

# How Jesus Builds His Church

by Zac Poonen

---

*The true church is the body of Jesus Christ, built on revelation, not human understanding.*

**Duration:** 1:12:43

**Scripture:** Jeremiah 29:13, Matthew 16:18-26, Luke 18:7, Luke 18:27, Philippians 2:8

**Topics:** "Following Jesus", "Church Growth"

---

## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of each individual in building the church by taking up their cross daily, denying themselves, and following Jesus. It highlights the need to pursue humility, godliness, and contentment, while rejecting the voice of Satan that hinders the way of the cross. The message encourages believers to seek God's interests over their own, to give up their self-life, and to cry out to God day and night for an anointing and a life that glorifies Him.

---

## Transcript

So today I want to share concerning how every one of us can have a part in building this church. So I want you to turn with me to Matthew chapter 16. So if you understand this all right, you'll be able to understand how each one of us can have a part in building the church.

Because in most churches it's just the preachers and the song leaders who almost do all the work and it looks as if they are the only ones who are building the church. But that's where you need to understand the difference between a congregation and a church. The Old Testament Israelites were a congregation.

If you called it a church, then that would be the biggest mega church in the world with two million people and Moses as their pastor. But it was not a church. It was a congregation.

They were not connected together as a body. The Holy Spirit did not dwell in all of them. So they could not be a body.

And most mega so-called mega churches today in the world are mega congregations. The Old Testament Israelites were all drawn to one leader Moses and Aaron, his assistant. And so today in many so-called mega churches it's one big man up there and his assistant pastor.

And that's what they call a church. But it's not a church according to the New Testament. And a lot of people are drawn to small groups then.

They like to meet in house churches because in house churches they care for one another, they help one another. That also is not necessarily a church. It could be a club.

In a club, people care for one another and help one another. And particularly people who are very insecure and lonely, they don't like to be in a big church. They like to go to a small place where people make much of them because there may be only 10-15 people there and one person is very important.

So people who want a sense of importance go to a small group because then everybody will make much of them, help them when they're in trouble and so many things. That's a club. That's also not a church.

Because if you're looking for a place where we help one another, you can join a club. There are many good clubs that do that type of thing. But a church is something very different.

So in Matthew 16, is the very first place in the Bible where we read the word church. Matthew 16 and verse 18. This is where Jesus spoke the word church for the very first time.

And whenever a word occurs for the first time in scripture, it's good to see where it occurs because we learn something there. I'll give you a couple of examples. The first time the word worship occurs in the Bible is in Genesis 22 when Abraham goes up to offer his son Isaac, give up what is most precious to him, to the Lord.

That is worship. What we do singing and praising here is not worship. This is praise and thanksgiving.

It's got nothing to do with worship. I know the entire Christian world calls it praise and worship. That's because they don't have a clue what worship is.

It's because they don't study the Bible. In the first place where worship comes, it's where a man has offered the very best of his life to God. And if you do that, even if you can't sing, you're worshiping God.

And another place where it occurs, which is in the first book of the Bible, the book of Job. Job, it says he fell down and worshiped God. When? When he had lost all his children and his business.

And he said, fine, Lord, you can take it away. He did the same thing which Abraham did. They both lived around the same time.

And he also gave up everything he had to God and said, fine, I don't have any complaint, Lord, you take it away. And he worshiped God. When you can do that, that God takes away something which is precious to you and you bow down and say, Lord, no complaints.

You're welcome to do it. You can do it again. That's a worshiper.

I want to tell you something. Less than 1% of born again believers know how to worship. I've met very few worshipers in my life.

I've met a lot of good singers, but worship is a completely different category. And it's only those who worship who can serve God. Jesus said that very clearly in Matthew 4 verse 10, thou shalt worship and then thou shalt serve.

That doesn't mean you first sing and then serve. No, it means worship. So I hope we get these wrong ideas that we've acquired in our previous Christian connections with dead churches that have taught us

things which are not at all in the Bible.

And just like you got rid of your idea of infant baptism and got baptized properly, in the same way, you've got to get rid of your ideas of what worship is and learn to worship properly. Otherwise, you'll miss out on a very important part of the Christian life. And I really believe, I really believe with all my heart, the reason why many, many Christians, their service is not effective for God is because they don't follow this order, thou shalt worship and then thou shalt serve.

So that's the advantage of seeing in the first place where it comes. So here's the first place the word church comes. So it's very interesting to see where it comes.

So there are a number of things. I want to speak to you today from verse 18 to 27 to try and understand this concept of the true church of Jesus Christ. It's not a building.

It's not a denomination. We saw it's not a congregation. It's not a club.

It's not a place where we join just because there are helpful people around who help me when I'm in trouble. That's a club. It's not a place where we just come to listen to some great preacher.

Because nowadays, I'll tell you, you don't have to come to church to listen to a great preacher. Just go to the internet and you get a variety of great preachers and you can sit at home and listen to them every day. And the advantage of the internet is you can turn it off when you get bored, which you can't walk out of a church like that.

So there's a big advantage. If your aim in life is just to listen to good preaching, you don't have to go to a Sunday service nowadays. Just get internet connection and go to YouTube.

Even my messages, there are about a thousand of them on YouTube. That's just a congregation. People are just admiring that.

Church is something completely different. The church is called the body of Jesus Christ. And Jesus knew that when he said for the first time, I will build my church.

So the first thing we learned from here is that the last part of verse 18, I will build my church and the gates of Hades are the powers of spiritual darkness. The powers of hell will not be able to overpower it. So there are a couple of things we learned right there about the true church.

One, it's only Jesus Christ who can build it. Any person who gets the idea saying that I planted a church here and I planted a church there and I built a church there, a lot of people who speak like that, they're pretty arrogant. It's only Jesus who can build his church.

If somebody has gone and planted a church somewhere, I can tell you that church will collapse. Because if you turn to the previous chapter, chapter 15, Jesus had already said in verse 13, chapter 15 and verse 13, every plant which my heavenly father did not plant will be rooted up. Every church which Jesus did not plant will be pulled out.

It's the same principle. God, listen to this sentence, God is the only legitimate originator of anything that's going to be eternal. A lot of things that man can originate and start and plant and build, it will only last as long as this world is there.

But the only legitimate originator of what is eternal is God. Turn with me to 1 John chapter 2. It's important to understand this. Very, very important because we live in a day when man is arrogant and the pride of man is becoming greater and greater and greater.

It says here in 1 John and chapter 2 and verse 17, the world is passing away and all its lusts. Lust means strong desires. That's the meaning of lust.

Lust, unfortunately, we always associate lust with sexual lust. But that's not the way the word lust is used in scripture. Because it says in Galatians chapter 5, I think it's verse 17, the Holy Spirit lusts against the flesh.

That's not a dirty desire. It just means strong desire. The spirit lusts against the flesh and the flesh lusts against the spirit.

It means a strong desire. So the world and all its strong desires, good or bad, it's going to pass away. But he who does the will of God abides forever.

In other words, when we get to the judgment seat of Christ and move into eternity, we will discover that the only things that remain for eternity are those which were done in the will of God. There's a very common saying, only one life, it will soon be passed. Only what's done for Christ will last.

Many people quote it. And it sounds very good. Only one life, it will soon be passed.

Only what's done for Christ will last. But strictly speaking, it's not true. Because there are a lot of people who are doing things for Christ today, which will not last.

So the way I say it is, only one life, it will soon be passed. Only what Christ does through us will last. Not what we do for Christ.

A lot of things we do for Christ won't last. Because it's done with wrong motives. It's done without God originating it.

It's just an idea that came from our fertile brain. It won't last. But what Christ does through us will last.

In other words, when we have sought the will of God and the Lord did something through us, He prompted us and we acted on that prompting. That is how God does His work. Even this church, many of you do not know how this church began.

But those of us who are here right in the beginning, and it's only about a couple of us there right now, who know it had nothing to do with any man. It had to do with God sovereignly bringing, suddenly getting us thrown out somewhere else and we didn't know where to go. And we started meeting together.

And lo and behold, a few years later, it was a church. And lo and behold, a few years later, it was many other churches. Man had nothing to do with it.

I'm so thankful that man had nothing to do with it. It's not that we planned and said, okay, we got to start a church and we must have a good church and let's start here on such and such a date. Nonsense.

We had no opening date, no cutting of a ribbon, nothing. It was God who just originated it. And that's the way every true church is planted.

So that takes away the glory of man. No man can take glory for anything that's done. Only the will of God will remain.

So that's the first thing we need to learn when we come to Matthew chapter 16. I will build my church. And I want to be in a church where Jesus is building, not which man is building.

Man is building a lot of so-called churches, which are not the one Jesus is building. I want to be in a church that Jesus is building. And he says, I will build my church.

And where does he build it? It says in verse 18, on this rock, I will build my church. And that's another thing many people are confused by. You know that the Roman Catholic church takes that verse and said that, well, Jesus said to Peter, you are Peter and on this rock, I will build my church.

And that's one of the results of reading scripture carelessly. You must never take a verse and try and get a doctrine out of it. See the context.

It begins with verse 15. Jesus asked his disciples, who do you say that I am? And Simon Peter said, look what he said, you are the Christ, the son of the living God. That's not because he was clever, because there were cleverer people than him in the synagogue who thought Jesus was the prince of devils, Beelzebul.

Here was a guy who was not even educated, who got understood the truth. How is that? And so Jesus tells him, you are blessed Simon, son of Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you. That means you did not discover this by your human cleverness.

Now that's not unimportant. It's very, very important to understand what I'm just saying. You did not understand this by your human cleverness or ability.

That's the meaning of flesh and blood did not reveal it to you. But my father in heaven revealed it to you, gave you revelation. My father gave you revelation on whom I am.

And on this rock, I will build my church. You got it? The rock of the revealed Christ. That's the rock.

And if you go to the original languages, which is written in Greek, what Jesus was saying, Peter, you're a small stone. That's what Peter means. But upon this massive rock, which you just confessed, the revealed Christ, the son of the living God, I'll build my church.

So actually Jesus was saying the opposite of what the Roman Catholic Church say. You're a small stone, Peter. You got nothing to be built on you.

But on this massive rock, which you just confessed, the Christ, the son of the living God, revealed to you by the Father, on this rock, I'll build my church. And Peter recognized that because you go to Peter's epistle. He says, we're living stones built up in the house of God.

And he claims himself also to be just a stone. He's not the rock. So revelation, that is the important word that comes through here.

A revealed Christ. Now there's a lot of difference between the Christ of history. You can read the Gospels and you know the Christ of history.

He did miracles. He died on the cross. But there's a lot of difference between seeing Jesus in your heart.

Revealed. Look what Paul said in Galatians chapter 1. We know that when the apostle Paul, he was not the apostle then. He was Saul of Tarsus going out to persecute Christians on the road to Damascus.

And he suddenly had a vision, seeing Jesus up in the heavens. And he said, who are you? And Jesus said, I'm Jesus whom you are persecuting. But it was not just that.

He saw Jesus externally, but that would not have solved the problem because many people saw Jesus externally on earth, who were not converted. But in Galatians 1, it says here in verse 15 and 16. But when he who had set me apart from my mother's womb, that means God, as soon as Paul was born, had set him apart.

This man is going to be my apostle. I know he's going to go 30 years in the wrong direction, do a lot of wrong things, even persecute my people. But I'll turn him around.

So it's a great encouragement for us to know, even if we wandered from the day we were born to the day we were converted, maybe 15, in my case nearly 20 years, wandered in the world and all that. Yet, to know that God set me apart from my mother's womb to be his servant. And I don't know at what age you were converted.

And you probably have a history of a lot of worldliness before that. And I've had people come to CFC and say, Brother Zach, I thought I was born again before I came here. But I feel after listening to the gospel that is preached in this church, I feel I've really been born again only after coming here.

And I can understand that. And they say, because first of all, I never knew what sin was till I came here, the seriousness of sin. And how could I turn from sin if I don't know what it is? And until I turn from sin, that is repent, I can't really receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.

So it's really, I've really been converted only after I come here. I mean, in my own case, I would say, though I was converted when I was 20, I mean, I really understood the new covenant only after we started CFC. Well, that's the truth.

But 41 years ago, 40 years ago, a little over 40. So there is there's a difference between seeing something externally and seeing something inwardly. Now, here he says, God set me apart from his mother's womb and called me through his grace.

And he was pleased, Galatians 1:16, to reveal his son inside me. Now, that's not seeing Jesus on the road to Damascus. No.

This is the same revelation that Peter got. You know what Jesus said, Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, because flesh and blood is not revealed. It's a very important New Testament word, revelation, revealed, not understood.

In the Old Testament, it was understanding. That's why you had scribes in the Old Testament who went to the Bible schools in those days and studied and studied all the laws of Moses. And they could quote this and that.

And people came to them like you go to a doctor for a prescription or a consultation. They will go to the scribes and say, this is what's happening in my home. What should I do? And they tell you, well, this word

says this versus that.

They were scholars. It was understanding and knowledge. But in the New Testament, it is revelation.

A word that's almost never found in the Old Testament, revelation, the church is built on revelation. If you don't have revelation on Christ, who He is, I mean, you can get into the committed members list, but you're not really part of the body of Christ. I'll tell you that.

I might as well tell you the truth. You need to seek God for the Holy Spirit to give you revelation on who Jesus is. I can't give it to you.

I can give you knowledge. But when you see the revealed Christ, your life will change. My life changed when I saw the revealed Christ.

So it pleased God to reveal His Son in me. It's only God who revealed His Son in me. What did Jesus say? The same thing Jesus said to Peter, we saw in one Matthew 16, flesh and blood has not revealed this to you.

So I want to ask you, my dear brothers and sisters, you hear a lot of truths from me. I know most of you have a tremendous respect for me and believe that I'm not trying to deceive you. I speak the truth to you.

And you've got a good mind to be able to understand what I explain to you in very simple words. But with all of that, you may not have revelation. And that could be the reason why your life is so up and down and up and down and up and down and so shallow that you don't seem to make much progress in your Christian life because it is not built on a rock.

Shaky. The rock is revelation. The revealed Christ on this rock, I will build my church.

That's why I earnestly urge you to seek for the spirit of wisdom and revelation. Ephesians chapter one, Ephesus was the finest church in the early days. It became pretty corrupt by the time you read Revelation chapter two.

But when Paul was there, Paul stayed there for three years. He never stayed longer in any church other than that. Ephesians.

Why do I say Ephesians was the best church? Because all the other letters of Paul, he corrects people for various things. But in Ephesians, he doesn't have any correction to give. It's an amazing church, no correction.

All the other letters you see, Paul is correcting something or the other. And to the Ephesian church, which is the finest church, where Paul had preached about 2000 sermons in three years, as we read in Acts 20. You know what he tells him? He says in Ephesians 1.16. First of all, he says, I've heard of your faith in Jesus.

Verse 15. Great. I've heard of your love for all the saints.

Think of a church that has got faith in Jesus and love for all the saints. And he says, I always give thanks for you. And I pray for you.

Now, what is my prayer? My prayer is not that you guys will get health and wealth. Paul is not an old covenant preacher like today's preachers. No, he's not praying that they'll get health and wealth.

He's praying something far more important. He says, I'm praying that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory, should give you something more important than health and wealth. The spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the knowledge of God, in the knowledge of Christ.

Have you ever thought of somebody praying like that for you? You know, this is a much better prayer to pray for people than to pray for their healing and to pray that they'll get a good job and a good house and a lot of money. All that will come if you seek God's kingdom first. Paul never prays for such things.

You see all the prayers of the apostle in the different letters. He never prays for anything material, anything physical. It's so different from a lot of prayers that people pray today.

That shows the shallowness of their life. Most prayers of Christians are for earthly things. And that's because they themselves are so shallow.

You see a pig is only interested in muck. It's not interested in anything else. A cat is interested in milk and fish, things like that.

There's certain things you're interested in. And where a man is only interested in earthly things, there's something wrong with him. He's a child of Adam, not really a child of God.

The child of God should be interested in heavenly things. And so Paul says, I'm praying that you'll get a spirit of revelation in the knowledge of Christ, to know Him. And he says, I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened.

Because that's what happened to him. And he knew that's what changed his life. And that's what changed Peter's life.

When I see so many Christians who say they've accepted Christ, even in our CFC, and I see what their interests are. They spend such a lot of time watching movies at home, when they don't even know the Bible yet. Now I'm not against a clean, absolutely clean movie.

But they're very rare. But when a person can spend a lot of time watching even that, and not have time for the scripture, I see there's something wrong with this guy's conversion. He hasn't got revelation.

He hasn't seen what is most valuable things in life. But I see the way a lot of Christians, even in CFC, spend their money. I mean, you get a little impression.

I don't know exactly how they spend it. But wasting their time, going to restaurants here and there, all the time, when they could very well eat at home. Because they've got a lot of money to throw around.

No wonder they don't get revelation. Because Jesus said, if you're not faithful with unrighteous mammon, I will never give you the true riches. Read that in Luke 16 verse 11.

That section, Luke 16, 10 to 13, is very important. You are not faithful with the money I give you. I'm not talking about righteous.

Righteous means, I don't cheat, I don't steal, I haven't not got anybody's money, I've returned everybody, I've repaid my debts. Faithful means, I'm very careful with the money God has given me, my salary. I'm absolutely convinced, as I've seen Christians around the world, that's only those who are 100% faithful with money, who get revelation.

All the others who carelessly waste their money and throw it around, you listen to them, there's no revelation. They repeat what they've heard from others. That's not revelation.

It's good, it's second best. But Paul prays that you guys will have the spirit of revelation, the thing that changed my life. And I'll tell you, it's only revelation that can change our life and give us grip with the truth and make us rejoice always and walk in triumph 24 hours a day.

It's this rock of revelation on which the church is built. I'm talking about the true church. And let's get back to Matthew 16.

So Peter, you're a small rock, but on this rock of the revealed Christ, which you just confessed, I will build my church. So this is why it's so important, that prayer of Paul's. I pray that you'll have the spirit of revelation in the knowledge of him.

I pray, say that to all of you. I pray that you'll have the spirit of revelation and the knowledge with Jesus Christ, where you know Christ in an inward way, in such a way that even if everybody in the church fell away, you will not fall away. That's what revelation brings.

I remember in the early days when God began to show me, it was way back in 1975 and 76, and God began to show me the truths of the new covenant of a life of overcoming. And it came home to my heart and I was gripped by it. And it was so real.

And as I began to experience it, I said, Lord, this is amazing. And even if everybody, only a few of us meeting that time, even if everybody leaves me, it doesn't make a difference to me. I've seen the truth finally.

And I said, even if all of India opposes me, I'm going to preach it because it's changed my life. It's revelation. That's what made these apostles in those early days bold.

It didn't matter if the whole world opposed them. I want to ask you, my brothers and sisters, do you have a faith like that? Do you have a faith where if everybody else around you says, no, this Christ is all rubbish and this is all nonsense about new covenant and all, you say, no, you can say what you like. I've been gripped by the truth.

I don't know whether that's true of all of you. I don't know whether you're holding a truth because there are so many others around you holding it. It's like these crowded buses in India.

You don't have to move. They're crowded. The people behind you will just push you forward.

You just stand still. I feel a lot of people are moving forward like that. It's not on their own steam.

It's not through personal devotion to Christ. So it's very, very important, this matter of having revelation of Christ within because the true church is only built there. I mean, I remember also the Lord asking me this question, if everybody opposes what you say, will you still hold true to it? I said, sure.

I've seen the truth in my heart. It doesn't make a difference if everybody in the world says it's all wrong. See, when you grip with the truth like that, it radically changes your life.

Money is no longer important to you. The honor and position of men and all that is just a lot of rubbish. You don't even care whether people appreciate what you say.

You don't want their appreciation. You don't want their gratitude. You don't want anything because you're gripped by God.

You know God. You live before his face. So my dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you, seek for the revelation of the knowledge of Jesus Christ in your heart.

Peter says, I pray that you will grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Don't take those words, just read it. What does it mean to grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ? It's by revelation.

Okay, I want to move on. Matthew chapter 16. We read here that further in Matthew 16, 18, the Lord said, I will build my church and the forces of hell will not be able to overpower it.

So that is the mark of the true church. Very clear. The powers of darkness, the forces of hell will not be able to overcome it.

Church will always overcome the forces of darkness. The church goes against the forces of darkness and overcomes it. The forces of darkness may attack the church and the church cannot be overcome.

So when you see a church that's overcome by the forces of darkness, where the pastor falls into adultery or some other pastor runs after money and the leaders are always interested in getting your money to make, become richer and richer themselves. You can be pretty sure that the devil's overcome that church. Do you know, I'll tell you why.

I'll show you two verses. Luke chapter 16. Luke 16.

Jesus said, no one can serve two masters. Luke 16 and verse 13. The two masters are God and money.

So there are only two masters. Why didn't he say God and Satan? Because Satan comes as an angel of light. If Satan came with fierce, ugly face and horns and hooves and a forked tail, you would run away from him.

But if you see an angel, wow! You know all these people who sometimes testify in meetings that I saw an angel when I prayed and somebody else says I saw two angels. They are demons. These people are testifying about the demons they saw, that they saw angels.

Second Corinthians chapter says very clearly, the devil's transformed into an angel of light. So, we got to be careful that when Satan, he won't come as Satan. So, I'll tell you how he comes.

He comes as an angel. He also comes as money. That's why Jesus said, you can't serve God and money.

Because behind that pursuit of money is the devil. And so, when a person is going after money, he doesn't realize that he's actually going after the devil. He doesn't even realize that.

That's why the Bible says the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil. In second Timothy, sorry, one Timothy in chapter six, you see that verse? One Timothy chapter six, verse nine, those who want to get

rich. I'm not saying those who work hard and make a lot of money.

I'm not talking about those people. There are many God-fearing Christians who do business, work hard and make a lot of money. They become rich.

But they're just working to earn their living. But those whose main aim in life is to get rich. And if you fall into that category, please listen to what God's word says.

Those who have a great longing to get rich in this world, fall into temptation. It'll happen. You think you're smarter than the devil? You're not.

I prophesy you will fall into temptation because the Bible says so. You will fall into a snare. That's the second thing.

You'll fall into many foolish desires. You'll fall into many harmful desires. I'm just reading scripture.

It'll plunge you into ruin. It'll plunge you into destruction. Look at the lot of things that are written to a man who is pursuing after money.

He'll fall into temptation. He'll fall into a snare. He'll fall into foolish desires.

He'll fall into harmful desires. He'll fall, plunge into ruin and plunge into destruction. And verse 10, it is the root of all sorts of evil.

He says there are 101 other things he says, which I don't have time to mention. All sorts of evil. They'll wander away from the faith.

Verse 10. These are the results. So who's interested in your experiencing all these calamities? Certainly not God.

God's not interested in your falling into temptation and snare and foolish harmful desires and plunging into ruin and destruction. Who in the world is interested in ruining you like that? That's the devil. So what will he do? He won't come as a devil.

He'll run away. He may come as an angel. If you're a Pentecostal type, he may come to you as an angel.

But if you're not that type, he'll come to you as money, the pursuit of money. And get you. It looks so innocent, no? Just like an angel looks so nice.

And money looks so nice. To earn money, to support yourself, to get as much as you need, to work hard to get that, even Jesus did it. Jesus had four brothers and two sisters and a widowed mother at home.

And he worked hard in the carpenter shop to support them. And if you're working hard and you're not earning enough and you're working somewhere else, looking for a better job, that's perfectly okay. To find a house to live in or to build a house for your family to live in, all that is okay.

Or to save money for that is okay. The Lord's not talking here about saving money. It's a very good habit.

The Bible says, go and learn from the ant who saves up for the future. So it's good to have a savings account. But he's talking about those who are pursuing after getting rich.

That is their aim in life. They have more than enough, but they're not happy. They want more and more and more and more.

They're not rich towards God. They're rich towards themselves. That's the devil's aim.

And he's led so many Christians that way. He's led so many pastors that way. And so you find many churches where the emphasis is on money, money, money, money.

I know that because I get numerous emails from around the world that tell me about what they hear from their pastors in their churches. And you know, there are so many people who write to us and say, when are you going to start a CFC church here? I got an email a couple of weeks ago from Greenland. You know where Greenland is? It's where the Eskimos live.

Yeah, the internet reaches to the outermost parts of the earth. It's amazing. There are hungry people who are longing for the true church of God.

Jesus once said to the Jews who did not appreciate his presence there, he said, the Queen of Sheba, you know how many hundreds of miles she traveled to come and listen to Solomon? And here's someone greater than Solomon is here, just across the road, and you fellows don't appreciate it. I feel a lot of people who are in CFC, in our CFC Bangalore, do not appreciate what you have here. I'll give you one example.

I want to ask you, how many of you get the weekly word for the week from CFC and listen to and read it every week? I don't want you to raise your hands because it'll embarrass a lot of other people or it'll make some people tell lies here by raising their hands. Who get it every week and read it every week? If you don't, it's free. If you don't have an internet connection, okay, understood.

But if you get it and it just lies there in your inbox and you don't even read it, how much value do you have? The Queen of Sheba traveled so many miles to get it. Here it comes into your inbox and you don't even have time to read it. Next question.

How many of you have read through, not listened rather, listened to 70 hours through the Bible? It was published more than 14 years ago. I mean on the internet, audio and on CDs. Have you heard it even once? In 14 years, 70 hours.

That comes to only five hours a week, five hours a year, five hours in a year. Have you heard it? Again, I won't ask you to raise your hands. You're too smart, right? You already know everything in the Bible, right? You don't need to listen to all this.

No wonder your life is so shallow, even though you think you're so smart and everybody appreciates you. Maybe you have a name in CFC. God calls that rubbish.

You think it's very important that people appreciate you in CFC. God calls it rubbish. I hope you see that.

Do you have time to listen to it? I have personally met people who are listening to it every single day on their smartphone and who have heard it three times, not CFC people, other people, King of Sheba and all, a lot of people like that, who are listening to it from here and there around the world. And some queens also, I think. I get to hear only the kings.

But anyway, my point is, we take for granted so many things that we have. But when it comes to the pursuit of money, boy, if there's some get-rich scheme that comes up somewhere, boy, how will you look

up that one? Turn to another passage of scripture in Matthew chapter 4. How did the devil come to Jesus? It says here, the last temptation. He had tried to tempt Jesus to act on his own, do a miracle for himself.

The first temptation was, do a miracle for yourself. Turn stones into bread. When you're hungry, do something for yourself.

Use the power God has given you to get something for yourself. And Jesus said no. He did use that power to feed 5,000 ones, multiply the bread, but he'd never do it for himself.

This is the word the Lord spoke to me when I left the Navy. The anointing I have given you, you must never use it to get anything for yourself. I said, yes, Lord.

I will never use the power you give me to get something for myself, usually money. I won't do it. Never, never, never.

We hardly find many preachers like that. But that is the temptation that came to Jesus. God has given you a power, now use it to satisfy your need.

And Jesus said no. I will use it to satisfy the need of others. That is the first temptation in case you never understood it till now.

Do you use the power God has given you to satisfy your need? For example, do you know the number of singers in the world, Christian musicians? Use the ability God has given them to get honor for themselves. What is the difference between that and turning the stones into bread to satisfy your need? Absolutely no difference. Where Jesus overcame, they have fallen.

They've used their ability, a God-given ability to sing or play an instrument to get honor for themselves and make a lot of money for themselves. Some of them are millionaires, writing songs. Lord made it very clear to me, when you write a book, don't get any money for it.

When you get to do anything, don't seek for money for it. Don't try to get rich of an anointing I gave you. Don't even get honor.

Don't seek for it. Then the second temptation that the devil tempted Jesus was with trying, instead of faith, presumption. Presumption means try and claim a promise of God and do something stupid, like jump off the top of the temple and say, well, I claim this promise.

There are people who do that also. When God has provided stairs to go down, don't jump off the roof. That's the meaning in that story.

The application of it is, when you're sick, don't say, I'll trust God to heal me. If God has provided medicines, that's like the staircase. Use it to come down.

Don't jump off the roof and say, I'll trust God, you'll die. There are a lot of people who said, I won't take medicines and I'll trust God and they've died. Presumption.

You need to distinguish between presumption and faith. There are people who don't study properly. They say, I'll trust God.

That's why they end up without jobs and they struggle all their life because they're super spiritual and say, I won't study properly. God will take care of me. There's no such promise.

Don't be presumptuous. And the third one, this is what I was coming to. Okay, the devil says, I couldn't succeed with this.

I couldn't succeed with that. I'll finally succeed with, let me see if I can succeed with money. Do you know that Jesus attempted money? Matthew 4.8, the devil took him and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

The glory of the kingdoms of this world is their wealth. What else is there in all the kingdoms? Why do they say America is a superpower? Because it's got so much money. Why are the countries in Africa considered low down? Because they don't have money.

It's money, which is the glory of the world. And Jesus, the devil showed it to him saying, I'll give you all this if you just bow down to me. And you think if the devil tempted Jesus with it, he's not going to tempt you.

There are only two masters in the world, God and money. And the devil comes in the form of offering you money. And remember this, that very often a lot of people who get it, they get it in unrighteous ways.

Any money that you have got in your life through doing something unrighteous, through cheating, through telling a lie, let me tell you how you got it. You bowed your knee to Satan at that time and got it. Judas Iscariot bowed his knee to Satan and got 30 pieces of silver.

He gave it back afterwards to the priest, but he did not repent. If he had repented, he'd have gone to the cross and said, Lord, forgive me. He went and hung himself.

You can give back money that you have taken wrongfully and yet not have repented. I've seen people who've done that. Because repentance requires humility.

Giving it back doesn't solve the problem. Judas Iscariot gave back the money he took wrongfully. I want to ask you if you have repented, not just given the money back.

So you see there how the devil tries to destroy Judas Iscariot with money. He destroyed Gehazi in the Old Testament with money. Think of this.

Elijah was the great prophet. When he went up to heaven, his anointing came upon Elisha and Elisha got double the anointing of Elijah. And if you look in the Old Testament and look at the miracles that Elijah did and the miracles that Elisha did, Elijah raised one man from the dead, Elisha raised two people from the one after he was dead through his bones.

And every miracle that Elijah did, Elisha did double. He got a double portion of the anointing. So can you imagine what Gehazi would have been? Gehazi would have been the most respected name in the Old Testament.

A man who had four times the anointing of Elijah. Look what he missed. He missed because he went after some rich general to get his money.

How the devil has destroyed people who could have had a fantastic ministry and instead of that all they got was money in some position. Don't let that happen to you. Don't let that happen to you.

So when Jesus said, I will build my church and the powers of spiritual darkness will not be able to overpower it. You understand now how the powers of spiritual darkness are overpowering so many churches. It's not only by adultery.

It's not only by infighting and division and strife. It's by making that church preoccupied with money and its leaders especially. And where the leaders use the anointing God has given them to get money for themselves, to gain for themselves, to buy cars and houses and airplanes and all types of things for themselves to make their life more comfortable, to exalt themselves above other people, to get titles for themselves of reverend and right reverend and archbishops and metropolitans and cardinals and popes.

Where do we find all this in scripture? The devil has overpowered so many churches and there's hardly anybody who speaks against all these things. I don't want to belong to such a church. I don't want to belong to a church that I see satan has overpowered.

I want to get out of those churches. I want to be a part of church where I may not be perfect but at least we are fighting against the devil and seeking to overcome him. And of course the greatest way in which the devil overpowers the church is through sin.

And if he can get a church where the emphasis is not against sin, he succeeded. A church where the emphasis is on you know miracles and singing. Do you know the best musicians in the world are not Christians? The best musicians in the world are worldly people.

The best pianist, guitar players are not Christians. They are worldly people. Sure, the best eloquent speakers in the world are not Christians.

They are politicians. Many politicians who can hold an audience grip for two hours. These are not the marks of a powerful church.

Eloquent speaking and wonderful music. No, not at all. Not even big buildings.

The world has got much better buildings than any church has. But I'll tell you what the world doesn't have. Holiness and purity and humility.

If I can tell you three things the devil doesn't have and if you have them you can overcome satan. If you have money, devil's got more than you. You're clever, the devil is cleverer than you.

You can sing, the devil can sing better than you. But if you got humility, you'll overcome. Because devil's got zero of that.

You must have weapons that the devil doesn't have. The devil is not afraid of a rich man. The devil is not afraid of an eloquent man.

The devil is not even afraid of a good singer or a good musician. But he's scared of someone who is genuinely humble. Not someone who is acting humble before you, you know, speaking in soft words and angry.

No, but one humble and says in Philippians 2.8, he humbled himself by being obedient to the death of the cross. That is the mark of humility. That Jesus was willing to go to the cross and die in secret every day for 33 years.

He died to himself. And if the devil finds somebody like that here, I'll tell you the devil will be scared of you. I want the devil to be scared of me.

Think how effective your life will be if the devil's scared of you. You'll be a blessing to people around you because the world is surrounded by people who have been influenced by Satan. So here's number one thing the devil doesn't have.

Humility. Pursue it. Pursue it.

Another thing the devil doesn't have is godliness or holiness, pure thoughts. The devil doesn't have pure thoughts. And if you, okay, you slip up in having dirty thoughts, but if you allow it and you don't take it seriously, you're getting more and more into fellowship with the devil.

You're going to hate it. If you hate and you're fighting dirty thoughts, you're on the right track. At least you're fighting it.

But if you don't hate it and you don't detest it, brother, be careful that you don't get into fellowship with the devil with all your Christian language and new covenant language on top of it. And in secret, you're in fellowship with the devil with your thinking. The devil does not have godliness.

The devil doesn't have godliness in thoughts. It doesn't have godliness in his speech, doesn't have godliness in his actions or his attitudes or motives or anything. So godliness covers many areas, our thoughts and our words.

If your words are not becoming better and better, you better be careful. This is the way we can have authority over Satan. We want to build a church the gates of hell cannot prevail against.

We want to overcome Satan. Here's the second thing we got to pursue with all your heart. And the third thing, the devil, there are many things, but I just listen, list these three is contentment.

You see, when he was created as the highest of the angels, you read that in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. He was not happy to be there. He was perfect.

He read in Ezekiel 28. He was not content, even though God placed him in the highest position in heaven. The only person above him was God.

He was discontent. He said, I want to go higher. That spirit of discontentment, of wanting to go above others, to push other people down and get on top of them, that is Satan.

And when that gets into any person, he doesn't realize that he's in hand and glove with the devil. When you want to push other people down, when you want to show in a church, I can pray better than others. I can preach better than others.

I can sing better than others. And secretly in your mind, you say, boy, wasn't that good, what I did, the way I prayed just now, or that sermon I preached, or the way I'm leading the singing, or the way I'm playing the instruments. You don't realize the devil's sitting right inside your head.

Where are you going to be a part of a church that the gates of hell don't prevail against? He's prevailing against you all the time. We got to understand the devil's schemes. Paul once said, we're not ignorant of Satan's schemes.

Tell me, am I speaking the truth or not? Aren't these Satan's schemes? Discontent began in the world with Lucifer. He was the first created being to be discontent with what he had. He wanted to be above others.

That spirit that wants to be above. Do you know that we read in John chapter 6, after Jesus fed the 5,000, they wanted to make him a king. You know what he did? He came to be the king of the world, but he would not receive that crown from human beings.

He said, my father has to give it to me. When men came to crown him, he just ran away and said, I don't want it. Don't seek for honor from people.

Don't think about it in your mind, to think that people honor you and appreciate you. You're just opening up your mind to the devil. Then you'll have problems in many other areas.

See, if we are not ignorant of the Satan's schemes and say, hey, I kept the back door open. I'm keeping the front door shut against the devil and the back door is open. And he walks right in.

So be careful that you don't seek for honor or this pursuit after money. These are the ways in which the devil comes. And you see plenty of that in so many churches.

And that is how churches have been overrun. Show me a church that fights against pride, which is the opposite of humility, fights against sin, which is the opposite of godliness, and fights against discontentment and grumbling and murmuring and complaining and teaches people to be content with what they have. There you'll have a church which overcomes Satan.

And that's what we want our church to be. We want to build people in this church who pursue humility with a passion, who know, always feel, I'm not humble enough. I feel like that.

I don't feel I have reached the humility of Jesus yet. Because Jesus said, learn from me, for I am humble and gentle of heart. And I honestly stand before God and say, Lord, I am trying to learn that every day of my life.

That is why God is my witness. I say, I judge myself every single day to find some unchrist likeness that I can cleanse myself from, be a little more christ-like, to go down and go down and go down. Pursue it.

We want to build a church where people are pursuing godliness, where you're not satisfied with the level of holiness you have attained to. Can you honestly say that? I am not satisfied with the level of holiness I've attained. There's a lot more I have to get.

And I'm not just sitting back and waiting for it to drop from heaven. Because I know the Bible says, God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. He's not a rewarder of those who sit back in their easy chairs and say, wait a minute, God dropped something on me.

He'll drop nothing on you. You sit there lazily and the devil will drop a lot of things into your lap. But the ones who find God are the ones who diligently seek him.

Jeremiah 29 verse 13. You will seek me, says the Lord, and find me when you search for me with all your heart. Those are the things which Jesus taught in his parables.

The widow going to the judge and saying, I've got you. Deliver me from my enemy. Deliver me from my enemy.

Waking him up at two o'clock in the morning. Deliver me from my enemy. Read it in Luke 18.

And finally the judge says, and the Lord says, look what this unrighteous judge says. And you think your heavenly father will not do for you if you cry to him day and night. I must show you that verse because some of you don't believe that's what Jesus said.

He told us to cry day and night. Turn to Luke 18. It's a story of a person, verse 3, who wants legal protection against my enemy.

She's not a widow, a helpless person. She doesn't have a husband. She doesn't even have any children to go and plead for her.

She's a widow without children. Otherwise, why should she go herself, 80 year old lady going to a judge? She has no husband, no children. It's a picture of the helplessness of the human being before, you know, in the presence of the devil is too strong for us.

Goes to the only one who can help, that is the judge. And what is the request? Give me legal. That means give me my rights.

I'm not asking for the enemy's property. I don't want my enemy's property. Don't let the enemy take my property.

This neighbor of mine is encroaching, encroaching and taking over my property. Please protect me. I want to keep my property for myself.

What is legally mine. The nature of Christ is legally mine. Jesus' blood on the cross.

Ask God for it. And the devil is trying to steal it from me. Lord, give it to me.

And she has to keep on asking, asking, asking, asking. And finally, the judge says, He shall wear me out, verse 5, by her continual coming. And he's talking about how we should pray.

Do you wear out God by your continually coming into asking him for something? Again and again, the Lord's reminded me of this. Sometimes you ask for something and then you give up after a little while. Is that what I taught you in scripture? To continually go till you wear out the person.

And the Lord says, see what that unrighteous judge says in verse 7, Luke 18, 7. Shall not God bring about justice that is our legal right? For whom? For us who are his elected children, who cry to him day and night. Do you cry to him day and night for your inheritance? Laid back attitude saying, I'll go next Sunday and listen to what they say in CFC. Maybe I'll get something.

Utterly stirred by the message, it lasts a few days. But if you cry, go to God and cry to him day and night, you'll get something permanent. Those are the people who have counted for God on this earth.

Who ask for protection against the devil and want to overcome him, who cried, the rock on which I'll build my church and the powers of darkness will not prevail against it. Now I want to show you one more thing and that is, this was also the time, Matthew 16, verse 21, when Jesus began to teach his disciples for the first time that he was going to be crucified. See the connection between the first time about the church and the first time about the cross.

There's a close connection between building the church and the way of the cross. And that's the first time Jesus spoke about the cross as well. And notice what happened.

As soon as Jesus said, I'm going to be killed and he even said, I'm going to be raised up. Peter said in verse 22, God forbid it, Lord, that's never going to happen to you. If I were to paraphrase his words, I'll never let that happen to you, Lord.

I'll stand in front of you. I'll let them stab me and kill me. I'll never let them touch you.

Wouldn't you be delighted if you have a friend like that who would say, I'm going to defend you even if I lose my life? How does Jesus turn around and tell him? Oh, he says, oh, thank you so much, Peter, for saying like that. You're such a good friend of mine. No, he says, get behind me, Satan.

Is that the way you should respond to someone who's trying to save your life? Jesus wasn't interested in his life being saved. What do I learn from that? The voice that tells me not to go the way of the cross is the voice of Satan. If you recognize that, you're a blessed person.

Any voice that tells you, don't humble yourself, don't go the way of the cross, is the voice of the devil. And you have to say to it, get behind me, Satan. That's what I learned from this rebuke that the Lord gave.

Because he says, Peter, your mind is on worse interests than you. The reason we seek our own is because our mind is on our own interests, not God's interests. I'm convinced that there are very few believers whose minds are on God's interests, who are always saying, hello, be glorified in the church.

I don't want just to go and have a nice meeting with people. I want your name to be glorified. I don't want my children just to do well in school.

I want your name to be glorified in my children, the way they grew up, the way they live. Your mind is on man's interests. You ask yourself, brothers and sisters, whether there's a little bit of that in your mind.

Avoiding the way of the cross and seeking to preserve yourself. That's what he went on to say in verse 24. If you want to come after me, you've got to take up your cross, deny yourself, take up the cross and follow me.

And if you don't do that, you try to save your life. Verse 26, you're not talking about physical life now, our self-life. If you try to save your self-life, how do you save your self-life? In a provocative situation at home, between you and your wife, you want to preserve your dignity and your self-life and you refuse to die to yourself and the end is a fight and a quarrel or between you and your husband.

Okay, you saved your self-life. You did not allow your self-life to die at that time. You asserted yourself.

You made your opinion known and you feel a little satisfied that you told your husband what you thought of him or you told your wife what you thought about her and you preserved your life. I'll tell you what will happen. Jesus says you'll lose it.

You will definitely lose it. But if you're willing to give up that life at that time, you'll get eternal life from God. That's what he's saying.

You'll get the life of God replacing that self-life that you gave up in that moment of temptation. Why is it you have not partaken more and more of the life of God? Because there were so many opportunities

where God said to you, give up your self-life now. I'll give you my life.

You said no. I'm going to stand up for my rights. I'm going to fight for my right.

I'm not going to die here. I'm going to say what I want to say. Okay, go ahead.

The Lord won't force you. You preserve your own self-life and see what your condition that you're in today. Be honest, my brothers and sisters.

Some of you have been here in CFC for so many years. Have you really made all the progress you should have made in all these years? And if not, ask yourself, isn't it because in numerous situations, you preserved your self-life and there you are today. Poverty stricken spiritually without revelation, without the anointing of God.

As God wants your anointing to become greater and greater and greater and greater as the years go by. Think of the years that have already wasted. At least wake up now.

And he says here, what will you gain? Verse 26, if you gain the whole world, even if you keep preserving your self-life, ultimately you gain the whole world. I mean, nobody is pursuing after the wealth of the whole world. But even if you did and you lose the opportunity that God gave you on earth to partake of eternal life, you've gained nothing.

And then he says, I will be coming back soon in glory, verse 27. And every man in that day will get exactly according to his deeds. Have you built the church? I don't mean coming and helping here in so many ways, that's good.

But the way you build the church is by your taking up the cross in your daily life. That's why I've often said, the important day in many churches is Sunday, for important day for us is Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. The way we live during the week, that's how we build the church.

The way you live at home, the way you live in your office, the way you behave on the roads, the way you conduct yourself, where you don't preserve your self-life, the opportunities God gives you. You say, Lord, I give up my life so that I can partake of your life. It's a much better life.

I've often pictured myself like, you know, Jesus is our bridegroom. We are the bride. But we are like a poor beggar woman whom a prince wants to come and marry.

That's a picture of Christ in me. So I picture myself like a beggar woman sitting by the wayside with my tin can, with all the coins inside, which amount to about two rupees by now. And this prince comes by in a flashy car and stops beside me and says, I want to marry you.

This is exactly the picture of salvation in case you haven't seen it. I see it very clearly. It's so ridiculous, humanly speaking, but that's what Jesus did.

This prince of heaven coming to this beggar woman sitting with a tin can and saying, I want to marry you. It's almost like a joke. He says, it's not a joke.

I want to marry you. But you got to give me everything in your tin can and I'll give you all of the riches of heaven. In other words, I'll put my millions into the bank account.

Let's have a joint account. But you must put your two rupees there also. And if I say, well, let me think about it.

Let me pray over that and see whether I want to have a joint account with you. This is the stupidity of so many Christians who haven't seen what they have missed by not having a joint account with Jesus. You can't have a joint account with Jesus if you don't give everything that you have in your tin can.

You can't take one or two coins and say, OK, I'll give you this much. The Lord says, no, I'm giving you everything. You've got to give me everything.

Otherwise, we don't have a joint account. It's wonderful to have a joint account with Jesus Christ. You have missed it.

You can start today. Give up your self-life. I'll give you my life.

That's what he's saying. That is how the church is built. So I want to encourage you, my brothers and sisters.

Go home. Take Matthew chapter 6, verse 16 to 27. Read it.

Meditate on it. Ask God to give you revelation and say, Lord, I want to be a very useful member of building the church. I can't preach.

Never mind. You can build a church. I can't sing.

Never mind. You can build a church. Lord, I don't have any spiritual gift.

Never mind. You can build a church if you're willing to give your all to Christ as your bridegroom and give up your self-life and the daily temptations that come your way and say, Lord, I'm going to take up the cross and follow you. That is how every member here can build a church.

And you'll be surprised, like Jesus said, you know, when the last day comes, verse 27, I will give to every person according to their deeds. You think it's only the preachers and the singers and the musicians are going to get a reward. They may be lost because they didn't die to themselves in their daily life.

They just stood up in front and got a lot of honor from people. And then you'll find some people whom you didn't think much of, who faithfully took that word and died to themselves in their daily life. You'll see them in that final day when Jesus comes going forward to get their reward and you'll get the shock of your life.

Boy, I didn't think much of that brother or that sister in CFC. How in the world is he or she going up to get the best reward? There's no partiality with God. He does not reward people according to their gifts, because gifts are what he gives them.

He cannot reward me for my preaching because I have, is a gift he gave me. He can reward me if I'm faithful with it. That's another thing.

He's going to reward you for faithfulness in the daily life and everybody sitting here has the opportunity for that. Who is hindering you, tell me, from crying day and night to God? Lord, I want an overcoming life. Lord, I want an anointing in my life that increases.

Who's stopping you from doing that? For your life can be a tremendous blessing to others. Read this week's Word for the Week of the gift called HELPS. Read it and ask God to make you one like that, a gift to the church.

So I just said that. I shared this today so that you can know that everyone sitting here can actively build the church, unlike the Israelites in the congregation of Moses, who could only observe God's actions. Let's bow our heads in prayer.

Heavenly Father, as we bow before you, I pray, Lord God, our Father, that we will all be gripped by this wonderful truth that we can be, every one of us, effective, useful members in the body of Jesus Christ. Lord, give us that strength to cry out to you day and night, till we are filled and anointed and rivers of living water start flowing out from us, blessing others. Deliver us from our lethargy and our laziness and half-heartedness and Lord, and give us a heart to pursue after you, to seek after you with all our hearts.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

---

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/FFDOq6B6NKs.mp4>  
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/how-jesus-builds-his-church/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**