

Important Exhortations for Church Elders

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Transcript

Lord Jesus, we want to acknowledge your presence in our midst. We believe we have gathered here in your name with a good conscience, to the best of our knowledge. And so we believe you are in our midst.

It is your church that you have called us to build, but you are the builder. Help us to be sensitive to your voice and equip us to serve you better. We want to glorify your name in each of our locations and be united together to fulfill your purpose in the place where you have placed us.

We want to be anointed with the Holy Spirit and equipped with gifts to serve you. We want to build families that glorify you. We want to walk in lowliness of mind, Lord, before you and in fellowship with one another.

Give us an open heaven at this time and speak to our hearts, we pray. Thank you. We believe you will.

Amen. I'd like to turn to Philippians chapter 2. There are some chapters in the New Testament which are very unique and very valuable, like Ephesians 1, here's another one, Philippians 2, because I believe we are told here the main secret of a Christian life and service, and the two greatest sins that we will have to battle to the end of our lives. Some of the sins mentioned in Matthew 5, 6, and 7, the Sermon on the Mount, are in a sense easier to finish with if you are faithful, but there Jesus said at the end of it that if you listen to these words of mine and do them, you will build your house on a rock.

That's my personal life, my family life, and my church. That's the end of the Sermon on the Mount, and any person who doesn't take those words seriously will find something or the other shaky, his life will be shaky, his home will be shaky, and his church will be shaky. So maybe I should begin there before we go to Philistines 2. Please turn with me to Matthew 7. We are called to proclaim something which most of Christendom is not proclaiming, and that is primarily the Sermon on the Mount.

And that is the reason so many churches are shaky, so many families are shaky, and so many individual lives are shaky. And that's why you have pastors falling into adultery, that's why you have divorce rampant in evangelical churches, and remarriage, and pastors divorced and remarried, all types of things. And here in the United States, that's more rampant than in almost any other country in the world.

So if you're building a church in this country, we have to be careful that these forces overwhelm us. And so this passage, Matthew 7, 24 to 27, is important because that shows why a personal life or a family life or a church life can be solid and unshakable or can be shaken. Matthew 7, 24, everyone who hears these words of mine and does them is like a wise man who built his house on a rock, the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew, and whatever that means, circumstances, contrary winds and everything, all the

attacks of Satan, attacks of men, name it, it did not fall.

But then there's another group of people, verse 26, these are not non-Christians. These are not unbelievers. They are people who hear these words.

Who are the people who hear the words of Jesus? These words of mine means Matthew 5, 6, and 7. Who are the people who hear these words? Who are the people who read these words? Most Christians. But they don't do them, and that doesn't apply only to Matthew 5, 6, and 7, but to many passages in Scripture. I believe we should be alert to be aware what are the teachings in the New Testament that are being preached but people don't follow.

I remember years ago when I started preaching more about the new covenant, I felt the teaching of Jesus was like, let's imagine the picture of the face of Jesus. None of us have seen it, but whatever he looks like, a perfect face, and there's a picture of it, and you know these posters sometimes are stuck on the wall of a person's face and then somebody's torn it and the face is disfigured. That's how I see the face of Jesus in most churches.

A lot of what he's taught, if you take the whole counsel of God as the face of Jesus Christ, it's disfigured. Maybe there's a bit of an eye there and a bit of an ear and you don't even know who it is. This is the gospel and the message being preached in most churches.

And the Lord has raised us up to proclaim the full counsel of God and to see what are the parts that are left out, and that's what the Lord told me. You've got to listen to what other people are preaching because that's what your flock has been influenced by, and then read the scriptures and see what are the parts that are missing. What are the parts of the New Testament that others are not preaching or emphasizing? That's why if you've heard me for a few years, you know that I almost always speak on certain subjects because the other things everybody else is talking about.

So here's this foolish man who the winds blew and the slam of it, great was its fall. So if you look at that, as I said, a picture of a personal life, family life, and church life, all three to be unshakable, especially family life, severely attacked these days, to be absolutely unshakable. And I believe this is something we should work towards, our children unshakable, founded on the Lord, growing up in godliness, husband-wife relationship in godliness, not shaky like on sand.

Then we have to take everything in Matthew 5, 6, and 7. I repeatedly go to it again and again and again to see, Lord, is there anything missing out in my life, my family life, or in the church that needs to be emphasized? People need to be reminded of it again and again, especially some of our churches, many new people are coming in and they have not heard these things. I've asked numerous people who have come to our church, for example, let's look at verse Matthew 5, 20. Unless your righteousness surpasses the righteousness of the Pharisees and the scribes, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

The earthly expression of the kingdom of heaven is the New Covenant Church. And it says, what we need to proclaim is a righteousness that exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. And the scribes and Pharisees kept the letter of the old covenant, they were very particular about that.

And then, I hope you have all seen that the rest of the Sermon on the Mount is an explanation of Matthew 5, 20. Your righteousness must surpass the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. And then the Lord says, okay, I'll explain it to you.

The righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees is, number one, don't kill, don't commit murder. That's good. It's one of the Ten Commandments.

You stop there, you come to the level of the righteous and scribes and Pharisees, but yours must exceed that if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven. Remember, as you read through this section, Matthew 5, 20, this is the qualification to enter God's kingdom. And this is what we proclaim in the church.

The church is the kingdom of heaven. You want to enter here, your righteousness must exceed. This is what we teach in the church.

Not just don't kill. What is the new covenant equivalent of that? We speak about new covenant church. Old covenant is don't kill, new covenant is don't get angry, verse 22.

Now we need to ask ourselves, first of all, have we, are we even seeking to fulfill that degree of righteousness, which exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees consistently? We must not be satisfied until unrighteous anger disappears from our life. There is a righteous anger and the righteous anger, I mean, I always say the, this is the written word, but the living word is Jesus Christ. So when I want to understand the written word, I look at the living word.

When was Jesus not angry? When was he angry? That's the easiest way to find out whether, which is righteous and which is unrighteous. When they slapped him, called him the devil and Beelzebul and spat on his face, zero anger. Ignored him, zero anger.

But when he saw the two instances, I see particularly when he saw people making money in the name of God, he was angry. And if you see a television program of some preacher asking for money and you don't get angry, you're not like Christ. Let me tell you that plainly.

You are not like Jesus Christ. You don't get, you don't burn with anger when you see that, or when you see some advertisement or an article, people asking for money, completely contrary to what Christ taught and we don't get angry. We are not Christ-like, even though we think we are Christ-like because we have been gracious to him.

Jesus was not gracious to those making money in the name of God. So that's what I mean. There is an anger which is righteous, there is an anger which is unrighteous.

You know, in Ephesians 4 it says, be angry with sin, which means there is an anger with sin and there's an anger without sin. So this is the difference. In other words, whatever people may say or do to me personally, if I get angry, I sin.

But Jesus never got angry. That is the living word. The written word is explained in the living word.

So let me emphasize that we need to examine ourselves if we do get angry in the place where Jesus was angry. And the other place where Jesus got angry was where he saw, you know, a man with a withered hand, I think it was in a synagogue and Pharisees were waiting to see whether Jesus would heal him. He was angry because of the lack of compassion that the Pharisees had towards the suffering man.

That's the other thing I must be angry with. When people, I don't care if it's in the church, somebody is not compassionate, it's hard hearted towards another person who's suffering in some way or a family that's suffering in some way. It's hard hearted.

A lot of preachers are very hard hearted. They are kind to those they love and are their favorites, but hard on others. Many preachers hit out in their sermons, it's maybe someone sitting in the congregation and they don't like or want to be exposed.

Jesus never did that. You know, the devil can make a person change the word the Lord gave him to speak by just sending into the meeting someone whose weakness, you know, or someone you don't like, or if you're against people wearing a lot of jewelry, somebody coming in a lot of jewelry, the devil can make you change your subject and you begin to preach against that person. That's one example I'm giving how our message must not be influenced by we see this person sitting here and that person sitting there, therefore I change my message, no.

I must be in touch with God. He'll give me the word to speak. There may be times when he gives me a word to speak with someone, but that's different.

So that's just one example. And then said your righteousness will exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees. The other thing he said, the old covenant standard was, was 27, you shall not commit adultery.

But the new covenant is, if you look at a single woman, verse 28, and desire her, you've already committed adultery. We must not only live by that, we have to proclaim it. Because I feel that in these days of abundance of pornography, there are probably a lot of men sitting in our churches who are defeated by that and who need to be delivered.

It's just like if you're in the old covenant and you were Moses and you saw a whole lot of people in your church were just committing adultery regularly, like Eli's sons were committing adultery with the people who came to the temple and Eli just kept quiet or said, Oh my son, you shouldn't do that. God said, you're finished Eli, you and your tribe will never be priests again. For the Lord said in the Old Testament, and when we see the new covenant standards, I should not imagine that everybody sitting in front of us are living a holy life, they're not.

We have to proclaim this. Otherwise, you're burning. You're talking to a man who doesn't have a kingdom, to a man who doesn't have a wife.

You've just got to put up with it. Jesus said, as I said, in the whole message of Christ Jesus said, Christ was made flesh in Jesus. That means this thing that is written here, where the righteousness exceeded the righteousness of the Pharisees.

This new covenant righteousness, this idea was made flesh in Jesus. And when it says, he who says he abides in him must walk as he walks. This is our calling.

To demonstrate that word has become flesh in our life or is increasingly becoming flesh in our life. And these are areas where we have to battle continuously. Never give up, never given a small place to the devil.

But it's interesting that these are the two primary sins that Jesus mentioned. Some of the others are a little easier to follow. But the number one and two was anger and lusting in our minds.

And interestingly those are the only two sins that he mentioned in the Sermon on the Mount where he said you can go to hell, not just miss the kingdom of heaven. If you read the entire Sermon on the Mount, the word hell comes only twice. And it's in relation to these two sins.

Matthew 5 22, you get angry with your brother you be guilty and if you call him some bad name you go to Supreme Court and if you say something more than that you will go to hell. Verse 22. I don't know how many Christians believe that.

And it's because their pastors and preachers don't preach it as strongly as Jesus did. Nobody preached about hell as much as Jesus. Not even Paul.

Jesus spoke about hell more than anybody else. And that's a subject that's almost not preached on today. The second mention of hell in the Sermon on the Mount, only two places.

The second is if your right eye, verse 29, makes you stumble better to tear it out otherwise your whole body will be thrown into hell. And if your right hand makes you stumble. Now remember this is speaking in relation to adultery.

And there are two ways you can commit adultery in the New Covenant standard. One is with your eyes and one is with your hands. I believe it refers to masturbation.

What is the other connection? I don't see any other connection between the right hand and the right eye and lusting. And if you do, verse 30, you're thrown into hell. Now it's a very high standard to preach and since most pastors and preachers don't live that standard they feel guilty about ever preaching it.

If you were to ask the people in your church, how many of you before you came here to our church were taught that anger was a sin? Serious sin. Serious enough to send you to hell. How many of you were taught that lusting with your eyes is a serious enough sin to send you to hell? Yeah and then you'll see how how much the face of Jesus has been disfigured.

And then we have to say what they're preaching is another Jesus. There are many other things mentioned here and I'll just mention one or two of them and then move on. Loving one's enemies.

Yeah I think we can, that's a little easier. Not seeking honor, chapter six, when we pray or fast. And when you come to fasting, notice Jesus did not say if you fast but when you fast.

You understand the difference between the two? There were a lot of difference between saying if you fast and when you fast. Jesus expected every one of his disciples to fast at some time. How much is up to you? He didn't specify how much.

I don't understand the full reason for it. I think partly it is to discipline our bodies. You know Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9 that every athlete trains himself to win a race and he relates it to the discipline of his own body.

In 1 Corinthians 9 the last verse. To paraphrase Paul's words there is, I don't let my body tell me what I should be doing. I tell my body what it should be doing.

And fasting is a help in that direction. At least now and then it's good for us to, when we have some time off, maybe begin with fasting a meal or two meals and then go on to have a full day of fasting and just have liquids. I remember in my younger days I did it regularly before I left my job while I was working.

And it really helped me to conquer the desire for food. Now you know Jesus was called a wine whipper and a glutton. People saw him eating heartily and he may even taken a second helping.

But remember this is a person who could fast for 40 days also. So he was not against, he was not like John the Baptist eating locusts and wild honey. He enjoyed good meals but he knew how to discipline his body.

I believe it's right you can enjoy a good meal but if you don't know at other times to discipline your body and without other people knowing about it, the times you should fast are when nobody knows about it. But one of the most important things here is forgiveness. More and more the Lord's emphasized this to me in Matthew 6 verse 14 and 15.

If you forgive others your Father will forgive you. If you don't forgive others your Heavenly Father will not forgive you. This has to be emphasized tremendously because I don't think that most Christians even believe that.

I've asked people this question. Supposing there's somebody you just haven't forgiven, somebody who did something against you maybe 10 years ago, and you just don't forgive him. This is terrible what he did to me.

And you die in that condition. I ask you where do you think you'll go even though you say you're a separate Christ. This is where some people say that I'm an extremist in teaching.

I say you go to hell. I don't have any doubt about it. I don't care how many years you call yourself a believer.

I believe what Jesus said. If you have not forgiven your brother your Father will not forgive you. And if you can, if you're not forgiven, can you go into God's kingdom? Can you go to heaven? Can you go into the Father's presence? Is there another place after death where we can be forgiven? It is appointed unto men once to die after this is the judgment.

This if you hear my words Jesus said and don't do them your house is shaking. These are the passages I quoted with most Christians who read. You ask them, have you read it? Yeah, we have.

You do it? They never take it seriously. You know the story of David in 1 Kings chapter 2. Read verse 8 and 9. You see there how he's giving his closing instructions to Solomon. He says, you remember Shimei who cursed you? I want you to notice these are the last words that David spoke before he died.

Verse 10 says, then he died. What were his last words to Solomon? He charged Solomon in verse 1, chapter 2, 1 Kings 2 verse 1. Be strong in the Lord. Keep the charge of the Lord.

Verse 3, walk in his ways. Keep his commandments and the law of Moses so that you can succeed and the Lord will carry out his promise. This guy Shimei who cursed me, I had promised him, verse 8 last part, that I would not kill him.

But Solomon you didn't make that promise. See how David escapes. He's got a bitterness against that man who years ago cursed him when he was running away from his son Absalom.

Don't let him go unpunished. His gray hair must come down to hell with blood. This is the man after God's own heart, David.

Then David died. Did he forgive Shimei? Next question is, is David in heaven? Have you ever thought of it? He was under the old covenant, the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. He kept it.

And he said in the new covenant, it's not going to be like that. In the new covenant, if you don't forgive others, your father will not forgive you. You know, it's one thing to say, we talk about the new, we teach the new covenant, but we don't explain what it means.

And this is one example of the difference between the old covenant and the new covenant. The old covenant, a lot of people got angry. Moses got so angry.

You know the story. I don't have to turn there. And the Lord told him, speak to the rock.

The second time they needed water. The first time Exodus 17 hit the rock. The second time in Numbers 20, 21, he said, speak to the rock.

And Moses was so angry with the people that, you know, there's a warning there in that passage. Maybe I should show it to you in Numbers, because it can apply to us that sometimes you can go into the pulpit with some anger in your heart against some situation or something or something that happened in the church or whatever it is, and you can speak in a way which is, you know, Numbers 20. The Lord spoke to Moses in verse 7. Verse 8, take the rod and speak to the rock, because they were thirsty.

There was no water there. Why speak to the rock? Because the rock is a picture of Christ, and Christ is to be crucified only once. There was a tremendous symbolism there.

You spike the rock once, and the next time you only speak to it. Even though Moses may not have known the symbolism that was fulfilled in the crucifixion of Christ, yet he was to obey what the Lord said. This is what can happen, you know, after we have become a little senior, or imagine ourselves to be senior in the Lord's work.

We can begin to be a little slack in obeying God's promises, thinking we can get away with it, because we're not like these newcomers. We're sort of senior. We're elders, but you can't get away with it.

And Moses took the rod, and listen how he speaks to the assembly in verse 10. You rebels, shall we bring water for you from the rock? Look at the arrogance with Jesus, as if Moses is going to bring that water, and he lifts up the hand, and verse 11, strikes the rock twice. He's clearly angry.

And immediately, of course, the water came forth in abundance. You know there were two million people there, 600,000 adults, plus so many women and children. It was not trickles of water.

How much water do you need for two million people to drink? It was rivers that came out of that rock in many directions. And the Lord immediately told them, you have not believed me, verse 12. You have not treated me as holy.

Therefore, you will not bring this assembly into Canaan. You know, that was the most severe punishment you could have given Moses. If you said you'll get leprosy, this is nothing compared.

This man, for 40 years, he had wandered in the and just at the door of Canaan, the Lord said, you can't get in. You mean, Lord, just for one little mistake? To whom more is given, more is required. Please remember, dear brothers, that God is going to require much more from us than from every single person in our churches.

And if I preach to you all, he's going to require much more from me than from you. Whoever you preach to, God's going to require more from you. Your standard is not the same as theirs.

It's way higher than theirs. And so he, this is the reason why he did not enter Canaan. God allowed him to see it.

This man would be faithful to God for 40 years, leading his people. At the last moment, he missed out. But I see God's graciousness in one thing, that years later, he allowed him to stand with Jesus inside Canaan's land on the Mount of Transfiguration.

God is so merciful and kind, but he could not lead him in there at that time. So that is Old Covenant. Even there, it was strict.

But I just mentioned that, that if we don't forgive others, we will not be forgiven. Just one or two other things, and we move on. Matthew 6, again, here's another thing which we have to preach in the New Covenant, Matthew 6, 24.

There are two masters in the world. It's not God and the devil. Almost no, Jesus never spoke about God and the devil as two masters.

The only two masters that Jesus spoke about was God and wealth. And he just said you cannot serve God and wealth. You cannot live for money and live for God at the same time.

It is impossible. But Matthew 6, 24 is another verse that hardly anybody ever preaches on. I have, in my own life, discovered that the love of money is like an onion with many, many layers.

And it's not a question of how much you own or how much what your bank account is. Billionaires love money, and the homeless man on the street loves money too. The homeless man's got nothing, but he still loves money.

And the billionaire's got such a lot, he loves money. So it does not depend on the size of your bank account at all. It's something quite different.

It's a question of where your, you know, like Jesus said, where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Or we can put it the other way and say where your heart is, that's where your treasure really is. And what do I, where is, what is my heart set upon? See, this is a very difficult area to be absolutely honest, but we have to be honest before God.

And we have to earn our living. We got to care for our children, especially those of you little children growing up. There are many needs and cost of living keeps going up.

We need to perhaps find a better job where we can earn more because what they're getting is not enough. There's nothing wrong in all that. There's nothing wrong in seeking a higher salary or finding means of earning more and absolutely nothing wrong.

But here is an area where we can, we can only know before God. And it's really contrasting. Do I love Jesus more than I love money? In other words, is Christ supreme in our life? Can you think of at least one instance in your life where you sacrificed money for the sake of obeying God? Just one.

I often say to people you should have had at least one time in your life where you made a choice. And as a result of that choice to follow the Lord and serve him, you lost some money. If you have not even had one instance like that, in other words, he chose to go to someplace to serve the Lord or sacrifice some opportunity to make a little more money because you went somewhere to build a church or to do

something for the Lord or go somewhere, an opportunity to serve the Lord somewhere, maybe in just some situation.

I've desired that for all of God's servants, that you should be able to look back to say, here's one time Lord, I chose you. I want to keep that. And you'll never be a loser.

That I can tell you. What Jesus said, you'll get a hundred times is absolutely right. I know that my own life, the last 56 years that since I quit my job, I've served the Lord and he never left me down.

Never. He's taken care of me abundantly. So, but we can, it's precious to have such experiences, but I don't look back to that time I left my job and say, well, that proved that I love God more than money because I say, I believe my love of money is an onion.

And I'll tell you honestly, I'm peeling it off even now. There are layers. The only man who can say I finished with it is the man says I've become like Christ in the area of money.

And I publicly say I have not. It's a pretty bold man who can say I have the same attitude to money that Jesus had. And if you don't have that attitude yet, we should be working on our salvation with fear and trembling.

And I do. As far as I know, I'm not pursuing money in any area in all these years of full-time Christian where I've never sought money from anybody, but I still say, Lord, I can't say that my attitude is 100% like yours. I want to have light in every little corner of my heart where there's any lurking little snake called the love of money because it will hinder my service for God.

I won't be able to serve God if I have any of that. So it's not a question of convincing others that you're free from love of money, but because of some action you took in some situations more than that. This is something so individual and personal that even your wife will not know.

I don't believe my wife knows whether I love money or not. By some of my external actions, it may look like I don't. But only I know.

God and I know. Even the devil doesn't know because he doesn't read our thoughts. God and you know whether.

And the more you work out your salvation from it, you don't have to reduce your bank account even \$1 to be free from the love of money. It's rare cases where the Lord tells a man, sell all that you have like he told the rich young ruler. He never said that to anybody else, only to one person.

For some people, he says that, but 99% of people, he doesn't say that. But he still tells them to be free from the love of money. 99% of Christians, he doesn't tell them to give up their jobs.

1% he does, like Peter and the fishermen who followed Jesus. But the rest of you, 99%, he doesn't ask you to give up your jobs when he says you must be free from the love of money. And that's an individual, personal thing between you and God.

And I urge you, don't condemn yourself. Let's say, Lord, give me light, walk in the light. And the other area which we don't think about much is anxiety.

In the space of 10 verses, verse 25 to 34, the Lord says, don't worry, don't worry, don't worry, three times. Those 10 verses takes about only two, three minutes, or maybe two minutes to read it. And in a sermon, in a two-minute period, if one truth is repeated three times, it must be very important, especially in Jesus repeating.

You read verse 25 to 34, how long does it take? Maybe two minutes. And he says, don't worry, verse 25. Don't worry, verse 31.

Don't worry, verse 34. Or verse 28, why are you worried? Three, four times. So this is obviously another thing which I don't know how much we take that seriously.

Your righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees. There was no, in the 10 commandments, do not worry was not a commandment. Do not get angry was not a commandment.

Do not lust after women was not a commandment. Forgive others was not a commandment. That is the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

So we have to ask ourselves, when we talk about New Covenant church, victory over sin, these are the sins we have to overcome. Anxiety. I was a slave for anxiety.

Anxiety leads to discouragement. I don't believe we should be discouraged. I remember reading Hudson Taylor's statement once where he said, I refuse to be discouraged.

I will only praise. It was a choice of his will. It's not feeling.

Even when I'm feeling like discouraged, I exercise my will and say, I will only praise. That's what helped me years ago because I was a tremendous slave to discouragement in the early years of my Christian life before the Lord baptized me in the Holy Spirit. And one of the results of the baptism in the Holy Spirit was to be free from discouragement.

And I learned it's not a question of feeling. I choose in my will to say, I will only praise in this situation. My feelings are irrelevant, like the old parable of fact, faith, and feeling walking on a wall.

If you haven't heard that, fact is God's word. Walking on a narrow wall. Fact, faith, feeling.

Faith was only looking at fact, which is God's word, and feeling followed along. But faith turned around at one time to see his feeling following him and fell down. And feeling fell down to him.

Faith would not have fallen if he had kept looking at fact alone. Feeling would have automatically followed. There's a great parable which has helped me.

I had heard it many years ago. I said, I'm going to keep my mind and my thoughts on God's word. And feelings will follow.

It may take time, but it'll follow. It'll catch up. But I'm not going to look at feelings.

No, I refuse to be discouraged. I will. I will only praise.

So anxiety is something you need to. And yeah, I see that, you know, the primary person in the old covenant, the man who proclaimed the old covenant, was Moses. And the one who proclaimed the new covenant was Jesus.

Do you know in the Bible, there are only two people who are stated to be the humblest people on the face of the earth. One was Moses and the other was Jesus. We know that Jesus was the humblest person on the face of the earth.

But it says about Moses, you know, this passage in Numbers 12, verse 3. The man who proclaimed the old covenant was the humblest man on the face of the earth at that time. Numbers 12, verse 3. Moses was very humble more than any man who was on the face of the earth. Now that verse is put in brackets just to say that Moses never wrote it because the five books of Moses, I think Joshua inserted it there under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The man Moses was the humblest man on the face of the earth. So I mentioned that, now we can go to Philippians 2, which I wanted to come to finally. That the old covenant and the new covenant were both proclaimed by the humblest man on the face of the earth, which teaches us the primary quality to be able to proclaim this new covenant is humility.

And that's another area. It's like an onion. Pride is like another massive onion.

You got to keep peeling it off and peeling it off and peeling it off. So turn now to Philippians 2. There are two sins. I told you about these other things which we looked at in Matthew 8. Anger, lusting with the eyes.

I believe we can come to the level of our conscience where we are free from anger that we never raise our voice at our wife even once. Under any situation, no matter what she does or what she doesn't do. I mean she forgot to give you some very important information which caused a lot of problems for you or made you lose a lot of money.

You don't get angry. You say, darling, let's be a little more careful in the future with this. This is going to land us in a bit of a soup.

I believe that should be our attitude because we make mistakes ourselves. But I believe we should work towards that. Home life is so important.

When it says a man cannot bring up his own children in godly ways, where is he going to bring up a whole church? Very important, dear brothers. I'm so happy when I see elders in our churches whose children are all of them following the Lord and all of them in your church. Not just following the Lord, but committed to the church you planted in your collection of churches.

And particularly if you have any of us are young, we've come to the Lord young, then there's no excuse. We got married after we understood some of these truths. Older people who understood these truths much later, it may be a little more difficult.

God is merciful. But if we proclaim the new covenant from a young age and our children are small, we have a great opportunity. And it's very clear in Philippians, sorry, 1 Timothy 3. It says man cannot bring up his few children in a godly way.

He's not qualified to be an elder. There are cases in India where I've removed some people from eldership because their children were wayward. I don't mean after they left home while they were in that home.

I believe 1 Timothy 3 refers to children who are still in your home, young children. Not those who have left and got married. But I mean if you really brought them up well when he's old, he will not depart from it.

That's what God's word says. So coming back to Philippians 3, there are two sins which we will battle till the end of our lives after having overcome all the sins mentioned in Matthew 5, 6, and 7. Those two are mentioned in Philippians 2 verse 3. Selfishness and conceit or pride. Selfishness and pride are two areas where it's very, very difficult for us to get light on if you're not ruthless with yourself.

Lord, show me where am I selfish? Where am I conceited? The conceited is a very subtle thing inwardly. It's not open manifest pride. It's a little feeling of superiority over others.

Even your wife may not detect it. Selfishness and conceit. And so he puts the opposite of that there with humility of mind.

All the time, my attitude must be humility of mind and considering others. This is a very important verse. Some people misread it.

Not considering others as more spiritual than yourself. No. Jesus never did that.

He didn't consider Judas as more spiritual. He didn't even consider Peter as more spiritual than himself. Jesus would say, who of you convinces me of sin? He could boldly say that.

He knew that he was the most spiritual person in all of Israel. He had no doubt about it, yet he was the humblest man on the earth. You can be aware of your spirituality and the fact that you're qualified to lead others because you are more spiritual than them and yet be the humblest person in your whole church.

Jesus is our example. But here it says more important than others. Very important to notice that.

People don't read it. Many people have misread it. Consider others as more spiritual.

Garbage. It's hypocrisy. Nobody does it.

It says more important and that's why on the last day of Jesus' life, he washed their feet. They were more important. See, when you walk the streets where the roads are not tarred.

I mean, when I go to the villages in India, I don't wear shoes. I wear sandals and the feet get dirty very easily on those dusty roads. And you walk into a home, your feet is all dirty.

And the Jews, many of the rich Jews have slaves who'd be at the door with a bucket of water to wash the feet of the guests. Very refreshing when you walked in sandals and dusty roads. But when Jesus was having the Last Supper, he had told them, I don't want any outsiders there.

It's a private dinner I'm having with my disciples. But they kept the bucket of water, but no slave. So who's going to do that? Who's going to consider others as more important than myself? He said, well, I'm the slave here.

And he took the bucket and washed their feet. Remember this, that the one whom we follow, the last day of his life on earth, he was not a chairman or director or senior class for any of that garbage. He was a slave washing the feet of others.

He came all the way down from heaven to the feet of others. And there was only one step more beyond that, that was to die like a criminal. And this is the direction we are to go.

We are not to be today as humble as we were a year ago, but much more. We should be working our way downwards towards the feet of others. Consider others as more important than yourself.

It's a very serious challenge. This is a new covenant. Don't look out just on your own personal interests, verse four.

As I said, this is one of the most important chapters in the New Testament, but also the interests of others. A true elder is like this. He takes it seriously.

Am I looking out only for my personal interest? He's not saying you shouldn't do that. He says, don't merely look at your own personal. We have to take care of our families.

Sure. But think of others in our church, especially the circle we have. I don't have to think of the interests of all the homeless people in town, but the ones whom God, if I claim to be an elder, a shepherd, there's certain sheep committed to me.

I must know who are my sheep. A lot of people who come and sit in our churches may not be our sheep because they don't submit to your authority. They don't accept you as their shepherd.

But if someone does accept you, you have a responsibility towards them. The reason we have more elders is because as the church increases in size, we need more elders. Not elders who are preachers.

This is another area where we think every elder must be a good preacher. No. I believe in primary requirement of an elder.

Very few people have the gift of preaching. I'll tell you honestly, I've discovered throughout my lifetime that it's a unique gift that God gives to some people. I don't know why.

I wish he'd give it to everybody. But in God's great wisdom, he gives the ability to explain scripture or challenge scripture in a clear way to very, very few people. But an elder is primarily a shepherd.

He must have the heart of a shepherd that cares for the sheep, even if he can't preach for them. You need only one good preacher or one or two good preachers in a church. That's about it.

But as the church grows in size, there needs to be shepherds who care for people who can think about the needs of the flock and sense somebody's drifting. I remember in the early days when I retired from eldership in CFC Bangalore about 25 years ago. But before that, when the church was much smaller, I knew everybody by name.

I even knew the name of all their children. As the church grows today, I hardly know anybody. But in those days, I knew everyone.

And also, I remember telling them, I cannot stop you from backsliding, but I'll tell you, I'll keep watch over you. And three months before you fall away, I'll warn you. I told them all that because I'll sense that you're drifting.

That I'll warn you. That's how I'll keep watch over you. I won't stop you.

You may still fall away. I have even gone to some people after observing them for a long time in CFC Bangalore and said to them, brother, you are not born again. I don't see evidence of that in your life.

Your wife is, but you are not. He got offended and left the church. I said, fine.

What can I do? And the subsequent behavior went from bad to worse. We have to keep a watch. Don't glory in the fact, oh, my church is increasing in size.

God have mercy on you. Is your flock increasing from a hundred to 200 sheep? A man who had a hundred, one got lost and he had such a concern that he left the 99 and went after that one. What will happen if your flock becomes 200? You'll need more shepherds.

And shepherds don't grow overnight. And shepherds will not grow. You are such a boss over the church that you don't allow people to grow.

So how that works out in each, I believe there's a tremendous lack of shepherds. You remember what Jesus said, Matthew chapter nine, Matthew chapter nine. It's a great verse.

I've often, you know, I read scripture and apply it to myself. And when you read scripture like this, it's good to apply it to yourself. Verse 36, put yourself there and see whether you are the spirit of Christ.

Seeing the people, he felt compassion for them because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. It's a good verse to think about when you look at your flock. I see this church sitting in front of me to whom I'm preaching.

Do I feel a compassion for them because they are distressed? The margin of my Bible says harassed, harassed by the devil or harassed by the circumstances. There are people like that in our churches, dispirited. The margin of my Bible says thrown down, harassed and thrown down because there's no shepherd to care for them.

And then he said, the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. That verse is used by many people to send people out as missionaries to unreached areas. But he's not, I think it's got nothing to do with unreached areas.

This is a classic example of scripture is taken out of context and misquoted. Harvest is plentiful. Brothers out there in Africa and India and Mongolia, workers are few.

That harvest is right in our church. The workers are few, the true shepherds. The workers he referred to, they were not missionaries going out to unreached areas.

See the context. Never try to understand a verse out of its context. Anyone with a little bit of common sense, read 36 and 37, knows that the worker he's talking about is a shepherd.

The shepherds are few. So pray to the Lord of the harvest. Here's another verse that's used for missionary work.

This is not talking about missionary work at all. Beseech the Lord of the harvest that he'll send out shepherds into the harvest. Harvest is right there in the church where the sheep are, not where the goats are.

He's not talking about the goats at all. He's talking about the sheep. There's a harvest among the sheep because they are harassed and thrown down by the devil, shepherds.

A great need in our church is a shepherd. They don't have to be great preachers. As I say, there are one or two preachers who can say about the gift of the word in a church.

It is more than enough. Even in a large church of 600 people. See in CFC Bangalore about 600 people now come to the meeting.

We're scared to tell you honestly. How many of them are disciples? I, it's very difficult because Jesus said make disciples. And we don't want to turn away him that cometh to me.

I'll not cast out. Jesus said they come. You can't say don't come.

But we see the numbers increasing. A lot of people come because many reasons. One, many people tell us we come here because every other church we go to they're asking us for money all the time.

There's one church they never ask us for money. And that's not always a good reason to come. But that's the condition of Christendom today.

But I find there's a church within a church. That's what I look for. See like Jesus had a number of concentric circles.

One was the big multitude of more than 600, 5,000 men alone and he fed once 10,000 people perhaps including women and children. Huge crowd. And he spoke to them.

He had a burden for them. Within that was a very small circle you read in Luke 10 of 70 disciples. You know they were such good disciples that he sent them out two by two in Luke 10.

They are the ones who came back and said Lord even the demons are subject to us in your name. And that's a smaller group than this big multitude. And within that crowd of 70 or group of 70 was another group of 12 his inner circle.

And then within the 12 was 11. You know one was a crook. Even in that small group of 12 one was a thief.

And then within that were three Peter, James, and John. So Jesus had concentric circles and sometimes he was only with those three. For example in Gethsemane when he went to pray why not have 12 people to pray with you? Isn't that better? Not necessarily.

We think the more people at a prayer meeting the more powerful it'll be. No Jesus went to pray in Gethsemane. He said I take only three.

This is a serious business. And even those three went to see. But he called only three.

If two people are agreed. You know that verse in Matthew 18-19. If you don't know it please look at it.

Two. I've often used that in relation to me and Annie my wife. I said Lord here are two of us.

We want to always be agreed. We would pray concerning our children. And we would take Matthew 18-19.

If two of you that's me and my wife are agreed about anything they ask. And we would ask often for our children. Shall be done.

Physical sickness. A need in the school. Some problem with the teachers in the school.

Some problem with other mischievous naughty students in the school. Anywhere. And as I grow up we never stop praying.

They need to find partners in marriage. Two of you take three. You see the importance dear brothers of being in agreement with your wife.

Whatever the cost. I'm not saying compromise. I'm not saying go down to her standards.

No. You must be the leader. You must be the head of the house.

Husbands be like Christ is to the church. The husband is the head of the wife. There's no question of yielding that position.

Don't let your wife run the house and decide how the children should be brought up. That's not love. That's foolishness.

If there's something which is there's a more godly way you can bring up your children. And you need to say that darling. You must do it in a more godly way.

These children I always thought of my children as they're going to leave my house by the time they're 18 years old. And then they'll go off to some college. And nowadays the college much worse than it was 30 years ago or 25 years ago.

And you all have a much tougher task than I have. But within those few years when they're at home I was determined about one thing. They must know the word.

At least I'm not saying they become preachers. I'm not interested in that at all. But they must know what we teach in the church clearly.

What we stand for. The elementary truth of the new covenant. And they must have a longing for it.

And they should have accepted the Lord and taken baptism before they leave home for college. That is my goal. And I encourage all the people in the church to have that as a goal.

And that they've developed the habit by the time they leave home of reading God's word regularly. I would start off by giving them the children's Bible with pictures and all that. And ask them questions around the dining table to encourage them to study God's word.

So we're two of them. My wife and I would go to this verse. Two of you agree Lord we are asking particularly for this.

Sometimes one of your children may have a particular problem. A health problem perhaps. It happens.

It happened with our children. It can happen in any family. We live in a world.

The dust of our body. Our body is made from dust. And that dust was cursed in Genesis chapter 3. Don't forget that.

The dust. The Lord didn't curse Adam. He said this dust is cursed.

And his body was made of that dust. And that is why he's dying. If there was no curse on this body he would never die.

And that's why we get sick. So people who claim that Jesus will heal every sickness in this earth. First of all they're not honest.

They're not speaking the truth. And they haven't understood that it's because we are made of cursed dust that we get sick. Because if that were true logically we should not die either.

But Jesus the Lord told Adam you shall return to this dust. It's part of the curse that our spirit is delivered from the curse. Galatians 3 13.

Christ became a curse for me on the cross. So that I may never be under the curse. But instead it says in Galatians 3 the curse is replaced by the blessing of Abraham which is I will bless you and you will be a blessing to every family that you meet.

That's how I understand the blessing of Abraham. Galatians 3 14. It's connected to the curse being removed from my spirit.

Christ not only took my old man on the cross. He became a curse for me on the cross. That's why he had to hang on a tree.

That's why he couldn't be killed with somebody stabbing him to death. Because the old testament law was cursed is everyone who hangs on the tree. You read that in Galatians 3 13.

And therefore I recognize the fact that till the end of my life sickness is possible. That's just honest truth. Isaiah 53 verse 4 says Jesus was acquainted with sickness.

That wasn't a sin. He had to be acquainted with sickness. He had headaches like we have.

And our children can have that. And we need to be united in prayer as husband and wife. It's a tremendous passage that requires husband and wife to be always united in the home.

And work towards it if it's not true right now. Because their children will suffer otherwise. And it's in that context.

See I read Matthew 18 verses 18 to 20 backwards. Starting at verse 20. Because these are all connected.

Verse 20 says four. Four means because. So it's going backwards to verse 19.

Again I say to you going backwards to verse 18. So you really got to read it from verse 20 backwards. First of all if two of you husband and wife are coming in the name of Jesus.

You're both born again. You love the Lord. The Lord Jesus is in the midst.

So that's the first step. Like I told my wife even before I married her. I said you will never be first in my life.

You'll always be second. And I want to be second in your life too. Christ must be between us.

Then we'll have a wonderful marriage. That must be very clear. That Christ tells me something and my wife tells me something.

I'm going to do what Jesus said no matter how much my wife gets offended. He is first. And I tell you there are many Christian husbands who do not take that place.

They love their wives more than they love Jesus Christ. And that's why the married life is shallow. That's why the blessing of the Lord is not on their home.

Because the Lord says you've got an idol in your life. You shall not have an idol. Your wife is your idol.

Two are gathered together in my name. It means the Holy Spirit brought you and your wife together. I am in the midst.

That's where it begins. Christ is in the midst of husband and wife. And then now Christ is in the midst.

Now two of you must agree. I'm not saying you're perfect in your unity but at least you must agree on the one thing you're asking now. Agree about something that they ask.

It'll be done. We shouldn't think well it may be done. It is Satanic powers that are seeking to invade your home and hit your children.

So coming back to Philippians 2. Selfishness and pride. The two sins that we have to be very careful about. And then this beautiful passage in Philippians 2 verses 5 to 8. Have the same attitude in yourself at all times that Christ had.

Same mind. This is where I you know you've often heard me say the three secrets of the Christian life are humility, humility, humility. Here it is.

Number one. As God he became a man. Humility.

Number two. Verse seven. Verse six first of all.

Number seven. As a man he became a bond servant. Again humility.

And number three. As servant of a slave. I thought that is the lowest.

No. He went to the point of being treated like a criminal. He's even lower than a slave.

Verse eight on the cross. Humility, humility, humility are the three secrets of the Christian life. And it says have this attitude in you all through your life.

Just keep going downwards, downwards, downwards. Therefore God has exalted him. And I tell you if any of us go this way God will exalt you over what? Not over your flock.

I have no interest in being exalted over my flock. I want to be exalted over the devil. That God at peace will crush Satan under your feet.

There's a place the devil is. God is appointed for the devil. Matthew 6. Sorry.

Romans 16 20 says under my feet. I believe as we keep on pursuing this life more and more we find we're not oppressed so much by the devil. I remember in the early days of my Christian life even while I was serving the Lord.

Oppression of Satan was there. But it's less and less and less because I know my position. This place is under my feet.

Scary dreams. I don't believe Jesus had scary dreams. In the beginning we do.

And if God gives you at least one co-worker in your church one is enough. Two of you agree. First of all in the home husband and wife.

And in the church we find one other person who's in complete agreement with you. Not because he's like you. Maybe different from you.

Paul and Barnabas were completely different. But the devil got between them. It's a very sad story there.

Because of family relationships, family friendships that Barnabas had towards his family member Mark. Division came between two whom the Lord said in Acts 13, separate me Saul and Barnabas for the work to which I have called them. And the devil came between them.

So that can happen there. It can happen in your church and mine. So if you fight for that battle, we've been tremendously blessed in Bangalore that the work started with me and another brother and I've tried to retain my unity within all these years.

If this are differences, we speak about it openly. We can have differences with our wife. But we must remain united.

We don't have to agree on every single thing on earth. But it's very important to seek that unity. And so the devil doesn't get a foothold on our church, doesn't get a foothold in our home.

That's our main object. Because if there's a gap comes between husband and wife, that's what the devil's waiting for. He sees that gap, he comes right in and you know who gets attacked? Your children.

Or a gap comes between these two elders who are totally united with each other in a church, something affects your church immediately. Or the children of some important member of your church. Not just your children you have to protect, you have to protect the others in your church as well.

You don't want the children in our church to be affected. It's so important, so important. We must care not only for our children if you have the heart of a shepherd.

Even care for the children in the church of others. I want to encourage you, be like Jesus. Make friends with some of the children in your church.

I sent you that article which there's a Christian research team, means called Barna or something. They do research for years. They did a research among children and said that about 39 or 40 percent of them said that.

One adult in our church made friends with us, apart from parents. That's made a tremendous difference in our life, brought a loyalty to us in church. You are that adult who has to make friends with somebody other than your own children.

Because that's how Jesus was. I've always felt that the more I become like Jesus, the more I'll be friendly with children. I try to make friends with them, let them know that I'm not this distant creature up in the

pulpit, but your friend.

Do that brothers. We have a responsibility of a generation growing up. Selfishness and pride.

I have a few things just to read out to you now. It's from this book. As you all know, God's work done in God's way.

This was actually a series of messages that I gave to elders through the years in India. In the early days, we had elders meetings. Every conference, we'd have elders meetings and I shared some of these things with them.

This is just a little edited version, essentially that. In one meeting, I said, brothers, can you all, a number of our elders there, write down what are the qualities that will make you have confidence in somebody? Not just submit to a person as an elder, but you have confidence in that person. What are the qualities that will make you lose confidence in a person? So we sat together and made a list and that's here in chapter seven of some qualities of Buddhism.

I'll just quickly go through it. Here are some of the qualities that you should seek to have if you want others to have confidence in you. Number one, it's clear to people that you seek the approval of God and you don't seek the approval of men, even of godly men.

Number two, the kingdom of God and his righteousness are your first priority, not your job. Number three, you are a totally committed disciple of the Lord Jesus and people can see that. You fulfill the conditions of discipleship, the three of them in Luke 14.

You love Jesus more than anybody on earth. You take up the cross every day, number two, and you don't hold tightly to material things. You have things, but you don't possess them.

Then next, you are humble and broken in spirit. You make godliness attractive. You know, there are many people who preach holiness.

It's what is very repulsive, the way they preach it. It's not beautiful. Holiness must be beautiful.

The life of Jesus was beautiful. There's a repulsive holiness, which is the higher sacred righteousness, which majors on minors. Have you washed your hands? Why do you pluck grain on the Sabbath day? And the equivalent of that today can be some little thing.

Your head covering is not fully covering the head, fully up to here. Don't measure all these things. You make godliness attractive.

You're zealous to preserve the church in purity, and you're not ashamed to proclaim that you're zealous about that. You're bold to proclaim the truth without fear. You live according to your convictions, and you practice everything that you preach.

Next, you control your temper, and listen to this, you are never in a bad mood. I believe it is possible by the grace of God to come to such a life that we are never in a bad mood at home or anywhere. Is there a situation where the Lord says, I will not be with you? I'm with you always until the end of the age.

If you're calling him, particularly Matthew 28, if you're calling is you're going around making disciples and teaching them to obey everything Jesus commanded, the Lord says, I'll be with you till the end of the age.

It's a conditional promise. A lot of people who hang it up on the wall, I say that's not for you.

Are you making disciples? Are you teaching people to obey everything that Jesus commanded? That's the condition. You try to claim a promise without the condition. I believe all of you are seeking to fulfill that.

I hope so. To make disciples and teach people to obey everything Jesus commanded in Matthew chapter 5, 6, and 7, then the promise is I will be with you always till the end of the age. I can stand before God's face and say, Lord, to the best of my knowledge, that is what I'm trying to do.

Make disciples and teach people to do everything you commanded. You have to be with me till the end of the age. I believe you'll be with me.

It's a promise you can claim. Then you're never in a bad mood because the Lord takes care of everything. So many things may go wrong.

I may not know what to do in certain situations. That's fine. Okay.

I'm confused. Sometimes I'm struggling in different situations. I still am, but I will not be in a bad mood.

Never, never, 365 days of the year, 24 hours a day, my wife who sees me all the time will never, never see me in a bad mood, not when I get up in the morning, not when I go to bed at night. Never, never, never. Make that a goal.

I mean, if you haven't got there, say, Lord, so many things can go wrong in life. Your wife may not be as much of a disciple as you are. Some people, unfortunately, have that type of wife.

It's not serious about discipleship. Happy to come along to the church. I'm not serious about discipleship, but there's no excuse for you being in a bad mood.

Absolutely no excuse. Your wife is a weaker vessel. You can allow her to have a bad mood now and then.

I'm not saying it's right. I mean, it's really God needs to get over that too. But the Bible says, live into your life in an understanding way, recognizing she's a weaker vessel.

So don't demand that she should not be in a bad mood. You must never be in a bad mood. And you're compassionate in your dealings with all people.

You're natural in your behavior. True spirituality is natural, and you don't put on airs of spirituality. Another one, you never make anyone feel inferior to you by your actions or words.

You always conduct yourself as an ordinary brother and not as a big brother. Another, you are easily approachable at all times. All times.

Easily approachable. You're warm and friendly and make people feel at home in your presence. You're hospitable in your home.

You're not only godly but fatherly as well towards people. It's one thing to be godly. It's to be fatherly towards people.

It's also important. You seek the eternal welfare of your brothers and sisters at all times. I'm going through it quickly because you can read it later on on your own.

You're totally impartial. Very important in your attitude to everyone in the church. This is one thing I have been ruthless with myself.

Am I partial towards somebody? Or am I completely impartial? Can I stand before God and say, Lord, I treat everyone the way you, Jesus, would treat me. There's no special friend of mine towards whom I'm partial. No.

We are close to some people. Jesus was close to Peter, James, and John. I have to say I have these circles in my own church.

The outer circle of 70, the inner circle of 11, and then inner circle of three. I have them. Naturally, I'll spend more time with the inner circle of three than I do a little more time with the 11 and a little more time with the and many others I hardly ever meet.

So there's nothing wrong in that. But I'm totally impartial in decisions. I don't care who does it.

If it's wrong, it's wrong. And I have spoken straight to senior most elders in churches. I say, brother, that is wrong.

I don't agree with it. You can disagree with me. I'm not asking you to.

I don't compel anybody to agree with me, but that is wrong. What you did that was wrong. What you said that was wrong.

And I'll tell you, I mean, you can say that you disagree with me. Welcome. But I will not say that you're a special friend of mine or you're some type of senior elder, so I'll overlook it.

No, I will not do it. This, you know, I believe that one of the greatest sins among elders is partiality. I've discovered through that through 47 years.

Elders are partial. Even, you know, that Paul says to Timothy, have you noticed that? Timothy was his coworker for 25 years and he writes to him in 1 Timothy 5, do nothing in partiality. And I say, Hey, Paul, do you need to tell what Timothy that? Yes.

Even Timothy needs to hear that. Do nothing with partiality. Yeah.

It's very important. I've seen through the years that many elders are partial towards somebody, some favorite of theirs. Yeah.

Read the letters. I often tell the elders, read the letters of Timothy and Titus, because those are letters that Paul wrote to senior elders, coworkers. Very important.

I usually tell elders to read 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, and Revelation chapter 2 and 3. Those are the letters written, especially to elders. Okay. You are not prejudiced against anyone because of family or for anyone because of family connections or community.

It's also very important. Supposing somebody is a family member of yours in your church and you are prejudiced in favor of that person in a situation, you are not prejudiced. Or somebody in the same community or some type of connection like that.

You uphold the dignity of all people, whether young, old, child, or servant. There's a dignity about a human being, even if a child must never humiliate a child before others. If a child misbehaves in the presence of visitors, I will not punish that child in the presence of those visitors.

I'll make a record of it. And once the visitors go, I'll deal with them. And I would not even punish one child in the presence of the other children.

I take them into another room. There's a dignity even about a small child. You must not humiliate a child in the presence of others.

You speak respectfully to all people, especially to those who are older than you. The other thing I want to say, I noticed this in the United States particularly, respect for older people is virtually disappearing among the young children. They go and call older people by their first name.

Can you believe it? Even the Hindus don't do that in India. Even as an old stranger, they're respectful to someone who's older. Christianity has sunk below the level of Hinduism in this area.

I know there's people who call themselves this. You have a concern, especially for the poor and for young people and children. They must have a concern.

You carry your brothers and sisters in your heart. You base your authority on God's word and not just your experience. If God's word is above the level of your experience, you say, fellas, I haven't reached that yet, but that's what God's word says.

God's word says, be anxious for nothing. I want to confess, you say in the meeting, I haven't reached there yet, brothers, but that is God's word. You and I are going to climb this mountain, whatever the cost, be anxious for nothing.

Rejoice always. In everything, give thanks. These are high mountains to climb and there's nothing wrong in saying, climb with me.

I haven't reached the top, but I'm working my way upward. Join me in this pursuit. People will appreciate you if you're honest, you're careful in your speech and never hasty to express your thoughts.

A foolish man expresses his thoughts very quickly and you're visibly growing in Christ-likeness and the best judge of that is your wife. You lean on the Holy Spirit in making decisions and not on your own reason. Here's another important thing.

You need to be trusted to keep all matters confidential that are shared in confidence, not even diverging them to your wife. When people tell me something in the church, something which I know is confidential, they know that I don't even tell my wife. I don't even tell my closest co-worker that unless it is essential for the church to know it.

They must respect your confidentiality. You can be totally dependent to keep your word and if in some situation you cannot, you go to that person and say, circumstances have changed. I'm sorry, I cannot do that now.

There's nothing wrong in going back on that and explaining, but don't just quietly ignore it without telling that person. You're very exact in fulfilling your responsibilities. You're straightforward in telling the people the truth in love.

You never deceive anyone. You're patient with all men and you do not hide the fact that you're an earthen vessel with human infirmities. You get tired.

You may be sleeping in the middle of a meeting. You're honest about it. There's nothing wrong in that.

It's straightforward in telling the truth. You never deceive anyone. You don't hide the fact you're an earthen vessel.

You're flexible and willing to yield. This is not rigid. You know, one thing about the Pharisees, they're very rigid.

You know, if you discover something later on that you felt you were too strict on that earlier on, be honest about it and change your mind. I'll tell you one example. The early part, you know, when we start out in our pursuit of strictness and new covenant, we're very strict and I was sometimes a bit foolish.

I said once in the church years ago, I think it was the early days of CHC starting, we must not allow our children to play with dice in a game because it'll make them gamblers one day. Over a period of time, I discovered almost every children's game has got dice in it. So I changed my mind and I admit and somebody came up to me, what's this brother, you change your mind on this? You allow children to play with dice now? I said, I'm growing.

It does not make them gamblers. I played today with dice. I'm just giving you one example.

You not rigid, flexible. I was using that example in relation to Abraham killing his son, told to kill his son. He takes Isaac to the altar, Mount Moriah and lifts up, Lord, you told me to kill him.

Here I am. The Lord says, stop. No, no, no.

I'm not going to stop. I'm going to do it. Foolish.

And the Lord says, stop, even if you're, be flexible. And don't say yesterday you told me to kill my child. That's just one example.

Okay. And you ensure that no pressure is put on others, either by your personality or by your gifts. I've seen this with some elders.

They have a very forceful personality. And especially with your fellow elders, you can make them submit by the force of your personality. Say we are one in the, we elders are always one with each other.

Really? Do they all have an individual conviction or you, your personality so strong that I've heard the story of an old Indian. Our first Indian prime minister was a man called Pundit Nehru. He was a very strong person.

And I heard that some of the cabinet ministers going back to 1948, 49, they would say, we got to go up to the prime minister and tell him this thing is not right that he's decided. These were some ministers in the cabinet and the cabinet meeting would come. Nehru would come and sit down and everybody was silent like a lamb.

Nobody grew up with that power. Yeah. That's called soul power.

That can happen with some elders. I've seen it. Soul power that dominates the other elders.

It says about Jesus in Isaiah 53, he poured out his soul to death. We have to pour out our soul power to death. It's part of the cross that nobody feels intimidated by my presence there.

So don't, by your personality, don't put pressure on others. Never force your advice on anyone. Give freedom to them to disagree with you.

I've had people come to my house and ask me for advice. And I say, okay, here's what I think I'll do in this situation, but I don't want you to do it. I want you to go home, pray about it.

And if the Lord leads you to do it, do it. And if you tell me tomorrow, brother Zach, I didn't feel free to do it. I'd be delighted.

That means you're listening to the Lord. I want you, I can only point you to the Lord. I'm not like, you know, I love that verse in John 1, 29 about John the Baptist.

They heard him speak and they followed Jesus. I said, boy, that can be written on our tombstone. They heard him speak and they followed Jesus.

They didn't follow you. Great. That's how it must be.

You don't force others by your personality. You never force your advice on anyone. You don't make you what you practice, what you practice to be a law for others to follow.

There's certain areas which are not clearly, there's no law in scripture, but you have decided to be a little more strict in yourself on certain areas. Fasting once a week, some type of thing you do maybe to discipline yourself. Good.

Don't force it on others because there's no such law in scripture. And you may practice it yourself. You enter into the problems of others with a sympathetic heart.

You're interested in individuals and not just in a crowd. And I have to rush through this. And here's another thing.

You don't keep on reminding people of their past failures. Finish with it. If God says, I don't remember it, you also don't remember it.

You can bear with the weaknesses and mistakes of others. You try your best to see the brothers and sisters of God sees them. Therefore you never give up hope for any of them.

You give people hope for the future, even when they have failed. You are a true friend to the weak members in your church. You never have any malice, even when speaking about your enemies.

You give strong exhortations against sin, both publicly and privately. You stress only what God's word stresses in your ministry. You are willing to share your responsibility with others, even if they are less mature than you, your fellow elders.

You do not, this is very important, you do not allow your wife to influence you in church matters. She's not an elder. I tell you, there are many wives I have seen, even in some CFC churches in India.

The wife is a fellow elder behind the scenes. Like that wife said, my husband may be the head, but I'm the neck that turns the head whichever way it is to look. Or don't let your wife be the neck that turns your head.

You don't allow your wife to influence, you take life seriously, and you don't want to be known as a joker. That's another thing, you know, I don't know if any of you are like that, but some people, they're jokers. They're all the time joking.

Nobody takes them seriously. Well, I believe in humor. I believe Jesus had a sense of humor when he said about having a log in the eye and swallowing a camel and things like that.

But he wasn't a joker. I believe we must have a sense of humor. It makes people feel at ease with us.

You never hurt anyone. If you crack a joke, crack it on yourself, never on somebody else. That's a law I'm always trying to follow.

You connect people to Christ the head and not yourself. And now just a few points about this is how confidence can be won by these qualities and how confidence can be lost. Others will lose or not have confidence in you if you're a busy body in matters that don't concern you.

If you pretend to be spiritual and behave in an unnatural manner to act spiritual, if you act with false humility, if you seek to advance your own name and interests, if you take advantage of the brothers and sisters and make them do odd jobs for you and your family without paying them for their service. I've had different brothers who have helped me in Bangalore, younger ones from the CSE office. I've always paid.

I have not treated them like people who can take advantage of. I mean, in some way, make up for it. Or I do something for them so that I don't make them feel you're my servant.

Nobody's my servant. I am their servant. If you value your friends and relatives more than your brothers and sisters in the church, people lose confidence in you.

If you're insincere, crafty and deceitful in your ways or if you're unwilling to listen to advice from other people, if you're unwilling to listen to the advice of elders who are your fellow elders, but maybe they're less mature than you, why did you make them elders if you don't want to listen to their advice? If you justify yourself in a situation where you know you're wrong, if you keep a distance from brothers as you're one superior to them, if you believe everything that you hear about others without verifying the facts, very, very important. You believe something and you've heard about somebody without verifying the facts. I've made that mistake a number of times and I've had to repent drastically.

Oh, Lord, I'm sorry I believed that without verifying. I should have gone and verified the first before acting on it. Yeah, I'm telling you from the mistakes I've made.

If you're quick to pass judgment, but not quick to show mercy. You know the great verse on that? I'll show it to you. Isaiah 61.

It's the verse that Jesus quoted in Nazareth when he got up to speak. Isaiah 61 verse 2, the spirit of the Lord is upon me. Verse 1, the Lord has anointed me.

One, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord. Two, mercy and the day of vengeance of our God judgment. Let me paraphrase it.

To proclaim 365 days of mercy and one day of judgment. Got it? That's exactly what I said. 365 days of favor.

Isaiah 61, 2 and one day of judgment. So I've seen that myself that I must be 365 times more willing to show mercy than to act in judgment. Be merciful and God will be merciful to you.

People lose confidence if you're untruthful, if you love only those who love you, if you platter people to get some advantage from them, if you praise a brother unwisely and ruin him, if you visit only the rich people and the influential people in your church, but not the poorest of the poor believers in your church. I've made it a very strong point in Daniel Orpheus. Make the poorest believers feel I'm their friend.

If you compromise in spiritual matters, if you tell jokes at the expense of others, if you're unforgiving and retain judge grudges, if you make decisions concerning church matters in certain situations to suit your family's convenience, very possible. You arrange a picnic according to your family's convenience or an outing according to your family's convenience. You make it look as though you're interested in the church.

If you cannot overlook small mistakes that other people commit, but instead make big issues out of them. If you don't look people straight in the face when talking to them. I'm always wary about someone who's looking here and there when they talk to me.

In this connection, I want to say, brothers, we must pray for discernment. When you look at particularly newcomers or someone who is in the church, their face and their eyes will tell you something. You know, Proverbs 6 speaks about haughty eyes.

Pride is in a person's eyes. Second Peter 2 speaks about eyes full of adultery. Two things, pride and adultery are in a person's eyes.

We mustn't be suspicious, but if you're judging yourself severely in these areas, over a period of time, you can have discernment that you'll be able to see in a person's face and his eyes a lot. He can't cover it up. Pride and impurity, especially, and that'll help you.

And the last of all, people lose confidence in you. If your messages, your sermons are long and boring, and you don't realize it. I've heard numerous cases like that.

They don't realize they are long and boring, and it's okay to be long and boring. At least you realize it. You do something about it next time.

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