

Transformation; Not Reformation!

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Almighty God, a living, loving Heavenly Father, we thank You. Thank You, Father, for this awesome day. A day of joy for us as a Church, as a body of believers that You have given us, O Lord Father, yet another child, Your daughter. We thank You. We just want to thank You, Father, for the gift of life. We just want to thank You. For this moment and time, O Lord Jesus, we commit Abel and Priyanka into Your hands, O Lord. Be with them and the baby. Thank You, Father, for all of us over here. Father, even as we come to You, O Lord, I pray, Lord, that You would build us up, O Lord. Father, You said through Your servant, Peter, "Coming to Him as living stones, to be built up into a spiritual house," that we might become a holy priesthood; that we might offer unto You spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. O Father, this evening, build us up as living stones. Build us up, O Lord. Give us the words of life. You and You alone, O Lord, have the words of life; not me. And this evening, O Father, I surrender each one of us into Your hands, beginning with me, O Lord; that You would empower us to hear Your Word. You would give me the grace to speak Your Word with clarity; that You would keep me from error and Lord, You would open our ears, hearing ears, that we might just not be receivers of Your Word but Father, we will be doers of Your Word. Give us grace that we would receive with humility, with meekness the implanted word into our hearts this evening. Anoint us afresh. Grace us grace, we pray. I commit all of those who are on the way that You would bring them safely to this sanctuary. We thank You; we praise You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

When Pastor was speaking a couple of Sundays back, he was mentioning about Christianity being transformation and not reformation. So, I just want to remind ourselves certain things that we have possibly have learnt some time back. Some of you are new; some of you are old; but the Word of God is always fresh. Amen? It is always new. I just want us to look at that particular passage for today's meditation from *Romans 12:1-2*, which talks about transformation.

Romans 12:1-2

¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

So, how do I get transformed? I get transformed by the renewing of my mind. That is what leads to transformation. Transformation is from the renewing of your mind. If my mind is not renewed, I will not be able to prove that which is good, acceptable and the perfect will of God. If God shows us His will before we get our minds transformed, we may not like it. Therefore, we need to be transformed by the renewing of the mind.

I just want to make a couple of observations here. I like the word 'transformed' because it appears only a few times in the entire New Testament. First observation – the word 'transformed' comes from the Greek word 'metamorpho'. Have you heard of metamorphosis? We've studied it in Biology, right? Metamorphosis is how the caterpillar turns into a butterfly. Metamorpho – a complete transformation. There is no comparison whatsoever between what it was and what it would be. Absolute change. Interestingly, it appears only four times in the entire Greek New Testament. Four times only. A couple of times it is mentioned in the *Gospel according to Matthew* and the *Gospel according to Mark* and particularly in *Matthew 17*, I want to look at this particular passage. Look at what it says;

Matthew 17:1

¹ Now after six days...

Six days from when? It's very interesting. Unless you read *Matthew 16* and the last verse, you will not know what he is talking about. Six days? It's like this, right? The *Gospel according to John* starts this way – when the first chapter is over, the next chapter, *chapter 2* will say, "After three days, there was a wedding." Three days from when? And we've looked at that in several contexts but just look at that. We can just extrapolate that idea here.

Matthew 17:1

¹ Now after six days...

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Six days – this is the number of creation. On the sixth day, man was made; man was marred. That's what I'm trying to read from the text over here.

Matthew 17:1-2

¹ *And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves.* ² *And he was* (metamorphosized) *transfigured before them...*

Completely changed. They were blown away by what they saw. Peter fell on his face, opened his mouth and God said, "Shut up." He didn't know what to say. He completely changed. He showed them a glimpse of how He was going to be in glory. A complete transfiguration took place. I want to connect that to another place. As I said, it is mentioned four times in the entire New Testament. A couple of times in the same passage, in the same context in *Matthew 17* and *Mark's Gospel 6*; *Romans 12* – transformed is mentioned; and the other time it is mentioned, the only other time is in *2 Corinthians 3:18*,

2 Corinthians 3:18

¹⁸ *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed* (metamorphosized) *into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*

So, the whole objective of God is to transform us, in other words. To transform completely, to change our life. How is He going to do that? He is going to transform us by the renewing of our minds. So, that's the first observation which I wanted to make. It is that – it is mentioned four times; it's a complete change. There is no comparison between who you are and what you will be. That is the reason why it says in *2 Corinthians 5*,

2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁷ *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a* (what?) *new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

Everything about us has become new. Complete transformation. That is His will. Observation number 1.

Observation number 2 – in order for me to be transformed, there has to be an exchange of my way of thinking to God's way of thinking. That's what transformation is all about. Do you understand? So, how do I get transformed? Simple. Exchange my way of thinking to God's way of thinking. Is it as simple as that? Let's see. What are the difficulties? What are the roadblocks that we will face in this journey of transformation? This is exactly what God tells through the prophet Isaiah in *Isaiah 55:6-9*.

Isaiah 55:6-9

⁶ *"Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; ⁷let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts* (meaning – change the way you think); *let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon* (He doesn't stop there). ⁸ *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. ⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

Therefore, a complete transformation has to take place. It is something which we need to constantly keep doing. So, what is it about the mind that makes this job of transformation difficult? What is it about the mind? One of the things I've been learning of late is to ask God – Lord, let me speak the language of Scripture. Compare Scripture with Scripture. Just observe where else is this word 'renewed' mentioned in the New Testament. So, what is it about the mind that has to be changed or renewed in order for us to be transformed? And this is, by the way, the call of everybody – to be transformed,

2 Corinthians 3:18

¹⁸ *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image...*

Those whom He has foreknown, He has predestined them to be conformed to the same image. That is God's call for everybody, that we will start thinking the way God thinks. It's amazing, the audacity (if I can use that word), the confidence of Apostle Paul when he was writing the *Epistle of Corinthians*. He says, "We have the mind of Christ. We have it." And God says, "Absolutely. If I were to write Scripture, I would write exactly what you are writing. Your mind and My mind, we are

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thinking exactly the same. So, write it as Scripture. It will be read throughout eternity.” Completely transformed. How is it possible that a guy who was actually a enemy of the Church, a persecutor, a blasphemer, a murderer and an insolent man, how was he completely transformed? There is only one perfect example in the New Testament of a transformed mind. It is not even Jesus because Jesus did not need any transformation. Jesus was perfect. Who was completely transformed? It was Paul. He was the man who was absolutely transformed. He was so confident that he says, “*The time of my departure is here. A crown of righteousness is ready for me.*” What confidence! He says, “*It is not me. By the grace of God, I am what I am.*” 1 Corinthians 15.

So, what is it about the mind that needs to be changed or renewed in order for us to be transformed? That’s the question that we need to post. It’s found in Scripture. You need to understand something. The Bible, unlike any other Book, it’s analysis of the human mind is so perfect, no other book comes close to it. He will tell you exactly what the problem is in order for us to overcome. He will give you the exact diagnosis of the problem. So, what is it before further suspense? Any more suspense, Ephesians 4:21,

Ephesians 4:21

²¹ ***assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus,***

This is a very interesting word – ‘assuming’. Paul is saying, “I am writing and I’m assuming that you understood what I’ve said. I hope.”

Ephesians 4:22-23

²² ***to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,*** (very interesting) ²³ ***and to be renewed*** (do you see that? The same word,) ***in the spirit of your minds,***

What in the world is that? You read the English Standard Version and the KJV, they are so different in some aspects. There is a verse in Psalm 119:130; it says,

Psalms 119:130

¹³⁰ ***The entrance of thy words giveth light...***

The picture is this – a guy is entering through the door; the door opens and boom! The light is there. Do you imagine that scene? Go through that door and Jesus said, “*I am the Door.* You come through Me and you will see light.” The other translation, ESV says,

Psalms 119:130

¹³⁰ ***The unfolding of your words gives light...***

Powerful. It’s a super translation. The reason why I like it is because (once Sundar Krishnan was talking about this) it says, unfolding is like when you go to Chandana Brothers. So, how does unfolding happen? I want to buy this saree. He unfolds on saree; unfolds another saree; another saree – 3-4 sarees. You wanted to buy one saree and because of the unfolding over there, you end up buying more sarees. “It’s a beautiful embroidery.” He says, “Exactly. That is the picture.” The unfolding of God’s Word brings light. That’s exactly what Paul was saying. He was unfolding to us what the problem is. He says,

Ephesians 4:23

²³ ***and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,***

The mind has a spirit? So, in order to understand this, let us look at another translation. I’m not against translations. I am enjoying every translation. When I started, I said, “Only KJV,” but now, I have learnt how much I have lost because I’ve closed myself to different translations. Look at what it says in the NIV translation,

Ephesians 4:23

²³ ***to be made new in the attitude of your minds;***

What does it mean? The mind has an attitude. That's very interesting, isn't it? Some of us are software engineers. So, what do we do? We want a program to run. So, what do we do? We enter the instructions in the hard drive or the RAM. The processor takes in the instruction depending upon the architecture with which the processor is made. It takes instruction by instruction. In one straight line, it will execute the instruction and it will give you the output. Because it doesn't have an attitude. Because it's a dumb thing. Unfortunately, the human mind is not like this. God does not like this. In other words, you cannot say, "Exchange my way of thinking with God's way of thinking." How does God think? Instruction 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 – execute. It's not going to happen. Because we are in an algorithmic generation, we need algorithms. Step 1, step 2, step 3, repeat. What does it tell me? It tells me that the mind has a posture. Remember, whenever I read the word 'posture', one picture comes to my mind – Vivekananda's posture. Like this, it's called the Vivekananda's posture because he is vivekananda. He's very wise. He has a posture. That's exactly what he is talking about – the mind has a posture. What does it mean? It not only has a view, it also has a point of view; not necessarily bad.

Third observation – it has a pattern or a discipline of thinking which it is used to and it is very difficult for it to give up and says, "How can I give this up?" That's a point. That is the problem with the human mind. It's got a spirit. What does it mean? It has an attitude. That means – it has a posture. It has a point of view. It has a discipline of thinking. There's a word for disciple in the Bible, in the Hebrew (Old) Testament where we use that word in *Isaiah 50:4*,

Isaiah 50:4

⁴ ***"The Lord God has given Me The tongue of the learned..."***

Or an instructed tongue. But the original word comes from the Hebrew word 'limmud', which means – a disciplined tongue. *"The LORD GOD has given Me the tongue of the disciple."* *"All our children will be disciplined of God; great will be their peace."* Another place, it is used, "Can an Ethiopian change his colors or a leopard his spots? Can you change, you, who are used to doing evil?" The word used is 'disciple' again. Can you people, who are disciplined to do good, do evil again? Because you are used to that pattern of living, that kind of a lifestyle. Because your mind has a mindset. What does it have? It has a mindset. Okay. You will say, "Vijay, where do you find this in the Bible?" It's there in the ESV; not in the KJV so much; it's in the ESV. Look at what it says in ESV,

Romans 8:5

⁵ ***For...***

Stop there. Why is this 'for'? What is before 'for'? The previous verse. This is a reasoning. Paul is structurally, step-by-step, is giving you logic. Because. Why because?

Romans 8:2-5

² ***For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*** ³ ***For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,*** ⁴ ***that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*** ⁵ (Because... that's the connection here. We will look at it later on,) ***For those who live according to the flesh set their minds (there is a mind set) on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit (set their minds; there is a mind that is set on), the things of the Spirit.***

There is a mind set. That is the problem. That is precisely the problem. We all have a mindset, bend upon a particular way of thinking. That is the reason why the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God in pulling down of those mind sets, if you will, if I can use that term. It goes on to say in *Romans 8*; how do I know? How do I detect if I have a mind which is set on the things of the flesh or if I have a mind that is set on the things of the Spirit? How do I know? Very simple. *Romans 8:6* will say,

Romans 8:6

⁶ ***For (this 'for' is an evidence) to set the mind on the flesh is death (to spiritual things), but to set the mind on the Spirit is life (to spiritual things) and (therefore, it brings) peace.***

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That's very interesting. What do you mean by that? How do I know if I have a mind which is set on the flesh or set on the Spirit? Do I have an appetite for spiritual things which is growing every day?

Pastor was talking about *1 Corinthians 10* – the parallel between the Old Testament and the New Testament – how we are all baptized into Moses; we were also baptized into Christ Jesus. They were all saved from the penalty of sin when they applied the blood of the Passover lamb on the doorpost of their house; we also are saved from the penalty of sin when we also, by faith, apply the Blood of Jesus over the doorpost of our hearts. They all overcame, positionally at least, the power of sin when they went to the waters of baptism; we also overcome the power of sin when we also go through the waters of baptism. There are four 'P's in Christianity. God takes away the penalty of sin; God takes away the power of sin; third thing – He takes us away from the presence of the sin but before He takes us away from the presence of the sin, how is He going to manifest the breaking of the power of sin in our lives? How is He going to do that? One man of God says, "The way he overcomes the power of sin, He takes away the pleasure of sin." That is the reason why it says in *Hebrews 11*, "*Moses, instead of enjoying the fleeting pleasures of sin for a season, chose to be called a Hebrew slave?*" Why? Because he was fighting the pleasure of sin with a greater pleasure. He was finding pleasure in God. So, the way we overcome the power of sin is by fighting the pleasure of sin with a greater pleasure. So, in other words, how do I know that my mind is set on the flesh or on the Spirit? Do I find spiritual things pleasurable? Very simple. When four of you sisters or brothers meet, what do you talk about? Very simple. I took that as a challenge in my life. Whenever brothers come to me, I don't make a conscious decision. It automatically happens. We all talk about Scripture and by the time, you are so fired up. Isn't that so, Sammy? Absolutely, right? The other day, we went to the Airport to pick up Eric, he got into the car and it started off. It was absolutely seamless. We never had to make a conscious effort to talk about spiritual things. No, it was seamless. "Er, should I come for the Bible study? Raakapothe (if I don't come...)." "Ahh, should I do these problems?"

I like the abacas. How many of you know the word 'abacas'? Have you heard of the word 'abacas'? I like the abacas precisely because I didn't use it when I was a kid. Now, I want to solve simple subtraction using the abacas and I get excited. It gives me so much of pleasure just to see problems being solved. That's exactly what God does. He says in *1 Peter 2:24*, "*Christ Himself bore our sins on His Body, took it upon the tree, so that we should no longer live to sin; we should die to sin; but be made alive to righteousness.*" What does it mean?

1 Peter 2:24

²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness...

He says, "He solved the biggest problem," and He gives us the pleasure in solving the smaller problems. It's like this; the other day, Abigail was there. I've told you before – the University of Abigail teaches me a lot of things. Abigail is in her desk in her office in her school. She saw a small ant, black ant which doesn't even bite. "Papa! Black ant!" Girls. "Oh, a black ant." And we have another girl coming. "Papa! Black ant!" And do you know what I did? "Black ant?" And I squashed it. Problem solved. "Now, you go do it." The pleasure of problem-solving. That is the reason why we want to teach children right from childhood – the pleasure in reading; the pleasure when read, understand and comprehend. What pleasure! The pleasure in problem-solving. That's exactly what God does – He takes away the pleasure of sin and gives us the pleasure to do righteousness, changing our mind set. And why is this problem? I said that it's an attitude problem, right? *Romans 8:7* gives us an idea.

Romans 8:7-8

⁷ For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, (That's the problem. It's got an attitude,) for it does not submit to God's law; (that's the law) indeed, it cannot.

You can't even try to make it wrong. It's not going to happen. That's the genius of Christian ethics, like John Piper will say. He is not going to change the fruit in order to make the tree good. "Oh, let's love!" That's not going to happen. He is going to take away the tree and He is going to give you a tree and then, you will automatically bear good fruit. So,

for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. ⁸ Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

So, you can connect this verse to *Hebrews 11:6* which says,

Hebrews 11:6

⁶ But without faith it is impossible to please Him...

So, what is it? To walk by faith is walk in the Spirit and not walk according to the flesh. Or in other words, having a mind-set of the Spirit is essentially walking by faith and not by sight. You got that, everybody? It cannot. The word 'submit' is so difficult. Difficult word. Who likes submission? So, God solves all these problems for us because submission is a major problem for us. How many of you find submission easy? Difficult. Very difficult because we have an attitude and I will talk about those common attitudes that we have in daily life before we finish today, hopefully.

So, let's move on. *Galatians 5:17* will also talk about another attitude of the mind.

Galatians 5:17

¹⁷ For the flesh desires (do you see that word again? I like this NIV) *what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.*

And therefore, a mind-set of the flesh, which KJV will call the 'carnal mind' has three attributes, at least; or three attitudes. It has a rebellious attitude or a rebellious spirit; it has an unyielding, stubborn mind-set and it has got desires which are contrary to God's desire. That is the reason why the Psalmist will say, "*Lord, at Your right hand, there are what forevermore? Pleasures forevermore.*" How am I going to enjoy those pleasures forevermore? The law of the Lord is this; the statutes of the Lord are this; etc. Enjoy God and then, you will find that there are pleasures forevermore at His right hand.

So, the way to overcome a mind-set is not to give it extra information and algorithms. No, it is to give us a taste of pleasure in obeying God. That is the reason why when Jesus came, He said, "*LORD, sacrifices and burnt offerings You did not desire; a body You have prepared for Me and I delight to do Your will.*" I find pleasure, O LORD, in doing Your will." So, we know that our mind has an attitude. Therefore, what motivates this change in our lives? This is the question. How do we change? What will cause us to, at least, have a desire inside of us to change the way we think? That's the next question. The answer is there in the same passage of *Romans 12*; look at it.

Romans 12:1-2

¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

A renewed mind, which will result in a transformed mind, is motivated by experiencing the mercies of God. Do you see that? Why should I think the way God thinks? What I learnt in my life as a believer is – God woos us by His mercy. He does not use strong-armed tactics. "Okay, okay! I'll believe!" No, that's not going to happen. That's what children do. "Okay, okay! I'm sorry!" If you twist their ears, "Okay, I'm sorry!" "Pray before you have your food!" "Go and wash your hands!" "Stand up!" "Sit down!" I'm sitting down but in my mind, I'm standing up. Because these are strong-armed tactics of the enemy. That's exactly what even the enemy does. God does not do it. He doesn't twist our arms to obey Him. He is never going to do that. He is not just God; He is a Father. So, how does He do it? He, lovingly, shows us who we really are because if He does it any other way, we will run away from Him. That's the beauty of the New Covenant. *The Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only Begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth; and of His fullness, we received grace upon grace.* The truth of God causes to run away from Him but it is the grace of God which draws us towards Him. That's exactly what happened to Moses. Moses saw the bush on fire but it was not being consumed. He saw the holiness of God, the truth of God but he also saw the mercy and the grace of God and he was drawn toward that. That's what He does. He shows – that is the mystery of incarnation. That is the reason why Paul will say in *1 Timothy 3:16*,

1 Timothy 3:16

¹⁶ And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: (the first aspect of that is –) *God was manifested in the flesh...*

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And we beheld His glory. Sinners and tax-collectors were surrounding Him. How is it possible that the most holy Man on planet earth... you should run away from Him but you are being drawn toward Him? Do you know why? Because they saw hope in Him; they saw grace in Him; they saw truth in Him; they saw the mercy of God in Him; they saw the love of God in Him and they were drawn toward Him. I believe He always speaks to us the truth in love. He will never show us what we really are because we will run away. That is the reason why when Mount Sinai came, the Ten Commandments, they were all afraid. “Moses, Moses, you go. We will stay here. It’s scary.” *Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.* But the problem here is – the other day, I was in a meeting. I don’t want to mention the person’s name. He said, “To have the mind of Christ is to think what Jesus thinks.” And he gave a very interesting illustration. He said, “When you join a company or rather, a new boss comes to your company, what do you want to learn as an employee? How does your boss think? What makes him angry and what makes him sad? What makes him unhappy?” In our culture, we don’t care but it’s okay. It’s there. At least, to a certain extent. He said, “Jesus loved something and we should also love something.” What is that? “Jesus loved to be with sinners.” Yes, true. So, what does it mean? And the inference drawn there was very obvious. He didn’t say that but the mind has an attitude. You should be knowing by now. The spirit behind that statement was – I can continue to be a sinner and still, Jesus will love me. No, that’s not why He came to the earth. He said, “You shall call His Name ‘Jesus’ because He is going to save His people from their sins.” Sinners will not continue to be sinners. They will be transformed. That’s the whole idea.

So, a few examples as to how He woos people. I love this. This is very close to my heart. I’m sure you would have also experienced that when you read this passage. This is *Luke’s Gospel 5* where Peter, raathiri anta kashtapadedu (toiled all night). He worked hard the whole night and he caught, how much? Nothing. God allowed that so that He can show His mercy. This is what happens.

Luke 5:8

⁸ When Simon Peter saw it (an incredible catch), he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!”

And immediately,

Luke 5:10

¹⁰ And Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.”

God woos us in His mercy and that’s exactly what He says in *Hosea 2:14*,

Hosea 2:14

¹⁴ “Therefore, behold, I will allure her, Will bring her into the wilderness, And speak (tenderly) comfort to her.

“I will bring her to the end of herself and I will speak to tenderly to her.” You know that when you encounter God, you deserve to be consumed in His wrath but He speaks kindly to you. That is what *Romans 2:4* says,

Romans 2:4

⁴ ...knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

And what is repentance? To change your pattern of thinking. To begin to change your pattern of thinking. How do I start thinking good? God encounters us with His holiness and with His mercy and He says, “It’s okay. In the times of ignorance, I have winked at.” That’s KJV. “But now, I am asking everyone at every place to change the way you think.” And you need to understand, therefore, from this – one of the biggest truths that I have learnt is that it is impossible for a man to repent on his own. Even repentance is a gift from God. Even the ability to repent, to change your mind. When I ask some people, “What is repentance in your language?” many people in our language use the word ‘paschathaap’. And in our Telugu, there is a very interesting saying, “Paschathaapanki minchi naa praschutham ledhu” – there is no greater sacrifice or a gift than a paschathaap; that means – you are feeling sorry. No, just because you are feeling sorry, it doesn’t mean you have changed your mind. You could be feeling sorry for several reasons. Because you have experienced the consequences of your sins and therefore, you are sorry. The change of mind is maarumanasu. In Hindi, it is beautiful – manseera, change the way you think. It’s a gift from God. “What do you mean by that, Vijay? Can you prove to me from Scripture?” Absolutely.

2 Timothy 2:25

²⁵ ***in humility correcting those who are in opposition, (because every mind has an attitude,) if God perhaps will grant them repentance...***

Change of mind. God has to grant it. It's an act of mercy. Did you get that, everybody? Therefore, the ability for you to repent is a gift; it's a miracle of God. You did not have the ability to solve the problems on your own. God gave you a new mind, completely. A new mind. That is the promise of the New Covenant. Look at the terminologies the New Covenant precisely uses. We heard this several times and I'm putting it in context.

Hebrews 8:10

¹⁰ ***For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their (where?) minds, and write them on (the tablets of) their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.***

And where is this happening? This is not happening outwardly. That's exactly what happened in the Old Covenant. Outwardly, the law was given but nobody could keep it because inwardly, they were not changed. Deep inside, He is going to do a deep work inside of our minds. He is going to convince us with arguments; He is going to convince us with His love; He is going to convince us with His mercy; and He will say, "This is the way. I think." "Can you think?" "Lord, I can't." "Okay, you can't? I will give you the ability to think. I will write it." What a God!

2 Corinthians 4:16

¹⁶ ***Therefore we do not lose heart. (Do you know why we don't lose heart? Why should we not lose heart?) Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.***

It is a slow process and we all despair. I despair every week, every day. "Lord, no, Lord. I'm not able to do this. Lord, I'm not able to forgive. Lord, I'm not able to do it." Despair and thank God for that despair. Thank God. "Lord, I'm not able to forgive." The inward is renewed day by day. It's a step-by-step slow process but if you cooperate with the Spirit, it doesn't have to be slow. That is the incredible thing about spiritual life.

One of the things that I have learnt over a period of time, just not from my life but from observing several people, if you want to grow in your spiritual walk, you can progress within a matter of six months, or three months or two months. It all depends on you. Your desperation. "Lord, I want to change my mind." That is how God works. He says, "*You are a chosen race; you are a royal priesthood; you are a holy nation; you are a peculiar people; to declare the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness and into His marvelous light. So, beloved, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against your mind.*" Because you are and therefore, do this. Abstain. He does it inside; not outside. That's the Old vs. New.

2 Corinthians 3:12. Where is He doing it? The outward man is perishing. The inward man is being renewed. Just keep that in mind. I am going to talk about something very interesting here.

2 Corinthians 3:12-14, 16-18

¹² ***Since we have such a hope, we are very bold,***

We do not fear; *for God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power, of love and of a sound mind*; a mind that has the ability to change. That's what it means. *God has not given us the spirit of bondage which takes us back to fear but a spirit of adoption by which we cry out, "Abba, Father."* The Spirit Himself bearing witness with our spirit. So, we are bold.

¹³ ***not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end.*** (the end of the Old Covenant. Look at this, the next verse) ¹⁴ ***But their (what was hardened?) minds were hardened...***

They left Egypt but their minds were absolutely hard. Their thinking would not change. That is the reason why it says, "God gave them the request of their flesh but sent leanness into their souls and essentially, into their minds," they had no ability

to change anymore.

...For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. ¹⁶ But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. (There are a lot of things here but I just want to read these verse and I want to draw a few conclusions. Just a few conclusions.) ***¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another...***

Slow and step-by-step.

The reason why I use this context – the outer man and the inner man – is because of a brother right here who gave me a book. He said, “Pastor, you should read this book – The Breaking of the Outer Man and the Release of the Spirit.” This is by Watchman Nee. He said, “Pastor, this will change your life.” I said, “Okay, fine. I will read it.” And I started reading it. That book is by Watchman Nee, by the way. The Breaking of the Outer Man and the Release of the Spirit by Watchman Nee. If you read that book, you will not be the same again. Everything will change around you. What did I say? Everything will change around you because God will do something to affect that if you are hungry. I’m using that in the context of what we are studying here. Watchman Nee said, “In order for us to be renewed in the inner man, the outer man has to be broken.” He used a very interesting illustration. He used the illustration of this Mary who comes and breaks the alabaster flask of ointment and the whole room is filled with the aroma. He said, “Unless you allow your outer man to be broken, (we all want a transformed mind but transformation happens; not in the outward; but in the inner man.) if you want the transformation to happen on the outer man, what is that outer man? Especially, what is that outer man? The outer man is all your thoughts of the flesh. It is essentially the flesh and he gives a very interesting example to reinforce that argument. He says, “When your outer man is being broken and the inner man is being renewed, you don’t even have to speak any word. The life automatically flows. Every action of yours will become spiritual because when you are doing it, you have a mindset of the Spirit.” And he gave the example of the Shunammite woman and Elisha. He said, “Elisha is walking by this road and every time he was passing by that way, he went to the Shunammite woman’s house and he had a meal. He didn’t do one Bible study, one miracle, one message, no sign, no wonder; just passing by that road. Every time he went into the house, he had a meal and he went back. Now, the woman observed the way this man was conducting himself around the table and she used these very powerful words to her husband. She said, “I perceived that this man is a man of God.” Watchman Nee said, “Elisha’s outer man was so broken that the very act of eating and drinking was releasing the Spirit because he had the mindset of the Spirit while he was eating. Because whatever is not of faith is sin and it is used in the context of eating.” I was stunned at the way that entire illustration went by. That will not come home until you experience it in your own life.

I’m not flattering anybody here. This is just to reinforce the point. No flattery. Please don’t think this is flattery. We had to go to the Registrar’s office to get a few signatures to register our trust. You know the Registrar’s office; you know the government’s office as to how everything works. So, I got everything done and I said, “Pastor, let’s go.” Pastor and two witnesses. In the mouth of two witnesses, everything gets established. So, we all went. This guy, Abel and Kiran were standing there and I was sitting. There was one lady who was helping us to do the whole thing. The lady was saying, “Get this document; get that document,” I got all the documents. I was running around. I said, “Pastor, please sit here. I will just get this done.” Everything was over. All the fingerprints and all. Everything was over and the lady looked at me and she said, “I have a fee.” I looked at her; she looked at me. I said, “Wait a minute. I’ll just ask my boss and come.” The boss didn’t open his mouth till now. He was just sitting there. She said, “No, don’t ask him. You give.” And I looked at her; I’m running around; this man is sitting and she is asking me. That is exactly the day when I started scolding Eric in my mind for giving me that book. I learnt a very interesting lesson that day. When your outer man is broken, you don’t even have to say anything because of a set pattern in your mind, your very life will start flowing. This is not to flatter anybody. I’m just giving you live examples because it came home to me. What does it tell me? We all look at the outer man. Preaching ministry! “How I wish I could stand behind the Pulpit and captivate the audience.” We are all captive audience? That’s an insult, by the way. It’s not a commendation. When people say that you are a captive audience, you should just hang your head in shame. “I wish I had that.” No, but we don’t look at the inner life. God says, “If you want your mind to be set on the things of the Spirit, I have to break you. There is no other way.”

And something else is very powerful. Watchman Nee uses it in the book. He says, “Mary breaks it; Judas is upset. And you

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will understand – every time you are breaking your outer man and say ‘no’ to the flesh and ‘yes’ to the Spirit, there will be a fleshly man sold out to the world who will always oppose you. Always.” Use some great language; religious language. Watchman Nee said, “Jesus said something very interesting. He said, ‘Be quiet. She has done this for My burial. She has anointed Me for My burial,’” and Watchman Nee makes a very powerful observation, “After Jesus died and He was buried, people took ointments too anoint His body. By that time, He was gone. No more ability or no more opportunity to anoint the Christ. The body of Christ – which is the Church.” You want to serve the Body of Christ; you want to be a servant, brothers, you have to be broken and you have to be broken fast because a day is coming when the Church will be taken off and you have no opportunity anymore. No more opportunity. Think about it. So many opportunity within this body to serve and we get offended easily. Think about that. A time will come where there will be no more opportunity even if you have the heart.

So, what does God do? In order for you to have that submissive mindset, what does God have to do? He has to put you through the ringer and He does that, particularly, if you are His child. That is the reason why I’m going to talk about it for the next few minutes. *1 Peter 2*. I’m going to talk about 4 instruments God uses to break the outer man.

First – in order to learn subjection, be subject. Simple, right? So, *1 Peter 2:13*,

1 Peter 2:13

¹³ ***Be subject for the (Whose sake?) Lord's sake to every human institution...***

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is, what? Freedom. I remember Methodist Youth Fellowship having a freedom party. “What are we going to do? We are free to play any kind of music.” That is not freedom. John Piper gives a very interesting definition of freedom. He says, “True freedom is the ability or the opportunity to do what you love to do is when what you love to do is what you ought to do.” Several things. Recently, I was there with my friend. He said, “Vijay, some of our friends have become free.” “What do you mean free?” “Arrey, they made a lot of money; they put all the money in a fixed deposit; they have their own company. Freedom.” That is not freedom. Yes, there is freedom there. Why? Because you have the ability and the power to do what you love to do but is that what you ought to do? No. So, look at what he says,

1 Peter 2:16-17

¹⁶ ***Live as people who are free (What do you mean by that?) not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.*** ¹⁷ ***Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.***

“Who is the emperor?” “Nero.” “What does he want?” “Taxes.” “So? Pay him. Don’t have an attitude not to pay.” Do you remember the very old advertisement the Income Tax Department used to play on Door Dharsan those days? Interviewer says, “Sir, have you paid your taxes?” This is a professional, okay? “Have you paid your taxes, Sir?” “Why should I pay my taxes? Have you seen the infrastructure? Have you seen the medical condition? Have you seen the educational system? Why should I pay my taxes?” Stop. “You may give any number of excuses but you know what is right. Pay your taxes.” I was like, “That’s exactly what it means.” I don’t want to name a man of God. He was really powerfully used but he would not pay his taxes because he was always upset as to what is happening with his taxes. “Oh, they are using my taxes to do this and do that. I don’t agree with that. I’m not going to pay my taxes.” He was in jail. Powerfully used by God. But in jail because he would not pay his taxes. After that, the wife and the family left. He came out, “Oh. My wife left. I’m getting remarried again.” Who asked you not to pay your taxes? Caesar needs taxes; pay them. Don’t show off an attitude. Subject to him. Jesus gives these interesting illustration, “Why? You are a free people, baba. You don’t understand that. You are free to do what you love to do because what you love to do is what you ought to do.”

Matthew 17:25-27

²⁵ ***...Jesus spoke to him first, saying, “What do you think, Simon?...***

Peter’s entire Epistle is based upon his experiences.

“What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tax? From their sons or from others?” ²⁶ And when he said, “From others,” Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are (what are the sons?) free.²⁷ However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you

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will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for me and for yourself."

Jesus paid taxes; I pay taxes. Got that? Simple principle. Don't show off an attitude.

Another institution we don't like. Be subject to every institution, right?

1 Peter 3:1

¹ Likewise, wives, be subject to (not another's husband but to) ***your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives,***

In other words, don't preach. Obey. Submit. And to attract them,

1 Peter 3:3-6

³ Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—

Don't try to attract him with that. In other words, even if your husband says, "What kind a dressing is this? Come on, change it," be submissive. Don't say anything. Don't try to attract him with a dress. In other words, don't say, "Okay, let me find this dress because my husband loves it." No, you are subject to God. You are free. Be quiet. Don't give him a Bible study. When they see your respectful and pure conduct, they will be changed. Try it. See, that is the reason why there are arguments in our mind. "Lord, to this moron, Lord?" I'm not joking. I'm speaking somebody's mind, the spirit behind your mind. You have an attitude. "For this moron?" "Yes, I kept that fellow to break your outer man." Why? The next verse;

⁴ but let your adorning be the (what person) ***hidden person*** ("because I want to break your outer man and release the Spirit. That is precious in My sight,") ***of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.***

You do not see that but on that day, when you are transformed, what glory that will be just because you had a meek, gentle and a quiet spirit. It will have an external manifestation of the inner man and people will fall flat on their faces and they will praise you.

⁵ For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, ⁶ as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord...

When did she call him 'lord'? "Oh, when my lord is so old, will we have children?" We are all adults. It does not say, "The Holy Spirit came upon Sarah and she conceived." Something happened and she submitted.

...And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

I'm telling you this because Scripture is like that. You see the equivalent of Abraham and Sarah in the New Testament in Elizabeth and Zechariah. "Zechariah, you are going to have a son." "I'm old. Will I have a son?" "You will be dumb." It does not say, "Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she conceived." He had to convince his wife with a dumb mouth. Outer man was broken; inner man was speaking. That is the reason why 1 Peter 3 will continue to say,

1 Peter 3:7

⁷ Likewise, husbands...

Because you have to be subject to every human institution and the institution of marriage is more honorable than every other institution.

...live with your wives* (yes, we will say,) ***in an understanding way, (KJV will say 'according to knowledge') ***showing honor to the woman...*****

We have forgotten – we are a generation who forgot chivalry. We are a frustrated generation.

...as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers (your inner man) may not be hindered.

Very important.

1 Peter 3:8-9

⁸Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, (Baba, all of you,) sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. ⁹Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.

Why, again? What motivates us persevere in this endeavor? What motivates us? There should be a motive, right? This is not in Peter. 1 Peter 2:21 will give us the answer.

1 Peter 2:21-23

²¹For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you (He suffered. He wooed you with His kindness and He gave you the ability to change) leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²²He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself (it's a slow. You cannot just entrust yourself today and forget about it tomorrow. Continue entrusting yourself,) to him who judges justly.

Then, your outer man will be broken and what happened on that Cross? When the outer Man was completely visibly broken, the first words that came out of His mouth was, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do." And therefore, do this. Everybody is silent. So am I. let God be true and every man a liar. Amen? Let's pray.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we thank You. We praise You; we worship You. Grant us grace, O Lord, to persevere in this endeavor. Father, it is not going to be a one-day process; we know it. But You gave us the ability not to give up; a mindset which will not give up; that we will fight this good fight of faith. We will arm ourselves with this pattern of thinking as Your Scripture enjoins us. Thank You, Father. We praise You; we worship You. We give You glory, honor and praise. In Jesus' Name, Amen.