have.

It doesn't matter what your hot attitude is. It doesn't matter if you have cheated people. It doesn't matter if you owe anybody anything.

Come, bring your offering, whatever it is. Not the very best. And that's why we have multitudes of Christians today who are offering like Cain.

They're bringing the offering. They don't realize God is not accepting it. And there's no servant of God to tell them the truth that God's not accepting your offering because they are eager for the money.

That's the tragedy in today's Christendom. But, the Lord says, things are going to change. You Jewish people, He's telling them through Malachi, think you're the only ones I accept? A surprise is coming up for you fellas.

It is about 300 years before Christ came. He says a day is coming and that is going to happen in another 300 years after the day of Pentecost. Something new is going to happen.

Verse 11, from the east to the west, from the rising of the sun to the setting, all the way from Japan in the east all the way to the other side to Hawaii on the west. All the way. My name will be great and people are going to bring an offering to me that is pure.

Pure means with sacrifice. They will give the best and my name will be great among all these nations and I'm not dependent on you Jews alone. And that's what happened.

God rejected that nation and whenever the same principle applies throughout the centuries whenever God finds a church that started out well and then after a while it becomes a routine the meetings become routine and dead and dull they're not seeking for the anointing of the Holy Spirit and the people have come

with a hot attitude which is not one of sacrifice but oh, I have to go on Sunday okay, I gotta go it's not with devotion to Jesus Christ God rejects that church and starts another and throughout the 20 centuries of Christianity that has happened again and again and again and that's why you have so many hundreds of denominations today something that started out very well and over a period of time usually 40, 50, 70 years it's dead because a new generation does not have the fervency

and zeal and devotion that first generation had so God has to pull them out now it doesn't have to be like that but very often it is like that Timothy was second generation from Paul but he was just as fervent as Paul so you can be second generation and zealous, sure but it's more rare Paul said, among all the second generation Timothy is the only one so the number is very little of those who are fervent and zealous so God has to set aside it's happened again and again and again here's a church that started out with zealous people let me give you a practical example one of the finest churches in Paul's day was the church in Ephesus and one way we know that is you read Paul's letter to the Ephesians there's hardly anything to correct there you read his letter to the Corinthians there's so

many things to correct it's a pretty pathetic church you read his letter to the Galatians there's so many things he has to correct there you read his letter to the Philippians he talks about people who are preaching to get honor and two sisters who can't get along with each other it's in Philippians but you read the letter to the Ephesians there's nothing to correct it's a wonderful church and one of the reasons was Paul stayed in Ephesus for three years he was the elder there for three years and you get Paul as an elder in a church it'll be a pretty good church as long as he's there and so we read after three years he has to go he can't be there forever he calls all the elders in Ephesus that's in Acts chapter 20 he called all the elders in Ephesus in Acts chapter 20 in verse 17 from

Miletus Paul sent to Ephesus and called all the elders of the church and then he gives a long lecture to them from verse 18 all the way to 35 it's really worth reading this Paul's message to the elders there are a number of things he says first of all let me show you Paul was in this place for three years verse 31 remember verse 31 night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish you with tears he preached publicly and he preached from house to house there were two places he had meetings but for three years he admonished them very often with tears so there we know he preached for three years and if he was doing that night and day early morning meeting, evening meeting for three years that's what about 2,000 sermons can you imagine if you were sitting in a church where

you had 2,000 sermons from the apostle Paul boy I would have loved to be in a church like that fiery, zealous apostle who lived close to God and and yet when he's about to leave them what does he tell them in verse 18 he doesn't say remember all the sermons I preached on this subject or that subject remember what I taught you about grace or about anything he says remember how I lived among you the ultimate testimony of a man of God is not the sermons he preaches it is his way of life very important he preached 2,000 sermons but he doesn't remind these elders about any of those subjects in those sermons he says remember from the first day I set foot in Asia how I lived with you the whole time how I served the Lord with humility, did you see my humility not did you remember my sermon on

humility, did you see my humility with tears and trials and all the persecution I endured, the opposition of others and how, verse 20, I did not hesitate to proclaim everything that would be profitable for you whether you got offended or not, I preached repentance verse 21, and I preached faith just like I said in the last session repentance and faith and now I know, verse 25 that all of you will not see my face anymore, I am leaving tomorrow, I want you to know nobody's blood here in Ephesus is on my hands why? because I

proclaimed the whole purpose of God to you I didn't tell you only about forgiveness of sins I preached victory over sin, I told you about the body of Christ and the bride of Christ I preached the whole thing to you so your blood is not on my hands that means none of you

can stand on the day of judgment before the Lord and say Paul never told us the whole truth I did tell you the whole truth now, be on guard for yourselves be careful because the Lord, the Holy Spirit verse 28, has appointed you as overseers to shepherd the flock of God but I know listen to verse 29 I know something the Lord has shown me that once I leave this place savage wolves will come in from outside to this church and destroy this flock what a message to leave with a church when you are leaving imagine telling the elders of a church listen fellas I was with you for three years I taught you, warned you, shed tears when preaching to you and I labored night and day but I know something is going to happen when I go the wolves that are waiting outside the door will come right in destroy

this flock why couldn't those wolves come in when Paul was there for those three years wolves are the agents of Satan because they knew we have no chance in this church as long as Paul is there he's a very strict elder he's got the power of the Holy Spirit we can have no foothold here but Paul can't be here forever he's going to go we'll wait for that time then we'll wreak havoc in this church what about all the other elders they didn't have the spirit of Paul not even one of them maybe there were five elders and imagine Paul sitting before five elders in Ephesus I've been with you for three years and I want to tell you fellas the truth none of you have the grace or the anointing to keep those wolves outside those fellas would think what an arrogant fellow Paul is as if he thinks he's the

only one who can keep the devil outside but what Paul said was true it's exactly what happened that church got destroyed because they didn't take that warning seriously they could have taken it as a warning God gives a warning doesn't mean it will happen Jonah went into Nineveh and said in 40 days the city will be destroyed but it was not destroyed why? because they repented they said we take it seriously what you say Jonah we repent and if these fellas had taken that seriously said oh Paul you mean it after you go the wolves will come in well we're going to repent we're going to seek God for an anointing we'll make sure the wolves are outside and he said some of you will speak perverse things verse 30 and draw away disciples after yourself you'll form your own groups inside this church

thank you for that warning Paul none of us will seek our own we will not form groups after ourselves we'll be concerned about the church if they had repented and taken a warning seriously from a man of God they could have saved that church but they were too proud who does this guy think he is we also know the Lord you take that attitude and you don't respect the maturity and knowledge of God that a man like Paul has they destroy themselves I found that even today I've seen young people who are very zealous but they don't have maturity and they think they know so much we don't have to listen to any older brother we know exactly what and I see them after some years wasted lives I've seen cases like that myself of people in our churches who would not listen to my warnings they went in their

own way and wasted their life and unfortunately they didn't have the humility to acknowledge their failure and come back they'll wake up one day at the judgment seat of Christ and see what they lost it's sad that's what happened here Paul gives them his example I want you to know I never wanted anybody's money what a testimony how many preachers are there today on television pastors who can say like Paul I was 3 years here or 30 years here and I never wanted 1 cent from any of you not only that I didn't want any of you to come and give me clothes you know a new suit or a shirt or a pan I never wanted any of these things from you I never worked for that but I showed you how we support ourselves and serve others to

follow the example of Jesus who said it is more blessed to give than to

receive and you know they heard all this and they acted very loving and it says they began to weep verse 37 you think these people are really wholehearted they kissed him again and again oh Paul we'll never see you again what's the use of all that if they were not serious about following Jesus what happened you know the story of the church in Ephesus in Revelation chapter 2 same church and probably some of those elders Paul spoke to are alive now this is 30 years later 30 or 35 years after Paul spoke to them so if some of those people were 40 years old then they are 75 years old now and to the church in Ephesus Revelation 2 the Lord says write this I know your deeds your toil, your perseverance so many good things about you but I've got something against you you don't love me like you

loved in those early days when Paul was here you lost that love you just got the routine meetings every Sunday and the conferences and your songs and you got better musicians and all that but I'm not interested in all that you don't love me like you loved me at first what is the proof of love it's not singing nice songs Jesus said if you love me keep my commandments John 14 15 so we could read this like this you stopped keeping my commandments that's what verse 4 means you have left your first love either you're not keeping the commandments now out of love it's out of fear and you're coming like Cain with an offering not the very best like Abel brought and is this a serious offence it is so serious verse 5 that if you don't repent I'll take away the lampstand that means I'll derecognize

you as a church you will no longer be a church in my eyes even though you'll have the board outside your building first church in Ephesus and you got your 500 members there but Jesus is not there but there will be a few overcomers, verse 7 who overcome and when they see, maybe there are 10 people in that 500 crowd who are overcomers and they see that Jesus has left they sense, hey they talk to one another and say hey we feel the Lord has left this church what are we sitting here now when the bridegroom leaves the bridal wedding hall the bride leaves also so these 10 overcomers leave and they start another church out there say we want to build the body of Christ this is what's happening there in the big 500 church remember the church is not the body of Christ it's just a gathering, a

congregation of people going through the routine singing and they're majoring more on music and psychology type of teaching and all that stuff, we're not interested in that we're interested in taking up the cross and discipleship and we're coming out and meeting together and when people what does the pastor in the church say when these 10 people have left fellas I want to tell you about 10 rebels who have left us they don't know the ways of God they've rebelled against God they've gone out, but the Lord was there with them the Lord wasn't here this pastor and elders didn't have a clue that Jesus had left because they didn't repent and he's with them that's how the second church in Ephesus started there were only 10 people there despised, rejected, they're called rebels heretics and what

not but that's where the Lord was okay give it another 50, 70 years that church becomes 500, 600 people and the young people who started it have all died and gone another generation has come up they begin to be like Cain they bring an offering not the best history is repeated again maybe there's nobody like Paul to tell them now after I go, wolves will come in the wolves come in but again there's a group of overcomers who move out with the Lord and that starts the third church in Ephesus of course the second church didn't realize we also started like this and they call this bunch of people heretics and rebels and all that now you have three churches in Ephesus after 200 years now give 2000 years and you know how many there are this is how there's a proliferation or multiplication of

churches around the earth God withdraws his presence and then there are overcomers who move out that's not the only reason sometimes somebody wants to be the leader like you said there, draw away some group after myself, that is also another evil reason with which they start a church that could also be there but sometimes there's a good reason with which some people start a new church because we say this church is not seeking to be built as a body they're just going through a routine of meetings and activity they don't want to be pure like the bride of Christ they're not talking about purity and holiness and being built together like a family it's not there there are so many Christians who are sitting in such churches and they're quite happy like all those 500 people in that first church

in Ephesus, yeah we've always been here we're not going to rock the boat I mean so what Jesus has left, let's continue with our meetings it's very sad I really believe that many so called Christian churches today where they say where two or three are gathered together I'm in the midst, he's not there, the Lord's not there they quote a verse, but the Lord is not there if the Lord is there you'll sense it you go into a room where there's light you'll sense it if the room is dark you'll sense it and you can go to churches and you know whether when you go there whether God speaks to you or not or whether it's just a routine meeting just another dead meeting, maybe the music is very good but if you want good music go to the rock stars they can provide better music than any church, I'll tell

you that if your aim is music and if you want to listen to good sermons listen to the politicians some of your past US presidents were first class preachers I mean, political speeches amazing, they could grip people for one or two hours so if you're only interested in good speeches go and listen to politicians if you want to listen to music go and listen to the rock stars but if you want godliness then you've got to find a godly church if you want to be built together as a family I know when we started 42 years ago the reason we started was because I had moved around Christian circles and churches for 16 years and I was fed up with everything I saw I was fed up with myself also I'm living such a defeated life, I'm not blaming the others but these guys are not helping me to overcome you

know how as a young man every young person when they are in their 20s and all they are struggling with sexual temptation and every man a person who says he's not struggling is a liar every young man in their 20s is struggling with sexual temptation so I go to this church I'm struggling like the others and they're talking about the tabernacle and my problem is not the tabernacle and it's meaning my problem is something else and they're not talking about my problem it's like a doctor who cannot diagnose the problem of the patients and giving some other medicine doesn't cure them so I understand all about the tabernacle but I'm still defeated in my sin this is what is happening in so many churches marriages that they don't teach them how to live happily together how to live as husband and

wife they're discussing all types of things about the end time and what the antichrist is going to be like and how the beast with seven heads there's a beast in this family they don't talk about that all this type of thing this is what's happening in Christendom today the medicine is not being put where the sickness is and I remember I suffered under this for so many years defeated, defeated, defeated I was defeated just like all of you and I said Lord if I ever build a church I'm going to put the medicine where the sickness is I'm going to talk down to earth practical things where they are defeated where I know because I was defeated I've been through that route myself and so I can tell them and how God helped me so that's the type of church you need to go to where you get some practical

help to overcome and where you're built together with others and so even when we started we were only two families and little by little some would come some would go they would experiment is this the place

some people would come and say do you have a marriage license to conduct marriages?

I say no do you have a burial place where we can bury the dead? No. Then we had to find another church they are all interested in marriage and funeral so I say fine go somewhere else we are here trying to build the body of Christ not for all these other things but gradually through all this sifting gradually a body began to be formed. It takes time.

The bones began to come together flesh came sinews and the breath of the Holy Spirit we had wonderful prayer meetings and we began to be a family and I'll tell you something I had four sons they were all very small Sandeep was only six months old when we started and I'm so thankful that my children grew up in this atmosphere of a living church which was like a family which was not a dead ritual every Sunday and it was not just a Sunday church it was a seven day a week church we were a family, not that we had meetings seven days a week but we loved one another and we would love to meet together with others one another during the week and we were a family and our children knew we were part of a family and it didn't matter if they didn't have other children of their own age there there were

older brothers who would humble themselves and come down to their level and become friends with them the 25 year olds could be friends with the 13 year old boy and lead them on so I'm so thankful and that's what I wish for every person we are growing up in a very very evil world there's corruption all around the schools are full of corruption the type of influence children get when they go to schools boy, I'm thankful if you have a church where they can be protected from all that where they can learn some values and that is why it's my great burden wherever I go to build churches that are like a family like a body not just members lying around but people who function together as one body, as a family who have the spirit of the bride of Jesus Christ what is the most important thing in a

bride? she loves her bridegroom fervently it's not her she may not be rich or anything but she loves the bridegroom and I say we want to build a church which is like the bride of Christ and the mark of the people in the bride of Christ will be they love Jesus fervently and because they love Jesus fervently they can love one another they may not be qualified they may not be great preachers they may not be great singers we met six years in my home because we couldn't afford even to rent a building we were very poor I was because I was in the Navy before coming out to serve the Lord I had a scooter and that was the best vehicle anybody had in that church most of the others had bicycles or came by bus some would travel great distances by bus one or two hours catching one or two buses to come

they loved the Lord and we loved one another we were not wealthy we kept an offering box just like here and sometimes there would be two rupees in it two rupees is about three cents it was a total offering some Sundays that's fine we were not interested in offerings we were interested in being built together as a family that's how we started I don't regret it but we loved Jesus and because we loved Jesus we loved one another we didn't look for the rich and the famous we looked for those who loved Jesus it doesn't matter what their education was or what their job was it was wonderful I tell you it was really wonderful and as time has grown on now we have 500 people sitting in our church but not all 500 are part of the family they come because they like to listen to Zak Poonen preach a

sermon you can't become a part of the body of Christ by appreciating Zak Poonen's sermons I'll tell you that you may think you're blessed but if that does not lead you to bring the best offering to God like Abel and say Lord I want to be part of a living church and part of a family all the sermons you hear from me are just a waste of time it will increase your judgment in the day of judgment it will, your responsibility because

the more you hear the more you'll be answerable to God for so I'm thankful that in the midst of all this there were some people who wanted to become part of this family and built together as a body and I praise God for what the Lord did in those days and gradually we never thought that would be anything we thought until Jesus comes we'd meet in our house because we

could never afford anything more than that but then little by little the work began to grow and we could buy a plot of land and build a hall there where we could invite more people to come in and then the Lord began to reach out to other places where there were needy people and you know to tell you honestly we felt like Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration Lord we don't want to reach out this is so good just to be here with a few of us we're having such a wonderful time here let's build a tabernacle and settle down here small church nice family and we all love one another and the Lord said no there are needy people in the valley and when they came down from that mountain there was that demon possessed man who said I brought my son that child and the father said I brought

my child to your disciples they couldn't cast him out we found that we came across demon possessed people exactly like that and there are a number of demon possessed people we had to cast out the demon so that people can be delivered and many other things like that and so we couldn't just sit and just think of ourselves the Lord said you have to go out and there are other needy people around you so that's why we moved out of the house and had a hall and then we began to go to other places and all that we're very thankful we didn't stay Jesus didn't say you'll be in Jerusalem all the time Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria to the outermost parts of the earth and that's how we never knew that one day God would open the doors to the outermost parts of the earth you know when we preach this message of

what we call the full gospel overcoming sin and building the body of Christ and radical attitude towards money and offerings and all that you know it brought upon us the anger of a lot of other Christian groups who were getting exposed for their shallowness for their love of money many pastors got exposed for their love of money they became angry with us and began to warn against us fine we would love them you know how can you obey the command love your enemies if you don't have any enemies so thank God for enemies they help you to obey a command how can you obey the command which says bless those who curse you if nobody curses you thank God somebody curses me so I can obey one command thank you brother you helped me to obey the command of Jesus love those who hate you yeah thank God for

those who hate us those who persecute us how can you pray for somebody who persecutes you if nobody persecutes you so I am not looking for a life where nobody persecutes me nobody is my enemy nobody curses me so many commands in the Bible I won't be able to obey when I stand before the Lord I say sorry Lord I couldn't obey these commands because I steered a very careful life where I made sure nobody would be my enemy where I was very diplomatic never hurt anybody nobody became my enemy and nobody would curse me any danger of that I would avoid that end result I disobey I can't obey God's commandments one of my prayers has been Lord before I leave this earth I don't know when that will be I want to obey every single commandment that you have given to Christians before I leave this earth is

that a good thing or not if you send your child to college and you say there are about 30 courses to complete there ah son just finish 5 of them that's enough how many of you will say that so you've got to complete all 30 and get your full degree why don't we have the same attitude to the courses in the Bible love your enemies bless those who curse you in everything give thanks rejoice always and be anxious for nothing these are courses I have to complete ok I'm failing in some courses but I'm going to work on it till I pass isn't that what you tell your children work on it till you pass is mathematics difficult work on it you'll

overcome there are other people who face difficulty and overcame so this should be our attitude to scripture and the other thing I pray for is Lord every promise

that is meant for Christians I want to claim before I leave this earth two things every commandment that you have given for Christians I want to obey before I leave that's like completing all the courses in college and every promise that you have given for Christians I want to claim that's like depositing all the checks you get in the bank supposing you got 20 checks in the mail how many would you deposit in the bank 18? 20 why not have the same attitude to the promises the promises are like checks you know why the reason why some of you are so poor spiritually you're not depositing the checks you're framing them up and putting them on the wall and admiring them claim them put them in the bank of heaven and say in the name of Jesus Christ this is mine that's what I did and sin shall not

have dominion over you sign Jesus Christ I put my signature on the back Lord cash it for me please you go like that go to a promise and say Lord every promise I want to claim in my life there are some wonderful promises in scripture no weapon formed against you will prosper Isaiah 54 17 I've claimed that a number of times Lord these people are trying to form some weapons against me it will not prosper it will not prosper there's once I don't like to talk about this much but once somebody did something to my car to try and blow it up but it didn't happen I drove all the way home and it didn't blow up it punctured a hole somebody was against me in the petrol pipe exactly the spot over the exhaust started to catch fire and I drove so many miles when I took it to the auto mechanic they said

how in the world did you drive this no weapon formed against you will prosper I've experienced that so many times in different ways but you got to claim it if you frame it up and hang it on the wall you get nothing you say in the name of Jesus this is mine what is there you're of more value to God than many sparrows the hairs on your head are numbered nobody can touch you without my permission amazing see for example this promise in Luke chapter 10 I'll just give you one example Luke chapter 10 verse 19 I give you authority over all the power of the enemy and nothing shall hurt you wow do you believe Jesus said that nothing can hurt me I give you authority over all the power of the enemy do you know the difference between authority and power we don't have more power than Satan Satan can

do all types of miracles he brought fire from heaven in the days of Job he brought the enemies to come and destroy Job's property I don't have that power but I have authority authority is greater than power you know in many places in India we don't have traffic lights we have a policeman who stands at the junction of the four roads and he's got a stop sign in his hand and he holds up the sign and says stop and then he turns around when this traffic is cleared and stops the other side he's a wee tiny man and these huge trucks with mighty power that can run him down come rushing down and all of them they've got power he's got authority he's got the entire authority of the government backing him when he stands there they dare not go past him that is authority and you can have all the power

of Satan coming against you I say in the name of Jesus stop get out of that man right now loose him, set him free authority you don't have power I give you authority over all the power of the enemy it's a wonderful thing to say Lord I want all your promises to be fulfilled in my life I want to show this world that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever this is what we need brothers and sisters if we don't have this how in the world are we going to proclaim the gospel I've often said if you were, you know the thing is here you preach the gospel in a country where everybody has heard about Christ, respect the Bible and all that and then it's fairly easy but you go to some village in India where nobody's seen a Bible they're all non-Christians, everybody there they've been

non-Christians for generations some remote village in India where the gospel has never gone and you go there and ask them have you heard of Jesus, no he says try the other village, he's not here that's their understanding of Jesus that's how much they they think Jesus is some person who's somebody's looking for Jesus around here they don't know who he is then they say ok we've got to get these people together and tell them about Jesus ok I've got to tell you about Jesus now listen, I'm preaching the gospel for the first time to a bunch of people who don't know anything about the Bible you know 2000 years ago a little baby was born to a woman without any, who did not join up with a man immediately those guys think I'm crazy because such things don't happen he was born of a virgin because

God Almighty came as a little baby and they say so what, even if it happened I don't believe it, but even if it happened so what, no that baby grew up and did a lot of miracles great and then they killed him what do you mean, he was God and they killed him? yeah he killed him because of your sins remember these are raw heathen what do you mean my sins, I'm committing the sins how did he know 2000 years ago what I'm going to do now all these doubts you try and preach the gospel to someone who's never heard about Jesus and you face all these things and then when it's all over then I say he rose up from the dead oh, they're absolutely convinced I'm off my head he rose up from the dead on the third day and then he went up to heaven that's a good way to escape out of the whole thing by saying

he's not around here now he went up to heaven it's a fairy tale it sounds exactly like a fairy tale to that person when I say ok now bring your demon possessed people here whom you could not help all your religion could not help and I'll prove to you that Jesus is alive bring your sick people we pray for them and in the name of Jesus that demon possessed person is delivered and they know Jesus is alive not by argument not by theology see we don't understand what the early disciples faced the early disciples were not going into Christian countries where everybody had a bible and they respected Jesus Christ no they were going into exactly the type of situation I describe now what we need is the power of the Holy Spirit but because you all live in a country where people respect Jesus and

have the bible you don't feel the need for the power of the Holy Spirit but you need it you cannot build the body of Christ or build the church of the bride of Christ unless you are filled with the Holy Spirit and not just once I love the Pentecostal brothers who are bringing out this truth of being filled with the Spirit but this is what I have against it that they preach about one experience I say I've had your experience I've been baptized in the Holy Spirit I speak in tongues, I've seen people healed I've seen demons cast out but I want to be filled with the Spirit every day I want to live that spirit filled life every day and to me the primary mark of it is that I can keep God's commandments I can love those who hate me I can overcome dirty thoughts I can overcome my anger I overcome

discouragement and self condemnation that's how I know that the Holy Spirit is there and this is the type of life we seek to lead other people into only then can they be formed into one body and become the bride of Jesus Christ I can't do this with all the people around the world as I told you yesterday but I can do it with a few people whom God commits into our church in a local church and that's why we seek to do that for those who have years to hear we don't force anybody to go this way but in order to build a church in unity I want to show you another passage of scripture which is very very important we've got another 10 minutes Philippians chapter 2 this verse is one of the most comprehensive verses you understand comprehensive all inclusive verses on unity that I found in the entire

New Testament Philippians chapter 2 verse 2 see the way unity is described here make my joy complete by being of the same mind same love united in spirit intent on one purpose there's not a single verse in the

New Testament that speaks about unity so much same mind same love united in spirit one purpose make my joy complete by all of you being like this that means bones that have come together, sinews and the breath of God has come and you're really functioning as the bride of Jesus Christ in your local Philippian church and if you want to be like that here is what you have to do beware of two particular sins thank God he didn't list 25 two selfishness and pride that's all that is what will hinder you from becoming one body he says that in verse 3 do nothing from selfishness and nothing

from pride you won't reach there in one day it's like saying kill all the giants in Canaan those giants of selfishness and pride kill all of them it'll take a lifetime but we're going to kill them one by one I found that selfishness and pride are like huge onions I peel off one layer and say ah, I got rid of selfishness no, something will happen tomorrow you'll discover another layer of selfishness underneath that in some situation you discover pride and you judge yourself no you haven't, you'll discover tomorrow something else and you become proud of something else another layer and you keep peeling off the layers of selfishness and pride that there are inside you and little by little the giants are being killed one by one and the wonderful thing is when you kill a giant you possess his

property you get some new area of your life becomes Christ-like so if I were to draw it in a circle as a diagram I'd first draw a big black circle this is the flesh and when I'm unconverted my heart is like this and one day I receive Jesus Christ into my heart a little white circle comes in the middle of this black circle this is my nature this flesh but in the middle Christ has come there's still a lot of black in me but now what the Lord is doing is he allows me to it's a small circle of white in the middle of this huge black circle that I am but the Lord on the rims of this white circle temptation comes different temptations and I fight and I fight and I overcome one giant is killed that white circle becomes a little bigger and then at the outer rim of this new circle a new area of

temptation and I'm fighting and fighting another giant is killed the white circle has become bigger and then at this new rim of this white circle a new area of temptation and I fight and I fight and I fight and I fight.

It doesn't happen in one day, but over a period of time, I've overcome. I've come to a place where now, for example, certain sins are overcome.

For example, I can never get offended anymore. Isn't that a wonderful thing? It's one of the earliest sins we should overcome, that I just don't get offended anymore. Because it's not like there are certain things which are in our system, like anger and sexual sin, which are very difficult.

They take many years to overcome. But getting offended, that's something external to us. The ones which are external, you can more easily overcome than the ones that are inward.

You get offended because you don't want to be treated like that. That fellow cannot speak to you like that. It's because you're proud.

So you say, Lord, let me tackle some of these easy sins first. It's like I remember when I used to do in school, when I did the final examination, some mathematics paper, I would start with all the easiest problems and say, let's finish that first quickly, and then tackle the difficult ones. Because if I just waste my time with the difficult ones first, I may not get time to do the easy ones.

So I do the easy ones first, at least some problems I got right now, let me tackle the difficult ones. So start with the easy ones in your life and say, Lord, this giant is a small, teeny weeny one. I can't think I can

handle that, getting offended, and a few things like that.

And say, Lord, I'm determined that the Holy Spirit's going to, this is called progressive sanctification, where I become more and more like Jesus. That's that white circle becoming more and more, Christ is being formed in me. Originally I was entirely Adam, all Adam, behavior, selfishness, pride, little by little Christ takes over.

This is sanctification. And God wants, and you know, when you have a group of people going this way, what will happen is they become more and more united. The more Christlike you become, the more you'll be united with someone else who is seeking to be Christlike.

But you've got to be in a church where people are pursuing Christlikeness, where they're not interested just in music. And we met six years in our house and we had no musical instruments. None of us knew how to play music.

Until my children grew up and learned to play the piano, we didn't have any music in our church. But that's okay. We had wonderful fellowship.

You don't need music. You don't read anything about musical instruments in the New Testament. Do you know that? You go to the Psalms and the Old Covenant, there are plenty of that, timbrels and trumpets and all types of things.

But in the New Testament, where do you read? You don't read one musical instrument. Because I'm not saying musical instruments are important, are essential, nor am I against them. I say you can build a body without them.

A lot of house churches in China today, wonderful believers, they don't have musical instruments. If they have musical instruments, they'll be advertising to the secret police, come and catch us. They have to do everything in secret over there, these underground churches.

So music is not the big thing to build a church, let me tell you that. And if you are attracted to a church by its music, you got the fundamental thing wrong. And not even preaching, it's love.

Church is not built by just good preachers. It's by humble people. So here it says, be careful of selfishness and pride.

But with humility of mind, here's a wonderful exhortation. Philippians 2.3, with humility of mind, let each of you regard the other as, be careful now, not more spiritual, but more important than yourself. Some people misread it.

The people who read Scripture carelessly, let me consider others more spiritual. Nowhere in the Bible does it say that. I'm following Jesus.

And Jesus did not consider others as more spiritual than himself. He did not consider Peter or even Judas or Judas Iscariot as more spiritual than himself. They were not.

When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, you know what he said? He said, we are spiritual and you are carnal. Was that arrogance? No, it was the truth. There's nothing wrong in saying that.

It's like if I tell a little boy I'm taller than you, I'm not proud of it. I'm just telling him the truth. There's no acting to that little boy, oh, I'm shorter than you.

It's all rubbish. A lot of people pretend you are more spiritual than me. Don't be artificial.

Treat others as more important than yourself. That means be willing to wash the feet even of Judas Iscariot. That's what Jesus did.

So if you want to build a church, you've got to treat others as more important than yourself. It's in the Scripture. And don't look out just on your own interests, but also the interests of others.

This is the way you come to verse two, same mind, same love, same spirit, same purpose. And then he says, if you want an example, I'll give you the example. Jesus, there was no selfishness in him.

There was no pride in him. If there was selfishness, he'd never have come from heaven. From heaven, he looked down and said, Father, these people don't have everything I enjoy here.

Let me go down and make a way for them to come up here. And the angels say, Lord, they'll treat you badly. They'll kill you.

It's okay. I'm willing to pay the price so that they can come and enjoy what I have. That is what brought him down.

That is the unselfish attitude that has sent missionaries to places to deny themselves, to sacrifice their job, give up everything, to go and bring other people to enjoy the Christ they knew. You get a few people like this in a church who are really not seeking their own. You'll have the body built there.

Not seeking their own. That's how Jesus came down. And when he came, he got rid of selfishness coming down, and then pride.

What does it say? Though he was God, he became a man. That itself is great humility. That itself would have been enough.

But then you go one step further in humility. As a man, verse 7, he became a servant, a slave. From God, he became man, first step of humility.

And then from as a man, he became a slave. And you'd think there's nothing lower than a slave. There is.

He died like a criminal, even though he was not a criminal. The Romans didn't crucify slaves, they crucified criminals. They were the lowest strata of society.

So Jesus humbled himself and became a man and became a servant and was treated like a criminal. Humility, humility, humility. That's why I always say the three secrets of the Christian life are humility, humility, humility.

You see that right here. You want to become one mind, one purpose, one spirit. You want to build a church where we have one body, where we become like the Bride of Christ, then have the Spirit of Christ.

The Bride has the same spirit as the Bridegroom. And that Bridegroom spirit is mentioned here. Therefore, God exalted him and gave him the highest place in the universe.

So we ask people today, why did God exalt Jesus to highest place in the universe? Not because he was a son of God, but because he humbled himself to the lowest place. The law of God says, he who humbles himself will be exalted. He was exalted to the highest place.

So you remember once James and John said, we want to sit on your left side and right side in the kingdom. And the Lord said, I'm sorry, I can't give that to you. The Father has reserved that for certain people.

I'll tell you who's going to sit on the right and left side of Jesus. You want to know? I know it. The ones who have humbled themselves the most, closest to Jesus, who've gone down in humility in their life to the maximum.

Nobody can exceed Jesus' humility. But whoever got closest to that would be on the left and right. I don't know who they are.

It could be some poor widow in Africa, or somebody in some other country. I don't know. It need not be the Apostle Paul.

Because it's not dependent on gift. It's not dependent on whether you can preach or whether you plant churches. It's dependent only on humility.

He was exalted to the highest place because he humbled himself to the lowest place. And the people sitting next to him will be the ones who humble themselves the most. This is how the church is built, with humility and an unselfish attitude.

And then he says, I'll give you an example. Timothy, verse 19. Timothy is one person like that.

He is genuinely concerned, verse 20, for your welfare. That's complete unselfishness. And he's not seeking his own interest.

Verse 21, he's seeking the interest of Christ. So Paul, do you have many workers like this? No. He says in verse 20, I don't have anybody else.

He's an exception. There are not many people like this. Even in Paul's co-workers, there was only one.

There are not many. There were not many then. There are not many today.

But if God can find in you the spirit of Timothy, not seeking your own, seeking the glory of God and Jesus Christ, and willing to humble yourself like Christ, He will use you like He used Paul, like He used Timothy, like He's used different godly men through the generations. There is no partiality with God. Remember this.

And if God is not able to do that in you, it's because you're not willing to the price. It's because you come like Cain, bringing an offering to ease your conscience. Decide today that it's going to be different.

You come to the end of the Bible, Cain and Abel, the two streams that started there, end as Babylon and Jerusalem, the harlot church and the bride church. What begins as Abel and Cain, ends as the true church and the harlot church. We are in that closing days of the age, and there's plenty of the harlot church all around us.

In the midst of it, God is seeking to build a true church. And what you've heard in these days is, shows you how you can be a part of that. We're not here to judge the others, but we seek to follow the scriptures, and scriptures show us this is the way God wants it.

If you're proud of it, automatically you belong to the false church, because the primary characteristic of a true church is humility. If you can look at other churches and say, oh Lord, thank you, we are not like them, you are definitely part of the harlot, without a doubt. Those who really belong to the true church do not despise the others.

They disagree with them. They say, that's not the way, but we don't despise them. I disagree with people who have a different financial policy from Jesus and Paul's financial policy, but I don't despise them.

I say they don't have light. So in many things like that, may God help you all not to miss out on what He has given you in these days. Let us pray.

Our Heavenly Father, it's so easy to forget many of these things, or just to know them in our head. I pray you'll help us to experience in our life, and to experience in our corporate fellowship as a body, in our church, the churches we belong to, this type of fellowship and unity, and where it is not existent to build a church like that, so that your name can be glorified, because you want to see such a pure offering in every place, from east to west. Thank you for hearing us.

In Jesus' name, amen.

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