

Being Righteous Without Being Faithful!

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Those of you who were there last Sunday, we looked from *Revelation 17:14*. It talks about the actual companions of Jesus Christ. And I believe these are set of people who will accompany the King all through eternity. And if you have been in nations where you have a king, you will see – the king has his special set of friends – the royal companions. And in the Bible, it talks about a set of people who will be overcomers and who will accompany Him, probably, forever. And you will see in those words which we looked last Sunday, three parameters are said – called, chosen, faithful. And to be the companions of the Lord, it's the third thing that matters. Many are called, few are chosen. And I believe, among those who are chosen, few remain faithful till the end. And if you look into the Word of God, you will see certain people specifically being mentioned as being faithful. It talks about Moses being faithful in the whole house of the Lord. It talks about David being faithful. It talks about Joshua being faithful. It talks about Paul. If you look at him, it says that he remained faithful till the end.

There is a difference between righteousness and there is a difference between being faithful. When you are called, you believe and when you believe, it is credited to your and my account as righteousness. *Romans 4:2* will say, "Abraham believed in God and it was credited to him as righteousness." But all those who are righteous are called to be faithful. And the test of our walk with God is not righteousness; it is something which we have received freely – it is faithfulness. We don't realize – every day, we are sitting for the Royal Civil Service exam. We don't realize it. People spend years together to prepare for the Civil Services exams here but we don't realize – every believer sits for the Royal Civil Service exam (not the Indian Civil Service exam) every day. And God is preparing a set of people who will be the companions of the Son. Those who will be faithful till the end. The Bible says that they are called 'overcomers'. Ten times in the *Book of Revelation*, it talks about overcomers. And each one of us are called to be overcomers.

If you turn with me to *2 Peter 2:4* onwards,

2 Peter 2:4-8

⁴For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; ⁵and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; ⁶and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; ⁷and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked ⁸(for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)—

If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and hold the unrighteous on the day of judgment while continuing their punishment. If you look at those verses, the term that is used there is 'righteous'. A very strange person is called 'righteous' there twice and his name is Lot. And if you study Lot in the Bible, Lot was not faithful. He was righteous. He was not faithful. He was righteous. And how did Lot become righteous? We will see – Lot became righteous the same way we all became righteous. If you go to the *Book of Genesis*, you will know that Lot was Abraham's nephew or Isaac's cousin. He did not directly followed God. He followed the man who followed God. I'm telling you – most of us, probably, all of us began by following a man or a woman of God. That will only bring righteousness into your life. It doesn't bring faithfulness. There will be a time in your life where God will ask you to stand up on your own feet and be counted. When God appeared to Abraham and asked him to leave his father's house, Abraham believed in God and he left. Abraham's father was a worshipper of idols. So, when you read *Genesis 12*, you don't understand any of these things. These things are mentioned in *Joshua 24* and *Acts 7*. When we read *Genesis*, we feel God appeared to Abraham in *Genesis 13*, which is not true. God appeared to Abraham the first time when he was in the Ur of the Chaldeans. When his father was an idol worshipper, Abraham had an encounter with God and the call that goes to Abraham is the same call that goes to everybody – "Leave your father, your household, your country and go to the land that I will show you." He's not actually talking about leaving your father and mother but basically, saying that – if your father and mother, your family do not believe in God, a separation has come into your life. You and I have been separated unto God and when that separation begins, we truly do not know where He is going to take us. you may be living in the same house but you have been separated. And you don't know where tomorrow will be. You don't know how your parents may react, how your family may react. You have no idea at all but you know you have been separated. And that was the call that came to Abraham. And

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when the call came to Abraham, Abraham believed and God considered him righteous. How do you know Abraham believed? Because he left. But when he left, he didn't leave fully. When we also left, we didn't leave fully. We left and we took a lot of things along with us. And what Abraham took along with him was his father. He took his father along with him, whose name was Terah. And when he took his father along with him, he came to a place called Haran, hanged out there and got stuck there. And every one of us, if we still try to carry anything God has told us to leave, we will get stuck. We won't progress any further with God. We will come to a stage in our life and we will stay there. And God is an incredibly patient God. He will wait for us but He will not change. He will say, "When I told you to leave, I told you to leave everything. Then, I will show you the Promised Land." Now, if you want to enter into the Promised Land, there is a land of rest, where there is a land of milk and honey; there will be provision in your life and there will also be sweetness or joy in your life. That's what milk and honey represent. When you enter into your Promised Land, it doesn't matter what your situation is, God promises you provision and joy. But if you enter into that land, He says, "you need to leave everything that I told you to leave." But Abraham got stuck in Haran for a season.

And then, again, the call of God comes upon his life. This time, he obeys and he leaves. When Abraham left the first time, his nephew, Lot, also followed him. Abraham was more of a father to his nephew than his uncle because Lot's father had died earlier. Now, the second time when God tells Abraham to leave his father and his father's household and country, he leaves his father and moves into the land God is showing him, Lot also follows him. Now, when Lot follows Abraham leaving his grandfather, Lot is also considered righteous. Earlier, we could never make out why Lot followed Abraham. Maybe Lot followed his grandfather because he was probably living in his grandfather's house. But now, when he leaves his grandfather and follows his uncle, Abraham, Lot is considered righteous. Abraham is now considered not only righteous, he is being tested and he is being found faithful also. Now, he has left his father and moved. It's easy to leave your grandfather. It's not a big thing but to leave your father is difficult. He left his father and he has moved. Lot has just left his grandfather and moved with his uncle and then, they come to the Promised Land. When they come to the Promised Land, there they are – uncle and nephew and Sarah and there is a test. And God moves you into places, He will always test you. don't get worried by the tests you have to face. As you go into this week, there will be tests prepared for you; tests allowed and prepared by God so that you might pass; not that you will face. So that He might promote you and me. And promotion is – He will draw us closer to Him. You need to realize – every time Abraham passed a test, his experience of God increased. Every time Moses passed a test, his experience of God increased because that's the whole idea – that He wants us to draw us closer and higher; closer to Him.

The test, now, comes. It says – here is the Promised Land that God, now, wants you to be in and the next thing you hear is – there is famine. God may ask you to go to a particular place and when you reach that place, you may be tested because suddenly, nothing seems to be happening over there and you might be wondering, "Lord, did You really want me in this place? Maybe I heard you wrong. Maybe I got it wrong. Am I supposed to be here?" Because nothing seems to be happening. Look at this poor man. He has been called, given a promise and he comes to the Promised Land. Two tests he is facing – one – there is no food in the land; two – his wife is barren. "How will Your promise come true, O Lord? I will either die of hunger and then, I can't have a child also." That's the test. In that test, Abraham fails. Abraham fails because he doesn't check with God. He goes by the testimony of his ears. There is a righteousness that is given to us from above because we believe. There is a righteousness which God takes which has to be worked out by faith. There are two righteousness in the Bible. In the *Book of Revelation*, it will talk about the Bride of Jesus Christ. She is given white clothes to wear, which are the acts of her righteousness. When it talks about Jesus in the *Book of Isaiah*, it says, "He shall not judge by what He sees or what He hears but He shall judge by righteousness." Jesus doesn't take decisions by when He was in the flesh. Not by what He saw or what He heard. At this point, Abraham loses. He retains his positional righteousness but loses his functional righteousness because he went by what he saw and what we heard. Maybe he saw caravans passing by and full of food. Where are they coming from? Egypt. Everybody is making a beeline to Egypt. Everybody is going. You know, from the Gaza strip, once in a while, a blow up. And they cross over to Egypt, they buy provisions, load them up. Even now, people from the old Israel which is in the Palestinian hand, go over to Egypt to buy food and come back. Not anything new. It started a few thousand years ago. So, Abraham moved from Canaan to Egypt. How do you know that you have moved from your position which God asked you to be, from Egypt? How will you know it? You will know it by working out your reaction. The first thing Abraham says when he steps into Egypt is, "Sarah, I'm afraid. You are pretty. They will take you and my life is in danger." Now, you need to realize – the Egyptian culture is no different from the culture of the Canaanites and the Amalekites among whom Abraham lived earlier in Canaan. The culture is the same. Why wasn't he afraid of the Canaanites or the Amalekites taking Sarah and why is he afraid of the Egyptians taking Sarah now? Because there, he was in

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God's appointed place and there is no fear. Though the people are the same and the culture is the same. But now, when he steps out of God's appointed place and is among the same kind of people, same kind of culture and godly people, now, he is afraid because he's moved out of God's position. The way you will know whether you have stepped out of faith, out of your functional righteousness is – check your heart; are you afraid? Are you anxious? Are you worrying? Because in the *Book of Hebrews*, God talks about giving you rest, a day appointed where you will enter into His rest and cease from your works. And people don't realize you can sit in your armchair and keep working by worrying. Over time, you get no payment and God says, "Stop worrying." Are you worrying? Are you worried? Are you anxious? Because today, you need to realize – Canaan is spiritual for us. A spiritual place where God wants us to be. He says, "Stay there in My rest. You don't worry." The battle belongs to Him. He fights our battle for us but He says, "Stay there in faith. Stay where I asked you to be. Do what I ask you to do." Abraham goes in; he's afraid and what happens? He opens his mouth, reveals his fear and life and death is in the power of the tongue. It comes to pass. His wife is taken away. Don't confess your fear. Church, don't confess your fear. Confess your faith. If you confess your fear, you are energizing or empowering the enemy to attack you. The enemy could not touch Adam and Eve until Adam and Eve listened to him. The minute they obeyed him, he had power to attack them. The minute we listen to the fear, the anxiety, the worries that are put there by him, the minute we listen to it and we confess it, we give him authority to start operating in our lives. Because in the *Book of Job*, Satan tells God about Job, "You have put a hedge around him. I cannot touch him." And if you check Job's words carefully, you will see, that man is very careful about what he says. Even when his wife says, "Curse God and die," most husbands would have lost their temper by now. He doesn't call her a fool. He says, "You are talking like a foolish woman." Very careful. You look at Scripture. He doesn't say, "You are a fool," because Jesus says, later, "If you call your brother a fool, you are in danger of hellfire." He doesn't call his wife a fool. He says, "You are talking like a foolish woman." These are two different things. He doesn't call her a fool. He was very careful about what he's speaking. Very careful about it. You need to realize – you can protect yourself by believing God's Word and when you speak, speaking according to God's Word. But God remembers the faithfulness of His servants and He intervenes and He brings Abraham out of Egypt. Abraham and Lot come out of Egypt. They both come out of Egypt and then, the test begins. You would wonder why but God will test you till the last day of your life.

One day, Paul, in his last days, is standing there all alone in the court. He has been brought before the Roman court and he is standing there. When you have served in the Kingdom of God all your life the way Paul did – beaten, bruised, starved, hungry. And you come there and you have brought salvation to probably tens and hundreds and thousands of people, opened up the entire Asia Minor, Europe and you come for your trial in the court, you would expect, at least, 5 people or 10 people, brethren, to be standing there for moral support. He looks and there is nobody. He is all alone. His faithfulness is being tested. When he opens his mouth, he says, "I do not hold it against them." And he says, "Even when we are unfaithful, there is somebody who is still faithful." He says, "The Lord Himself stood by me and strengthened me." God brings Abraham and Lot out because of God's faithfulness; not Abraham's or Lot's faithfulness that He brings them out but when they come out of Egypt, you will see, now, they have great possessions. Now, when they have great possessions, there is rift. There is rift because there are great possessions and that is a test. Every time there is a conflict, God allows conflict. Don't worry if God allows conflicts. Conflicts are a test of your character. And there is conflict between Lot and Abraham's men and there is a line written in *Genesis 13* over there. Just one line over there.

Genesis 13:7

⁷And quarreling arose between Abram's herders and Lot's...

And then, one line, a little line over there. What is written there?

...The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time.

Now, this is information mentioned already earlier. Earlier, when Lot and Abraham had moved into Canaan, it is already mentioned who was living there. Second time, when God repeats information, it is not information; it is something else. He is telling, when there is conflict between two of His people, please remember – there are unbelievers around watching your testimony. There are Amalekites and Canaanites around and among them, there are only two people holding up the testimony of the Living God. And when there is conflict that way, it's a test of your faith whether you would be just righteous or whether you would prove to be faithful. It's a question of righteousness and faithfulness. You will see that both remained righteous but only Abraham remained faithful. Abraham comes to Lot and says, "We are brethren." They are not

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brethren. He is uncle and he is nephew. His nephew got blessed because of the uncle but he comes down and says, "We are brethren. You take whatever you want. What is that you want? You take whatever you want." Just remember this one thing. The test that you and I go through is, whenever there is conflict, what is the first thing that comes into your mind? The first thing for a faithful man that comes to mind is – the Name of my God is at stake. Not anything else. The first thing that should come to your mind is – "It's my God's Name is that is at stake." It's not possessions; it's not people; it's not relationship. It's none of those things. These are all secondary. The primary thing that should come in the heart of a faithful man is – my God's Name is at stake. When David goes with bread for his brothers, the father has sent him; there is a battle going on and the Israelite army is gathered over one side and the Philistines on another side and Goliath coming and challenging; when David goes over there, his zeal is not for the king; his zeal is not for the army; his zeal is not for his brothers. The first thing that comes out of this mouth is, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he dare defies the armies of the Living God?" He was willing to fight Goliath not for the sake of Israel but, "My God's Name is at stake here." He will find one man to fight the battle for him. That's what David is saying. "Lord, when You look down, O God, You find one man." In the *Book of Ezekiel*, God says, "I looked to find one man but I didn't find." One man. The first thing that should come into our heart is – "Is my first priority God?" Is His Name uppermost in my life? God says, "You are not just righteous; you are faithful." Both are given the same test. If Lot had been faithful, he would have turned to his uncle and said. "Uncle, everything that I have is because your God blessed you and those blessings have poured into my life. I don't want to stray anywhere far from you. You tell me where I can dwell and I will dwell there. You make the decision for me." That would have been a reply of a faithful nephew but he was righteous; not faithful. So, you know what he did? He looked. The minute he was given a choice, he looked. Scripture says,

Genesis 13:10

¹⁰ ***Lot looked around and saw...***

It's not the looking that matters. I'm telling you – looking doesn't matter. It's what you see that matters. It's not looking that matters. We all look but we don't see the same. Seeing is dependent on what has been implanted into your heart. Seeing is dependent on what has already been programmed into your mind. You will see according to that only. You will not see it anywhere.

Many years back, we heard this story of three bushmen coming out of the jungle and for the first time, they are breaking through the jungle and they are watching, they go back and they report to the head man, "We saw a terrible monster at night! It had shiny eyes and it had a huge mouth in the side and it was just swallowing people. The people did not die. One guy, two sides of his stomach was transparent and we could see people sitting there." It was just a bus. But then, how do you see? You see only with the knowledge that is there within. That is why God is saying, "Meditate upon My Word day and night so that how you see can change." There are no shortcut methods. Church, there is no shortcut method. You want to be faithful? You need to start looking at things the way God looks at things. Why is it written in *John 2* that Jesus wouldn't commit Himself to any man? Because He knew the hearts of men. He wouldn't commit. Yet, God is looking, still for people, into whose hands, He can commit His Spirit. God committed Himself to Moses and to Abraham. He will still commit Himself into the hands of people once He finds them faithful. And they have trained themselves to see things the way He sees. Every test He put the disciples through is to see whether they were looking at things the same way. Everybody will look but each one of us will see differently depending on what has gone in. And that is where this comes in. This is primary so that you can remain faithful till the end. It's not only seeing but seeing correctly. So, Lot has just come out of Egypt. He came out of Egypt. He brought most of Egypt in his heart. Abraham must have brought, maybe, 5% of Egypt from his heart. You might be wondering, "Did Abraham bring Egypt with him when he came out?" I still believe Abraham brought some influence of Egypt in his heart because later, when his wife offered him her concubine, he was tempted by the Egyptian maid. It was the Egyptian maid that was offered to him. She was not a Canaanite or an Amalekite. But Lot came with the whole of Egypt. So, when he looked, he looked and he chose something that looked like Egypt.

...that the whole plain of the Jordan toward Zoar was well watered, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)

That's what we have to be very careful about. You and I sitting here, we are righteous because of God's grace but we will be called 'faithful' only when we die to the patterns to this world. Never is anybody sitting here, you and me, going to be called faithful if we haven't died to the basic patterns of this world. If we operate either in our home, our business, our ministry,

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our Church in the pattern of the world, God will call us 'unfaithful'. "Friendship with the world," God says, "is enmity with God." It's not possible. And that is the area we are struggling. We are always struggling in that area because everybody's doing it and they seem to have a great measure of success also, when they do it that way. But God did not say that, "I will measure you by success." God said, "I will measure you by faithfulness." Do you remember what He tells His servants? "Good and faithful servants." He didn't say, "Good and successful servants." Though He was successful, He did not say, "Come to Me, you good and successful servants." He said, "You good and faithful servants, enter into My joy. I shall give you charge of ten cities." Never does God in the Bible evaluate anybody based on success; He evaluates people based on faithfulness. Salvation is there for everybody, including Lot. He is called a 'righteous man' by God in the *Book of Peter*. He is not called a faithful man. He is called a righteous man. God is asking us, "Look, I know you are right but I want you to be faithful." Lot wasn't faithful. He looked and he made his choices. He looked, he saw, Scripture says, "He chose." That's the way. He looked because everything begins with a look and you will look and see according to what is already there inside. And then, when you see that inside, you will make your choice according to that. That's why when I do counselling for these to-be young married couples, I tell them, "Please don't get all these ideas from the movies you have seen." All of them see movies. Hindi is bad. Hollywood is worse. They all come with this great romantic idea that marriage like that. Why do so many people get so upset after marriage? Because they think that marriage is like what they have seen. They come with a preconceived idea that marriage is like this. They will go and check of the blueprint of the marriage given in this. That is truth which would set you free. There are a whole set of ideas that they have come with. And they come with that idea and they start their married life and after a week, 1 month, 1 year, things start changing and they are wondering, "What went wrong? I believed in You, Lord." Which is true. They are righteous but they are not faithful. Faithfulness is connected with the Word of God.

We go to our workplace and the same thing happens. We go to our workplace, expecting things all to be honkey-dorey. God says, "You will be tested left and right, every day in the workplaces. Don't consider it abnormal. Consider it normal," He says. If you don't get tested, who will get tested? You've got a God who wants to promote you through test. You want an enemy who wants to put you through fire. You will be tested. It is the test of your faithfulness. We don't realize that we are not looking at things and situations through the Word of God and if we were, we would start seeing things differently. Lot looked; Lot chose and Lot moved. When he moved, he did not realize – that was the first step towards disaster. And I will tell you, many of us have gone through or will go through situations like Lot had to do. Maybe, many years back, we took one step and that step led to a decline. We are righteous in the eyes of God but we have moved further and further. You look back, you will see where that decision took place. Lot took a decision to move away Abraham and to move towards Sodom. You know what Scripture says? Abraham did not look at all. Abraham had to be told by God in,

Genesis 13:14

¹⁴ The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Look around from where you are..."

Maybe you are waiting to hear from the Lord. And I will tell you, Lot is a person. Lot also is a part of you living within you and until that Lot separates from you, you will not hear from God. If you study the Gospels carefully, some of the serious things which Jesus taught His disciples, He taught after Judas had left. There are certain revelations God will not give you until your flesh dies. Lot had to be separated and moved; then, God spoke to Abraham. There is Lot within us. Not just Lot within us, there's a lot within us. And God will wait for it to die. Once it dies, you will hear from Him. Then, God will say, "Lift up your head." The point is – Abraham did not lift up, look or choose until he heard from God. And then, God says, "Look to the left, to the right, to the front, to the back,"

...to the north and south, to the east and west.

"Whatever you see, including what your nephew took, is yours and your descendants." Don't worry about all the people of flesh when they make their choices. They will try to take the best of things and go. Don't worry about that," He says. "At the end," God says, "the silver and gold are Mine." The earth and its fullness is His. He is the Lord of all flesh. The Heaven is His throne. The earth is His footstool. He says, "It belongs to Me. I will give it to anybody that I choose. So, you don't worry about who has taken. I will see it comes back to you and to your descendants." That's what He tells. If you are faithful, He says, "you will never lose." Because God's sovereignty that cannot be overruled.

I want to look at one thing that is beautiful over there. Look at *verse 12* and *verse 18*. You will see the difference.

Genesis 13:12

¹² Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom.

The testimony of Lot is – he lived among the cities of the plain and moved near Sodom. Look at *verse 18*. Abraham also moved. It was not a move of one person alone; it was a move for both people. One moved towards Sodom; the other moved towards Hebron.

Genesis 13:18

¹⁸ So Abram went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he pitched his tents. There he built an altar to the Lord.

What does ‘Hebron’ mean? Hebron means fellowship. One moved towards Sodom; the other moved towards closer fellowship with God. You remember why Caleb, when I taught about Caleb I told you why Caleb wanted Hebron as his inheritance and he had to kill three giants before he could inherit Hebron. You have to kill the giants within you before you can actually fellowship with God. And here is he, moving towards Hebron and the other man is moving towards Sodom. And if you look at the record of this man who moved towards Sodom, from the beginning till the end, he never built an altar. If you look at the man who moved towards Hebron, at every stage of his life, you will see – he builds an altar. Because you cannot fellowship with God without an altar. This guy is not worried about fellowship. He is worried only about blessings. Here is a person who is not worried about blessings; he is worried about fellowship with God. And in Christendom, even today, the believers, the righteous are divided into these two platforms – those who want blessings without fellowship with God; and those who want fellowship with God and the blessings follow them. That’s what God is talking about. He moved towards Mamre and he moved towards Sodom. Separation takes place. All choices. Choices began by what they looked at.

The first fall of the first human being also began with a look. Eve stood by that tree and she looked. And she knew that it was pleasing to the eye. In the Garden, the fall began with a look because the commandment not to eat from the tree was given to Adam before Eve was created. Eve heard it second-hand from Adam. Adam was not there anywhere near the tree and Timothy says, “Adam was not deceived.” It was Eve who was deceived. Adam was not deceived. So, Eve is there, looking. There must have been hundreds of trees over there with beautiful fruits all over there but Adam had told us, “God has said not to eat from that tree.” You tell children not to do something. You will see what happens. They will go after it all there. They don’t want anything else. The most uninteresting thing over there, however the toddler is, it is after that. And here is the overgrown child, Eve, looking at that tree. Now, that fruit looks even more beautiful than the others because there is a law which says, “Don’t eat of it.” Paul says in the *Book of Romans*, “Until law came, I did not know what sin was.” The very reason law is given is so that we will know what sin is and then, we start getting tempted and temptation is a test for your victory. The minute one rule was given, “Don’t eat from that,” she comes and starts looking at it. Then, she hears a whisper, “Eve, let’s change the information you have in your mind. You got this information from your husband about a good God who said ‘if you eat, you will die’. Let me give you some more information. That’s not right. The new information is that – if you eat, you will become like God.” Now, it looks even more beautiful because she has supplanted the old information with new. That is why we need to realize especially in this age, when we are going through an information revolution, information is very important because the information you receive, the source from which you receive will determine your destiny. And those of you who are in literature will know that the big name; those who read newspapers, you will see, he also comes here; people like Chomsky and all these will talk about something and they will say, “There is no meaning in the Word.” They will attack the Word. The tiny little Word down to their limit by saying, “There is no meaning in it.” And they will say, “Truth is relative.” You know why? Because somebody once stood there and said, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.” And the Word is the truth. And they will start hitting down at the Word by saying, “There is nothing like that. You cannot believe any Word. Your truth. My truth. “Because information is vital to your destiny. You need to realize – where did I get that information from? Where did you get that information from?

So, that lady, an old grandmother, picked up that information, acted on that information and here is a man, standing now. He knows she is fallen. He is not deceived. Scripture says in *Timothy*, “He is not deceived.” Now, he is acting on another piece of information. See, it’s not enough that you know Scripture. You also need to know all of Scripture so that you can evaluate Scripture properly. So, he’s acting on a piece of information where it says, “For this purpose, man shall leave his

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father and his mother and cleave to his wife.” Now, here is this man – standing and saying, “She has fallen, moving away from the glory of God and You are my father and mother and You have said ‘leave your father and mother and cleave to your wife.’” The only way he can cleave to his wife then was by partaking of that fruit. Otherwise, there is a separation between the two of them. So, he follows her in sin. That is why in the New Covenant, even when submission is told, it is told, “In the Lord.” Don’t get it wrong, brothers and sisters, even in marriage. God says, “It should be everything in the Lord because,” our submission first is to God and not to your husband or to your wife. It’s not that way. Otherwise, it is a submission which is wrong. It’s a lie, not a truth. Adam is not deceived. *Timothy 2:5* will say, “He was not deceived.” Eve was deceived. You know, everybody was acting on information and the information that goes in is how you see when you look. Abraham refused to look because he knew that the One who brought him to this land was God. The honor of that piece of real estate is God, not him. So, he waited until he got information from God to take the look. Then, when God said, “Look,” he looked and he chose. And Lot, as he moved away from God and his uncle, moved towards Sodom. Have you moved towards Sodom?

Turn with me to *Ezekiel 16:49*.

Ezekiel 16:49

⁴⁹ Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom...

We thought it was homosexuality and sexual immorality. These are all the symptoms. These are not the sin. The sin is something else.

⁴⁹ Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

This was the sin manifested outwardly in sexual immorality. You look back in all these nations where they are extremely rich. They are dense in sexual immorality. You know why? It’s the symptom of a lot of money, a lot of pride, a lot of time to kill and we don’t want to help anybody who is poor. Let them die. Who cares? That is the sin. That is the iniquity, manifested outwardly. They don’t know what to do. They’ve got a lot of money, a lot of time to kill and they want to spend time in other things. That is the outward thing but the real sin is something else – pride, a lot of money, idleness and an unwillingness to help those who are poor, downtrodden and weak. That was the real sin of Sodom manifested outwardly as something else. Now, you tell if God judged Sodom and Gomorrah, will He judge us? “Oh, no, brother. I don’t do the things which Sodom did.” God is not talking about that. God is talking about something. He is talking about iniquity. A long time back, I talked to you about the difference between sin and iniquity and transgression. These are all three different things. God is saying, “Do you have that iniquity within?” Are you very proud that, “We are so big and we’ve got so many possessions and now, we don’t have to care; we can spend it the way we like,” without strengthening the hand of the poor, the weak and the downtrodden? “Oh, we’ve got so much time to kill. It doesn’t matter.” When God says in His Word, “Redeem the time because the days are evil.” Are we the lord of our time? Are we the lord of our wealth? How do we look at things? God says, “You are partaking in the sin of Sodom. You have moved away from Hebron.” And He is saying, children, “You are pitching your tents closer and closer to Sodom.” We need to look at Scripture very carefully to see how God looks at things. Are we righteous? Yes, we are righteous. Are we faithful? God says, “Check yourself. Are you faithful?” There’s a call to faithfulness. It’s not enough that we are righteous. God says, “More than that, I expect.” And we are talking about a call to faithfulness. Can you imagine the Lord of the Heavens, the Creator of the Universe, after He has fed five thousand plus people, telling His disciples, “Pick up all the scraps. Nothing should be wasted.” Jesus?! God, who created everything, is telling His disciples, “Take the baskets and pick up all the scraps.” Don’t waste. God hates wastage. That’s God. You know why? He has called us to be stewards and His Son proved His stewardship. Being righteous in money matters is one thing. Give unto Caesar what is Caesar’s. Give unto God what is God. He is talking about just not being righteous; it is talking about being faithful. And I’m telling you – we don’t fail in this. We are always right in being righteous. We all fail in this – about being faithful because you need to realize, every penny in your pocket belongs to God; not you. It doesn’t belong to me; it’s His. I don’t have anything. It all belongs to Him. Therefore, He says, “I am trusting you to be a good steward. I have entrusted 24 hours a day to you, expecting you to be a good steward of your time. I’ve entrusted a body and a life and a tongue and brains and all these things to you, expecting you to be a good steward. I have put My Spirit in you. A treasure in jars of clay, expecting you to be a good steward.” We are called to stewardship. We are righteous. No problem. We will make it to Heaven. If we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, confess your sins, repent and walk in that

repentance, we will all make it to Heaven. But it's not just that. It's much more than that which is there in eternity. You ask – why did you slog so much? So that you could do well in life. IIT Kanpur, M. Tech? He didn't stop there. Now, he's doing a Ph. D in Robotics. Why? People will slog, especially in Andhra Pradesh. I think before they are in Class 1, they send them to IIT preparation academy – Narayana and all. All with this one dream – get into IIT somehow. How much, people? God is talking about – you have no idea about the academy that is being prepared over there. Eyes haven't seen nor ears heard what God is preparing for those who love Him. There is so much. It's not about good works; it's talking about – we have been called to be faithful and I know that if Jesus is King, one day, He is going to rule the whole universe and He is going to pick up His own civil service, He's going to give it to people who are faithful. There's a very powerful statement which Jesus makes – “If you couldn't be trusted with unrighteous mammon, how could I trust you with true riches?” Everywhere, people will say, especially in the ministry; I'm not talking about the congregation. “Brother, I don't get any revelation, brother.” True riches are revelations of God's Word. It is His Spirit. His Words are life, Spirit and truth. He says, “You want to get revelation, be faithful to those little points.” It's connected. We don't see there is a connection with this and this. If you are a man or your little vanity bag and this. Your money and your revelation. If you can be a faithful steward of that, God says, “I will be a faithful provider of revelation.” We want to hear, every day, from God. Patterns. We look at all these patterns that are there and we look at the results. I like one man of God. I won't mention his name. He has an incredible sense of humor sometimes. He says, “You look at all these crusades and you look at all the success and healing and everything, praise God. It's God's work. It's not man's work.” But he says, “Can you think 2000 years back, God's own Son, Jesus, having a crusade and on His right is His King Excellency, King Herod and on His left, his most reverend, Caiaphas; and now, before Jesus begins His crusade, our Excellency will speak a few words and then, reverend Caiaphas will give the opening prayer and then, I will minister.” Isn't that the way almost every crusade takes place in this country? Just think about it; would Jesus ever have them on the platform? He would tell Herod, “You fox! Go tell him.” We look at the results. We look at all that is happening – perfectly righteous. We are not talking about righteousness. We are talking about more than that. We are talking about faithfulness. Would Paul do that? Everywhere Paul went, he had problems with all those in power and authority. They were after his life. Why didn't he call them to his meetings and say, “Take an exalted chair and sit on them”? No fooling around with those things. He was a faithful man. They were all faithful men. They were not just righteous; they were faithful. They were very sure – if it's God's work, it should be done God's way. It will not be done any other way. God will take the credit for the results. I will get judged for my message. Both will happen in the same meeting. I won't get the credit for a single healing or a single salvation or a single separation, whatever. It's all His works but I'll get judged for the message. That's where you and I will be judged. Because you need to realize – this man called Lot, when he was found by the angels of the Lord, he was sitting at the city gates. Proverbs 30:23 says, “Her husband sits at the city gates. He takes his place among the elders.” Lot has now become an elder in Sodom. It's not a great thing to be a big man in this world unless God has put you there. Lot only became a city elder in the city where the city was destroyed later. But the king of the land, Abraham, comes and says, “We need to have peace because I know God is with you.” And to his son, the king and the general comes and says, “Let us have peace because we know your God is with you.” That's the difference between the two. Both were extremely prominent men in their generation. One, his city was destroyed. There was no legacy left. To the other, the kings were sent. And he still has a legacy. His descendants are there forever and they shall possess the land for eternity. We don't have to rise up in the world on our own. God will do it. When God does it, you leave a legacy. God will leave a legacy. And how did Abraham achieve it? All through fellowship. Only through fellowship. How did Lot achieve it? By going after things. What was his testimony? Nothing. His sons in law laughed at him. His daughters and he had to be pulled out. His wife looked back and finally, he's there on the top of the hill, sitting there with his two daughters. Everything lost. City burnt. Everything lost. Nothing is there. Does the ruin end there? He's a righteous man. Does the ruin end there? No, it doesn't end there also. Why? Because now, the father is sitting up in a small mountain, no people around; there are two daughters and they are planning, “Hey, hang on. We are in a mess. Only Daddy is there. If things go on like this, there are no men over there and we will have no families, no children. Our line will end up here. So, let's do one thing.” The two daughters put their heads together and come up with a “wonderful” plan. They say, “We will make our father drunk tonight. You sleep with him tonight. Tomorrow night, I will sleep.” You know why? Because they made their decisions because the information that was gone. Incest was okay in Sodom. Sodom has been destroyed but not the Sodom in their heart. So, when they are in a crisis, the immediate solution – let's make a solution according to the information that is there. You know why? Lot failed to put his righteousness into the hearts of his children. But Abraham did not fail. “Ishmael, God has told me. Get out of the house.” He got out of the house. There was not a word of murmur nor did he rebel against Abraham. “Isaac, come with me. We go on a three-day journey.” “Yes. Where are we going?” “To worship the Lord.” “Father, the fire and wood is there. Where is the animal?” “The Lord will provide. You just follow me.” He must have been a strong, young teenager then. Now, where is the animal? “You are the animal. Get on the altar.” He tied him up. Is

Being Righteous Without Being Faithful!

there any sign of rebellion. No. You know why? God said, "I shall name you Abraham. The reason? You shall command your children to obey Me." He passed on a legacy. He was able to implant that righteousness and that faithfulness in his children. Lot was not. Yet, Scripture calls him a righteous man. But I'm saying – it's not enough that we are righteous. We need to be more than that to be faithful because it would affect our generations. It affects our children. It affects the lives of all the others if we are faithful. And that's what God is talking about. It all began with a look. For all of us sitting here, it will begin with a look and the look will determine what choice you will make. The choice you make will determine what information you have.

At a time when kings went to war, David did not go to war. He sent the army with the generals and he was walking on the terrace on his house. Because when you are out of position with God, you will not be able to sleep. You will be restless. He should have been there with his soldiers as a king, as a warrior. Instead, he is working on the terrace and when he's on the terrace, he stops and he looks. He sees a woman bathing. That's why she's called 'Bath-sheba'. She was in the Bible. It's one of them. But you know why it all began? Because he was at the wrong place. When you are at the wrong place and when you look, it should have stopped there immediately and you should have backed off. But he didn't. It led to one thing and to another. Then, disaster followed. Did God restore him? Yes. Did God say about him in the *Book of Acts*, "Here is a man after My own heart?" Yes. But did it affect his generations? Yes, it did. It was passed on to his generation.

Elijah brought fire down from Heaven. "Lord, I have done everything according to Your Word. You had said, "Until My Word comes, it will not rain in the land." Fine. 3 and a half years are over, it is come. Now, "Servant, go and see." But the prophet doesn't leave his head. His head is between his knees and he is there. He doesn't want to look with his eyes; he wants to look with his spirit. "Go." He goes. "Nothing." "Go again." "Nothing." "Go again." "Nothing." "Go again." "Nothing." "Go again." "Nothing." Eighth time, when he comes back, he says, "I see a cloud like a fist." Elijah doesn't have to look; he's already seen it. What did he see? The Word of the Lord will never fail. "I don't have to see the testimony with my eyes. I have already seen it." "I see the fist, the cloud like the hand of God rising." When the hand of God rises, it comes with blessings. "I can hear the sound of rain." And when a man of God has learnt to see with his heart through the Word of God, the blessings will come and it doesn't matter if your enemy is going in his chariot; God will empower you to run faster than the chariot. That's what happened over there – an old man running faster than a chariot. That's the God we are talking about. These were people who were faithful. Extremely faithful. They are not just righteous; they are faithful. That's why you should read the *Book of Hebrews 11*. He will mention there a set of people who are faithful. They were not people who were just righteous. There are some characters, like Samson, who are mentioned there who was not faithful but almost all the others were faithful. And we are called to faithfulness and God says that His grace will empower us to be faithful. He will do everything possible to see that we remain faithful till the end. That's our call. Wherever you are – student or a worker, whatever we are doing, God has called us to be faithful. Amen? He has called us to be faithful till the end. We have to be faithful in little, little things.

In a week to go, we will go through the Word together. Don't think I'm preaching to you. I preach to myself first. Then only to the congregation. There are some things, when I preaching, He tells me things that are new for me. I don't even know it until I have spoken it. It was very difficult last week to sit at home and not to go around. I actually told brother, "I will come with you." And when Brother Pandian comes, he said he would give me a call, "I will come with you and we will go and take a look at the halls." I also knew that I shouldn't go. It sounds very strange. You need a hall and God tells you, "Don't go. The hall will come to you." It's very easy to go look around. It's very difficult to sit. These many numbers of people wouldn't have fit into my house. It's not possible. I wouldn't have fit them into my room but then, He is saying, "You sit there," till Friday. And I hadn't still seen the place. What time did we see, brother? Friday afternoon. You came here at 12 o' clock in the afternoon and we saw the place. And then, you see the hand of God – everything coming down. The rentals are coming down. You know why? God is also a good steward of His money. He's a good steward of His money. It's not just that I need to be a good steward of His money. He needs to be a good steward of His money. And I want you take that seriously home and read it today. Okay? I do not know how the offering will be next week but whatever, I want you to be absolutely free in this Church about offering. Just like you are with Communion. When the Communion tray comes to you, if you are not right, just let the Communion tray pass. I will say the same thing with the offering bag if there is a bag. Just let it pass. Don't waste your money. Keep it. Use it wisely. Please read it carefully and we will worship Him together next Sunday.

Closing Prayer:

Being Righteous Without Being Faithful!

Father, we thank You. We praise You, God. We worship You, God, because You are a faithful God. You are not just a righteous God, O Master. You are a faithful God. Faithful, as Your Word says in Timothy, even when we are unfaithful. And You have called us to be faithful, O God. Thank You, Father. Thank You, God. And You have not asked us to be faithful in our own strength. Your grace is more than able, more than sufficient, O God, to keep us faithful. And, Father, I pray, Lord, as a Church, as families, as individuals, each of us will learn to lean on that grace, to depend upon that grace every day, every hour, O God. In our weaknesses, especially, O God, so that we remain faithful to You; so that, one day, O God, each one of us sitting here can hear from You, "Come to Me, good and faithful servant. Enter into My joy." God, what a day that would be! And I pray, Lord, none of us here would miss hearing those words from You. Prepare us every day, Lord, so that we can truly be Your tabernacle of God where You dwell in us and with us, O Master. As we go into a new week, O Master, I commit the Church into Thy hands and I pray Your presence would go with each one of us. And I pray, Lord, in our infirmities, You shall be our strength. You are our Deliverer. You are our Provision. You are our Healer. In our workplace, You will stand by us, O God, as You stood by Paul. Even if everybody else abandons us, O God, I pray, Lord, Your presence will be there; that You would teach Your people to keep their eyes on You and You alone, O God, and they will feel Your presence by their side, O God, strengthening them and comforting them; so that, O Lord, each one of us can stand there as a testimony of Your mercy, Your love, Your kindness, Your patience and Your goodness. Thank You, Father, that we have no other name but the Name of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us to live up to the Name, O God; to live that Name, O Master. Thank You, Father. As Your servant, I release Your blessings into the lives of Your people, O God. Let the blessings accompany them and overtake them as they obey You every day, O Master. Thank You, Father. Once again, I thank You for this place You have given us, O God. Father, we choose to bless Sister Della, Master. Thank You for her. Thank You for her kindness, O Master. Thank You for her love for You, O Master. Because, O Father, whether she knew it or not, this morning, when she came and when she cleaning up this place, I believe, O God, she was doing unto You, O Master. And I pray, Lord, let Your hand rest upon her and her household too. Let her and her household be blessed, O Master. Thank You, Father. And even in this place, help us to be faithful and good stewards of what has been entrusted to us, O Master. Thank You, Father. Father, we praise You. We worship You. We give You all the glory and the honor. It belongs to You and You alone. Thank You, Father. For in Jesus' Precious Name we pray, Amen.

Benediction:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest and abide with each one of us, Amen.