

Audio Sermon ■ Are You Destroying The Church

by Francis Chan

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Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:16, Titus 3:10, Psalm 51:10, James 3:6, Proverbs 18:21, Ephesians 4:29

Topics: "Unity in the Church", "Reverence for God's Temple"

Description

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Transcript

But here's some things the Lord's been teaching me lately about unity and with that man, you know, what's amazing is even tonight this morning John the pastor of Bethel, you know upstairs He preached John 17 You know, we didn't plan this But even in the middle of John 17 as he's preaching about unity Some people stood up in the service and started yelling at us Like three people at once just trying to cause to in the middle of preaching John 17 Look, the enemy is alive and well If if Jesus said that's what's going to create get the world to believe then what's the enemy gonna be after? Division right and this is one of the things I want to talk about tonight. I Understand what's going on here is not just a human being talking to another human being not in God's eyes It's something bigger Something sacred You guys remember the first time you read the story in the Bible about? Uzza remember a guy named Uzza Okay, let me refresh your memory if you don't remember the story Uzza was one of the guys that was carrying the Ark Right, right. Yeah.

Okay. You know what I'm talking about now and What happens the he stumbles or someone stumbles and the Ark's about to fall and what does he do? Okay, remember the first time you heard that story Did you think to yourself serves him right No, right What was going on in your mind the first time you heard that story? He thought that's not fair Exactly. I would have done the same thing.

I think I think I would have just stabilized it remember the first time you read the story of Moses and remember when Moses struck the rock and God to speak to the rock and Moses struck it and Water came out. I remember when God said to him Because you didn't treat me as holy. I'm not gonna let you enter the promised land.

I Still remember the first time I'm reading through that story and I still remember thinking he's gonna let him in Cuz God himself was so mad at the people He's not gonna get mad at Moses for striking the rock and keep so I kept reading thinking he's gonna let him Okay, something's gonna happen because Moses was so tight with God, right? There was no one on the earth like Moses and now you're not gonna let him cross into the promised land You're gonna just let him stare at and say no It's like I thought at that moment God was gonna forgive him and say you've proven yourself faithful I forgive you coming to the promised land and Again, I thought that's not fair. And then recently when I read About the story of Saul and the Old Testament remember when they were about to go to war and Saul is waiting for Samuel to come and offer the sacrifices before they go to war and Samuel is late Okay, he was beyond the seven days that he was supposed to wait for him and So Saul thinks to himself. Well, I don't want to go to war Without the sacrifices being offered and Samuel didn't show up So he's kind of stuck like do I just go to war? No, I want the blessing of God So he said to the people, you know what? I'm gonna go in and I'm gonna offer the sacrifices because I don't want to go to war without God's blessing we need to make the offerings and Saul goes in there makes the offerings Comes out and Samuel shows up.

It's like what are you doing? He's like you were late And God says to Saul because you did that I'm gonna tear the kingdom away from you Doesn't feel totally fair to me. I feel like he was trying to do a good thing Okay now now let's jump to the New Testament Ananias and Sapphira Okay, remember the story they sold some land They they come before the Apostles the Apostles say is that all the money, you know, and Ananias is like, yeah, that's that's it and I think this is the reading for tomorrow, right and Some kind of spoiler alert and He's he He says yeah, that's it And he says because you lied You're gonna die And he dies And his wife comes in says hey, did you give us all the money she goes? Yeah, that was all of it You're gonna die, too They exaggerated how much they gave when you read that story don't you read and go I feel like I've done worse Right Have you ever exaggerated to me Or one of the leaders and Peter and you know, he's saying you lied to the Holy Spirit That's crazy, though And then what about first Corinthians chapter 11 when it's talking about communion and And he gives that warning. He says you better examine the body Before you take to the bread or a cup because if you take it in an unworthy manner He goes that's why some of you are weak and sick and a number of you have died Don't you read that and go wait if that happened back then how come it's not happening today or is it and we just don't Notice it don't you look at some of these things and go Wow, but what is it? Why are these passages? Why is that story with King as a soul bothersome to us? It's because we don't understand this word sacred Okay, the God says you don't get it You just don't if I say don't touch that that arc you just don't touch it It's sacred and we don't understand that we're a society of second chances.

Come on. That's not that big a deal This guy's done worse. I'm not Hitler.

I'm not this I'm not that so I'm pretty good That's the world we grew up in and so we don't understand this word sacred We don't understand when something is of God and he says don't touch it you just don't touch it right and and and we we look at what what what what Moses did in striking the rock and God says you didn't treat me as sacred You didn't treat my word as sacred You don't do that. I don't care. That's a command from the Lord.

You have no right to do that and in the same way Taking of the body and blood of Jesus God sees as a very sacred thing there's a story in Second Chronicles 7 You have to turn there well you better Someone should turn there because I'm gonna make sure it's second Corinthians second Chronicles 7 Yeah, it is second Chronicles 7. Okay. Never mind. Now, you don't have to turn there.

You can read later Okay, but second Chronicles 7 is That passage where they just finished building the temple Okay, you remember that scene they just finished building the temple of God Solomon just finished it This is his prayer of dedication and the Bible says that everyone was outside of the temple and they had put a Sacrifice in the middle of the temple and as everyone was outside they watched fire come down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice and Then it said the glory of the Lord filled the temple In such a way that no one would dare enter the temple. Okay, if I told you tonight God told me we can reenact that right here at Bethel That'd be pretty cool Right and you're like, I'm so glad I came tonight We texted all your friends you so blew it, right? Because we were outside and we saw fire come out of the sky don't you want to just once see something like that Don't you sometimes read the Old Testament go gosh. I'm so jealous.

I wish I had seen that I wish I could have been there because you imagine how Terrifying and exciting all at once it would be because the people it says that everyone fell with their faces to the ground and yet They were worshiping God. So there's like this I mean if we really did that if we walked outside and we saw fire from heaven come down and then this mysterious Crazy glow coming from inside of this building. We would be outside just Terrified but also so excited like yeah, we prayed for the presence of God Let me pray that he would come and fill his temple and he did right We would be so freaked out by that instance Could it be a sacred moment? Could you imagine if that happened and you were there at the temple scene God's glory filled the place? Could you imagine? picking up a sledgehammer And Striking the temple would anyone in their right mind dare do that? That would be like the stupidest thing on the planet you could do, right? God's glory fills Everyone's terrified.

We're scared to go in and you just walk up with a sledgehammer and you're about to strike the temple What if one of your friends picked up the hammer and they were about to do that? What would you scream? Wouldn't you just beg put it what are you thinking you're insane? No, no Don't do it. Don't do it. Don't do it.

Why could this is something that is sacred? What is my point in all of everything I just said is this first Corinthians 3 Verse 16 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you if Anyone destroys God's temple God will destroy him For God's temple is holy and you are that temple. This is the Word of God I'm gonna read it again Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you if Anyone destroys God's temple God will destroy him For God's temple is holy and you are that temple we talked about what is sacred What is holy and God says you wonder what's holy you are You are this temple the Bible says when you got saved you became like a living stone Stacking on top of the other stones Building one temple that is a dwelling place for God He says it's built on the foundation of the Apostles and the Prophets and Jesus Christ himself is the cornerstone So it's this one temple that that spans time somehow Like right now. I'm a living stone connected to other living stones throughout history

I'm connected to Moses.

I'm connected to David I'm connected to Peter and Paul Jesus is the cornerstone Elijah the prophets he goes. This is a very holy thing that God is doing and So if anyone tries to destroy this unity If anyone's trying to destroy this temple God says I will destroy him This is why I believe in Titus 3 10 it says warn a divisive person once warn him again and Then have nothing to do with him. If anyone's gonna try to destroy God's temple.

God says God will destroy him When God was revealing these things to me man, I just Was like Lord, I am sorry There are times when I've spoken up and said things too flippantly about other leaders and other churches and when I compare to what God struck people dead for Go God, I am so sorry help me guard my lips Because when I speak against that brother I'm taking a sledgehammer to the temple that's why if someone is gonna gossip to you and Say something negative about someone else in the body Man it is your job. If you love that person to warn him That you put that sledgehammer. Are you insane? Do you know what's gonna happen if you destroy God's temple? Yeah, are you are you an idiot you're you're seriously gonna go after that's why if you come from another church man Don't go telling me Anything about what happened over there and how they mistreated you and oh you poor victim, man I'm sorry, whatever, but you know what? Let's be very careful about our words That's why people don't come to me with that stuff You know people boasts like oh, I'm a safe place No, you're an enabler You're an unloving enabler You might as well put your hand on the sledgehammer with them So yeah, I can't believe that.

Yeah, I can't believe that person You are insane Instead if you love the person going to put that down Don't let those words come out of your mouth Look at what God says and don't let Satan get in your head going. Did God really say That God really say he would destroy you and I mean, is that really his temple Read it I'm a part of the temple of God Let's be careful with our words Man, I hear people criticize Leaders around our nation And I haven't been quick to confront it, but now it's like I'm getting serious Like are you crazy? Are you gonna bash Rick Warren? This is a guy that loves the Lord Yeah, you may not agree with everything he does but man I'm telling you he loves Jesus everything I can tell a supernaturally spirit-filled man Are you gonna attack Mark Driscoll? Are you gonna attack John Piper? Are you gonna attack Mike Bickle? Are you gonna attack some of these expressions in the body of Christ that may look a little I'm just saying to put that down I've met these people and I see their hearts and I and I hang out with people in these different denominations I'm like man, they love Jesus. It looks different from me, but I can see the spirit in them We better be careful And I'm reading this and I'm thinking God how come more people aren't dead Seriously I seriously prayed that go God.

I don't get it. You should have struck me dead and here's what I heard from the Lord They haven't been warned the church hasn't warned people We listen to gossip We listen to people talk about leadership And We don't warn them We just kind of think that we're being loving by listening and everyone comes as the victim And so we're just thinking oh, I'm just being compassionate Now you're being disobedient We need to warn Warn the divisive person warn them again in the Bible says have nothing to do with them It's like if you're gonna keep striking the temple, then I just need to get away from you Because I don't want to be anywhere close to that See somebody to read that passage and you think well I would never say that to another person and I would never distance myself from another person well I'm just telling you what the scripture says Have nothing to do with him And I know sometimes in our hearts. We don't want to give up on people So we say well, I know we warned him a bunch of times back This isn't like every other sin God doesn't say this about adultery God doesn't say this about homosexuality God doesn't say this about swearing drinking drugs But he says look With division.

I don't play around You warn a divisive person once you warn him again, then have nothing to do with him Because it's going to be the unity of the church That's gonna get the world to believe What if Anytime You know, let's say after this Kelly comes up to me and starts talking bad about Angela You know, which is a very likely scenario, right? And she's calling all sorts of swear words, you know, like I know Kelly calm down calm down I know I get that way with Angela too, you know, I Used Kelly because it's kind of safe. Okay, but Let's just say that happened man, what if I was a type of person that seriously loved Kelly enough say You gotta stop seriously. Seriously.

Let me read this passage to you again. Put the hammer down Please tell me you won't do this anymore Seriously like if you keep doing this I don't even want to be around you because God says he will destroy and I've got to be Obedient to the Word of God. Like I fear God more than I want this friendship.

I Want to be obedient to him more than I want this relationship And I love you. Like I don't want you destroyed by God. Do you understand how serious what if this is the way? We spoke to one another Can you imagine how quickly? Division would end See I used to read those passages like like, you know The John 17 prayer in these passages about unity and this oneness that God wants and I used to just think gosh Lord I don't know how that's going to happen How in the world are all these different denominations all these leaders and all these people that have so many, you know Fights with each other.

How is it going to come together? And then after this was revealed to me, I thought this is it I can actually see it happening If I actually have a fear of the Lord and I'm so terrified to destroy his temple I'll be much more careful about my words That doesn't mean I don't go to people and even other leaders And say hey, I'm really concerned about your belief in this area But that's between me and them And to really talk it through with them out of love But what if we all got serious about this has anyone ever done that to you Loved you enough to stop you and say dude Just be quiet right now Has any of your girlfriends ever come up to you and say? Please stop It's like you're swearing right now, I can't I hate it's like you're just throwing a bunch of F, but it's so My ears are sensitive to when you strike the temple. I Can't handle this Look, I know in this room Careless things have been said We live in a time Where the world out there? Everyone wants to say the loudest thing possible with the fewest words possible, right? We want to tweet the most outrageous harsh things. We want to exaggerate and we want to tear down You know the strongest person we know like that's just what we do in the world But what if the church was different? What if we defended each other? And we don't let any unwholesome speech come out of our mouths only that which is for the building up Believe in a time where everyone hates authority But what if it was different in here And we're actually grateful to be under a king And we actually obeyed like Hebrews 13 where we obeyed and honored our leaders Because we live in a time where This is something else.

I feel like the Lord's revealed to me he has to come through on his word because we live in a time where You can have all of the elders in complete agreement You know and say look like with John or something we say look John we all see this in your life But we live in a time of such arrogance that John would go. I don't care. I think you guys are all wrong It doesn't matter That the godliest men got together and sought after the Lord and Prayed and came to you know in deep prayer came to this conclusion.

You know, I know better That's just the world we live in And so the only way that God can bring unity is if he actually acts and he actually opposes the proud and He actually humbles and he actually destroys And I'm just saying I really believe that time is coming When God himself Has listened to all the bickering all the gossip all the division and he's held back Because the warning hasn't gone out and I believe he's telling me warn consider this your first warning and It's a beautiful thing to repent It's a beautiful thing.

There's this piece that goes. I'm actually gonna speak positive About my brothers and sisters from now on this could be an amazing place Where you just know? No one's talking behind my back Because they don't allow it there They love enough to confront And God's gonna destroy Anyone who would dare destroy his temple? And I had a wonderful time with the Lord repenting.

I hope you guys like repentance You know people go. I don't like change. I'm like Well, that's what repent means It's change If you don't like change you don't like Christianity It's all about change.

It's all about God. I don't want to do this anymore. I Need a new start.

I want to start a new season. I want to be so filled with the Spirit And I just believe there's I believe the Lord wants to do something in and through us over these next few weeks Something new That's why we're in this room that we've never been in That's why we're gathering together on Sunday evenings for a few weeks Not sure what the Lord is going to do, but we believe as elders the Lord led us to this You know normally at this time we divide into new churches, and we just as we prayed right? It's just something something's not right and Maybe there is a pruning that needs to take place Maybe some of you during this time say you know what this isn't for me. I Can't I can't handle that closeness.

I can't handle these parameters. I just need to vent you know well That's okay But we can't have that here You know it's kind of weird because every year we've kind of doubled in our churches and this year it's like okay We've got these 14 churches. Let's go to 28 and it's like There's maybe three churches that are ready to multiply.

It's like okay. What's going on here? Did it when I was a kid I don't know if I ever told you a story but my My chore was to water this cherry tree and this peach tree in my backyard And there was so much fruit one year that I fertilized it more and sprayed more water on it I just watered it faithfully going next year. It's gonna be insane cherries and peaches everywhere you know and There was actually less and then less and then pretty soon there was like nothing on that tree And I'm thinking man.

I'm watering it so much more faithfully honestly that It was a mystery I it wasn't till probably about 10 years ago when I was like 40 that someone taught me about pruning I Know that sounds ridiculous to you, but I didn't know I just thought man the more you water the bigger It'll get is gonna be awesome be a ton of fruit next year. It's just gonna keep increasing in fruit That's like no. You've got a prune it I'm like what? Like you cut off, and then you know That's why I see those trees sometimes where it's like bared down to like hardly anything And what was so beautiful now does look so barren and ugly right and it's almost heartbreaking Like oh, that was such a beautiful tree, but it had to be trimmed down And the branches that bore no fruit were actually sucking all the energy out of the tree And that's why the Bible even talks about that how God cuts off every branch It doesn't bear fruit, but the ones that are fruitful.

He trims clean, so they'll be even more fruitful And so I don't know if that's what the Lord is going to do in these next few weeks It's maybe trim us down I'm okay with that I Get it Because I just want to get together with a group of people They're gonna love each other deeply and say I want unity so Kelly shut up About Angela, okay, I want unity And I'm sorry to be so harsh with you, but I'm just tired of it kidding you know it's just But what if there was just some of that going on here and some repentance starting tonight? I have found That revival start with prayer and repentance And We want to just jump in do some miracles Lord grow our churches well Let us repent first God trim me clean I want to be that branch that bears fruit and if I bear fruit then if I'm gonna bear fruit I need to get rid of this bitterness. I gotta get rid of this anger. I've got to get rid of this arrogance I've got to get rid of some of this speech.

That's come out of my mouth And I've got to confess it to the Lord I've got to really beg him and say God I grabbed a sledgehammer and Went after your temple Your sacred temple, and I am so sorry Feel like we just need some space right now Individually to pray I don't know if you could just play something softly and But can we just spend some time right now? Repenting before God picture God in this room Knowing picture of God God of the universe Who struck a man dead for touching his ark Who killed 70,000 people because David took a census? Who had the ground open up and swallow people alive for their grumbling? and now he says You're that temple and if anyone destroys God's temple God will destroy him You want to be on the right side of his protection That's an awesome thing to think no way. I'm a part of this temple Amazing privilege Right now as the Lord is the Holy Spirit Brings to mind things you've said and done Confess that to him right now. I'll bring you and you just took a shower.

It's like All of that is gone now. I Confessed it to the Lord And because I confessed it he's faithful and just forgive me my sin and cleanse me from all unrighteousness Thank God that he's been patient with us He's been so patient with us And now through this warning, it's a time of cleansing But it's exciting. I mean to go gosh.

I'm a part of this temple that spans hundreds thousands of years And if anyone tries to destroy this thing that I'm a part of God's gonna destroy him. I Guess an awesome thing to know you're protected by God, isn't it? I'm on the right side I'm a block in that temple and no one better dare touch this temple Because God's watching It's a beautiful thing. And as we pursue unity as a church, there's a promise that goes with that That people are going to start believing And so as we just start building together and becoming one, I hope that's what you're seeking So we don't see church as an hour a week where you go to a room and sit like this and then walk away That's why we're having you meet in your homes and going.

No, you've got to become one with these people Like God wants us to display a supernatural oneness that the world can't have They can't have fellowship with God Unless you walk in the light, you can't have fellowship But the Bible says if we walk in the light as he is in the light We'll have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all unrighteousness So that's why we spend this time confessing first So next week when come back and we can minister to one another we have real fellowship with one another And this week spending the week just repenting and cleansing ourselves of this and seeking unity with one another So we can see God move in mighty ways Now, let's not stay in this place of sorrow. Let's worship him. I believe God is so pleased God is so pleased when we come to him like we just did and just confessed what he already knows Thank God, you know what I said about him.

You know what I said about her You know what I said in the past about previous church experiences previous leadership I'm done. Forgive me And make things right And now he wants us to worship him John if you just Lead us into the presence of God

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