

Father, we just come to You. We come to You first as Your children. We are Your children for You gave birth to us through Your Spirit. We come to You as sheep for You are our Great Shepherd. We come to You as Your servants for You alone are our King and our Lord and our Master. This morning, by faith, we surrender our bodies, our minds into Thy hand. Touch our ears, O Lord. Touch our hearts, touch our will that we may hear, we may believe, and we may obey. Let no man receive glory in Your house. Let it be all about You and You alone, O Lord; for You alone have the words of life. And Your words alone are life, spirit and truth to those who receive it. And this morning, if You do not speak, there will be no life in this place. Come, Lord Jesus. Speak to us. Sup with us. Fellowship with us. Strengthen us. Encourage us. Rebuke us. We just surrender into Thy hands, Lord. Speak, Father. For in Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

Nice to be back again. Eleven months. You see, the year is almost over and things are not getting better; they are getting worse. That's why we keep studying, meditating on the Word so that actually, when the day of evil comes into our own lives, we will be able to stand. If you had seen, what happened this morning, the first thing at 3:30 in the morning, I hear the mayhem in France, the deaths in France. When I last heard, it was terrorist attacks – over 150 dead. These are secure countries; these are not countries like ours. They are extremely secure countries. But remember, no country, no person is secure. Our security lies in God and God alone. Remember, God has numbered our days and always tell people, "Please don't die before your time. Die only at your appointed time. You should be able to tell at that time, 'I have finished'."

So, this morning, we will continue to study from where we stopped last month. For those who weren't there last month, I will quickly recap what we looked at last month. We saw, in terms of work, God identifies most with the term, 'shepherd'. Though there are many, many vocations in the Bible, He never called Himself 'the Great Fisherman', 'the Great Farmer', He didn't call any of those terms. He called Himself, 'the Good Shepherd'. He is called the Great Shepherd. He is called the Chief Shepherd. That is what He does – He shepherds His people. We looked at the nature of the shepherd because that is what most of us here are – we are called to shepherd. And we also saw that no shepherd can become a shepherd unless he is first a sheep. Unlike any other animal, the sheep is entirely dependent on the shepherd. God calls us to a complete dependence upon Him all the days of our life. And remember, in the Kingdom of God, which lasts for eternity, there is nothing you or I can do without Christ. So, the first is a personal relationship. We looked at *Psalms 23* last month.

Psalms 23:1-2

¹ The LORD is my shepherd...

It has to be an absolute, total, personal relationship. So many of us face lack in our life, want in our life, it is not because He is not there; it's because we haven't understood Him as, 'my Shepherd'. It is an absolute, definite proclamation,

¹ The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

It is not talking about, "I will not want today," it is talking about all times,

¹ The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

And the first thing we see after that we saw last month was that,

² He makes me to lie down in green pastures...

And the first thing God offers to His sheep is rest; not work. So many people have no rest; yet, they work. That's never God's order. For His children, for His sheep, for His shepherds, God says, "First, you enter into My rest." Then only the work begins.

First, there is an entering into the rest from the burden of sin.

Matthew 11:28

²⁸ ***"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.***

God will say, "All who labour and are heavy burdened, come to Me and I will give you rest." It doesn't matter what your sin is, what your burden is, God says, "If you come to Me, I will give you rest." This is Scripture. So, if I and you do not have rest, it's only because you didn't go to Him. Then only He says in the next verse,

Matthew 11:29

²⁹ ***"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.***

Now, the Shepherd and the sheep are yoked together. And what does He do? He gives rest for our souls.

Psalms 23:2-3

² ***He makes me to lie down...***

And then, Scripture says,

...He leads me...

And then, He gives rest for what?

² ***He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.***

Verse 3 will say,

³ ***He restores my soul...***

We will look only at that one and a half verses today. These two verses,

...He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

We shall look at these two verses and we will apply to our own lives, as sheep and as shepherds. Now, if you go to verse 2,

Psalms 23:2

² ***He makes me to lie down in green pastures; (we looked at last month) He leads me beside the still waters.***

That's one thing a shepherd does and our God does. He never takes His sheep to muddy waters. A shepherd always takes the sheep only to clear waters. But the first thing we need to realize and understand about our God – there is no confusion with God; man creates confusion. God is not a God of confusion; He's a God of order. God never blows a trumpet with an uncertain sound. He speaks to us as a father speaks to his son. When a father speaks to his son, there is clarity. Look at *Proverbs 4:20-22*; listen how God addresses,

Proverbs 4:20-22

²⁰ ***My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings.*** ²¹ ***Do not let them depart from your eyes; Keep them in the midst of your heart;*** ²² ***For they are life to those who find them, And health to all their flesh.***

But we have to find it. *Those who find them.* We have to hear, incline our ear, we have to listen, and we have to obey. And then, it becomes more and more clear what God's plan is for each one of us. Yet, when we look at the Church today, worldwide Church today, we live in the most confusing times. Leave the world aside. God doesn't speak to the world; God speaks to His Church. Yet, there is so much confusion. Why is there so much confusion? In the Book of *Ezekiel 37:1*,

Ezekiel 37:1

¹ *The hand of the LORD came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones.*

We know this portion. Ezekiel is brought over here and he is asked a question. If you look at verse 2, He will ask him a question,

Ezekiel 37:2-3

² *Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry.* ³ *And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" So I answered, "O Lord GOD, You know."*

Valley full of bones, very dry. And often, you go to Churches, you meet Christians, they are so dry. There is no excitement, there is no joy; yet, when you read the *Book of Acts*, we don't go through anything they went through; yet, you couldn't stop them from jumping and dancing and singing. "Can these bones live?" That's a question God is asking, "Can these bones live?" Ezekiel says, "Lord, You know." God always wants to come and give life back. God is a God who always wants to restore. But before life can be restored and a human body takes shape, remember the first thing that needs to be put together are the bones. It is the bones that give shape to our body. It is the bones that enable a man or a woman to stand upright. And God keeps on asking this question about the last days, in *Matthew 24:13*, He will say, when all these things happen,

Matthew 24:13

¹³ *"But he who endures (which means, he who stands) to the end shall be saved.*

How can you stand if your bones are all off joint? In *Mark 13:13*, again, the same question is repeated.

Mark 13:13

¹³ *"And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end (or he who stand till the end) shall be saved.*

Till the end, *antam*; till the end, will we stand? *Luke 21:36*, again, Jesus will say,

Luke 21:36

³⁶ *"Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."*

How can you stand if your bones are out of joint? In *Ephesians 6:10-14*, this is what the Holy Spirit will say through the apostle,

Ephesians 6:10-14

¹⁰ *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.* ¹¹ *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.* ¹² *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.* ¹³ *Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.* ¹⁴ *Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,*

Over and over again, the call of God is that, "Will you stand?" Did you know that if a person has to stand, what he needs are bones? (Showing a slide) Do you see? Do you think this fellow will stand? All he needs is a wind to blow. He looks good, very colorful and he's smiling also. That's how so many Christians in Churches look. All you need is a wind of trouble to come. And then, you will see – he's not able to stand. Why can this fellow never stand against the wind? Because he has no bones. God has to put our bones back together. If our bones are not set, we will sway. In the Bible, bones stand for doctrine. When the Church is born in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, in *Acts 2:42*, you know what God is starting?

Acts 2:42

⁴² ***And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.***

The first thing God begins is by putting the bones back together. Do you know why there is so much confusion in the Church? Because there is so much confusion about doctrine. The confusion is about doctrine. God says, "It is like a human body." If your bones are weak, if your bones are broken, you will not be able to stand. It's like the pillars of this building. This whole building is standing only because of these pillars and these beams. The strength of a believer and the strength of a Church are based on what you have received as doctrine. Often, the confusion is that, we do not know or understand the doctrine of Christ as taught by the apostles. Over and over, the Church is warned about doctrine.

Hebrews 13:9

⁹ ***Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them.***

Ephesians 4:14

¹⁴ ***that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,***

Do you know that many Christians and many pastors and many Churches, if you ask them, "Why you believe in this?" they do not even know where in the Bible it is said something. They have received as the doctrine of Christ. So many things which men have taught. In *1 Timothy 4:1*,

1 Timothy 4:1

¹ ***Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,***

The Bible specifically talks about three doctrines – the doctrine of Christ, doctrine of demons and doctrines of men. But we can believe only in the doctrine of Christ. In *1 Timothy 4:13*, this is what the Holy Spirit through Paul will exhort the Church,

1 Timothy 4:13

¹³ ***Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.***

Now, this is talking about the public reading of the Bible in the Church because those days, everybody did not have a Bible. But it still stands that each one of us should give attention to the reading of the actual text and not the words of man. *To exhortation* and *to doctrine*. Pastors, I've warned over and over again to watch out for doctrine. God warns through Paul to Timothy and all of us here. In *1 Timothy 4:16*, he tells him,

1 Timothy 4:16

¹⁶ ***Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.***

Why is there this insistence on doctrine over and over again? Because God says, "A time will come when people will not receive sound doctrine." In *2 Timothy 4:3*,

2 Timothy 4:3

³ ***For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;***

Question is: How sound is our doctrine? The Psalmist says, "*He leads me in paths of righteousness for His Name's sake.*" How do you judge doctrine? When you hear, because I know, many of you watch TV, you watch whatever Christian channels are there; you listen to all these preachers. How do you judge doctrine? I'll tell you simple things. First, if you get very excited by the message but usually, it is not sound. When you feel like jumping and dancing, when you hear that, usually, it is to your flesh; it is not to your soul. When Jesus started teaching sound doctrine, people were leaving so fast. How do you judge a doctrine? Simple test – is there in *1 Timothy 6:3*? Why so much of that is there in *1* and *2 Timothy* is, it

is written by a pastor to a junior pastor who'll take over. So, it is a mentoring text – *Timothy 1* and 2.

1 Timothy 6:3

³ If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness,

Simple thing there is that, whenever you hear something new, question you ask is this: does this doctrine accord with godliness? If I receive this, will it make me godlier? Will it actually draw me closer to God or actually it is a trap to take me further away from God? Why are the Churchgoers of this age most discontent? People will always ask: What is the will of God? Can I tell you your God's will for you? There's only one place in the entire Bible where the will of God is absolutely clear. *This is the will of God that you give thanks in all situations.* Forget saying thanks to God; people don't even say, "Thank you," to each other. There is no joy at all. "Remember, this is the will of God," Scripture says. Why are people so discontent? Because they have received doctrines that do not tally with godliness. *1 Timothy 6:6*, Scripture says very clear,

1 Timothy 6:6

⁶ Now godliness with contentment is great gain.

Does the doctrine you and I have received accord with godliness? What is Scripture given for? Primarily, what is the first purpose of Scripture? In *2 Timothy 3:16*, you will see, all will come in Timothy,

2 Timothy 3:16

¹⁶ (Not some Scripture but) All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

The first thing, Scripture says is, "Doctrine." Unless your and mine doctrine is sound, we will never be able to truly exhort a believer or contradict a heresy. In *Titus 1:9*, to another young pastor, this is what God says,

Titus 1:9

⁹ holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

When people come and speak to you a new doctrine, you should be able to contradict it by saying, "It is not so from Scripture." Why do people lose all their money through these big ministries? Why are they able to fool thousands and millions of people? Because the people do not know doctrine. Let's say, there are two hundred and fifty people here, and I have all your names and addresses and I sent you a letter, same letter – 'Dear Brother, this is what the Lord tells me, "If you sow ten rupees into my ministry, God will bless you ten times by the end of the year".' And I write: "Faithfully Yours, Pastor So-and-so," and send it to all of you. Two hundred of you got the same letter. Even if twenty of you send ten rupees, I will still get two hundred rupees. What if the letter is sent to ten thousand people? What if the letter is sent to one hundred thousand people? What if the letter is sent to a million people? You know what's the problem when you don't have doctrine? You play lottery. This is not my doctrine or your doctrine; it is the doctrine of Christ. You cannot receive anything, anybody says, without testing it with the Word of God.

2 John 1:9-10

⁹ Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. (Now we are getting into something really tough, what God says.) He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him;

There's nothing wrong. When all these Jehovah's Witnesses come, stop them at the gate and say, "I believe in the Lord Jesus There is nothing called Jehovah's witnesses; we are Yeshua's witnesses. You can leave." Because they deny Christ. There are so many groups like that. Does it accord with doctrine of Christ? It doesn't matter what we do; remember – doctrine is fundamental. There are many who take the Name of Christ but they do not have God. And when heretics come, God says, "This is the way you do." Do not let them into your house and there is nothing wrong in it, because God said so. Because doctrine is fundamental to faith. If your doctrine is wrong, your faith is false. If the Gospel you preach is false, the

salvation you received is false and the Jesus you believed in is wrong and you'll end up in the wrong place. That's why the Church, all these letters are written to see doctrinally the Churches are established in truth. And if the doctrine is wrong, it doesn't matter how many people are there in the Church, what all signs and wonders took place, Jesus will ultimately say, "*I never knew you, you workers of unrighteousness.*" Why? False doctrine will always produce unrighteousness.

So, how does God restore our soul? By replacing the doctrines of men and the doctrines of demons with the doctrine of God. How did man fall? Because in the garden, they received the doctrine of the devil. It was a simple doctrine; one line doctrine. But it was a false doctrine. But when they took that false doctrine, everybody was effected and sin comes in. And you will see the outward manifestation of it. In the first three people alone, shame, fear, anger, jealousy, lying, covetousness, hatred and murder. The first three people, one doctrine of the devil. We are not talking about the rest of humanity; we are just talking about Adam, Eve and Cain. And one fellow who got this doctrine right was killed by the others. Abel got his doctrine right. Without blood, there is no forgiveness. Simple doctrine. You want mercy; you go through the blood. His doctrine was right but he was killed. From the beginning, remember the devil is after doctrine. He knows, if he can get the doctrine in the Church wrong, Church will automatically go. In *Jude 1:3*,

Jude 1:3

³ Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith (here faith actually means doctrine) which was once for all delivered to the saints.

It is about doctrine, the fighting for the faith is doctrine. Do you see how we struggle? It's five years. All I teach is doctrine. And you know how it is a struggle to get you here? Is there any struggle in getting people if the banner is put, 'Blessing and Miracles, Sign and Wonders'? You know, there is no struggle. But when it comes to doctrine forget people, you struggle with pastors themselves. Scripture says, "You have to contend, fight for this." You have to keep the doctrine sound. So, the question for each one must be, "Where do I begin? Lord, I want sound doctrine." First, let me assure you, if you are serious and you are just one person in this crowd, He will teach you. Scripture says, "He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake." This is a New Covenant promise. Let me show to you from the New Covenant in *Hebrews 8:10-11*. This is the New Covenant.

Hebrews 8:10

¹⁰ "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

First thing, you will see the difference between the Old and the New Covenant is in the Old Covenant, the law was outside. In the New Covenant, God says, "I will write it in your hearts."

Second fundamental promise is this,

Hebrews 8:11

¹¹ "None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.

Never happened. It could not happen in the Old Covenant and you have and I have to believe. From the least to the greatest, it doesn't matter who you are. If you are one year old in the Lord or whether you are eighty years old, God says, "I will teach you both." Whether you are a king or whether you are a poor man, God says, "It's irrelevant. I will teach you." Now, it is not negating the ministry of the Church but God says, "Even if the teaching ministry of the Church fails, your God will not fail in the New Covenant." But before God will teach, there are certain conditions God demands. If you look at the Bible – the Old and the New Testament, the doctrinal text of the Old Testament is the first five books and the doctrinal text of the New Testament are the thirteen letters of Paul or fourteen, if you add *Hebrews* also. One was written through Moses, the other was written through Paul. What do you see common between these two people? Lived apart, almost fifteen hundred, two thousand years apart. Their absolute surrender to know God. In worldly terms, both these men lost everything; yet, both men attained Christ. In *Exodus 33:13*, this is what Moses says,

Exodus 33:13

¹³ "Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people."

This is his desire; this is his prayer. The only prayer Moses asks is, "Lord, teach me Your way that I want to know You." And the doctrine of Christ in the Old Covenant is revealed through Moses. In *Philippians 3:7-8*, listen to Paul's prayer,

Philippians 3:7-8

⁷ But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord,

This is the key. It doesn't matter how old you are; it doesn't matter how young you are. Moses was an old man, eighty plus, when God revealed doctrine. Paul was a young man when God started revealing doctrine. Age does not matter; heart does.

You know when Jesus started teaching at the age of thirty, they were amazed at Him. Actually, they were talking about His doctrine. In *John 7:14-15*, this is what they are saying,

John 7:14-15

¹⁴ Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught. ¹⁵ And the Jews marveled, saying, "How does this Man know letters, having never studied?"

It doesn't mean Jesus did not study. Every Jewish boy studied. What they meant is – He's never gone to Bible school; He's never gone to seminary like the Pharisees. They were amazed actually by His doctrine. Remember when Jesus was arrested and taken to the High Priest, one of the first questions is about His disciples and about His doctrine.

John 18:19

¹⁹ The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine.

If the government catches you today and asks you: do you have an answer for your doctrine? Or you have to go through the notes, which you picked up from TV, "This is my doctrine"? Are we sure about our doctrine what we believe in? The Jews were amazed by His doctrine because He had never gone to Bible school. And after Pentecost, John and Peter, all started teaching. Again, the problem now is doctrine. They are picked up and brought before the Sanhedrin and look at *Acts 5:28*, what they are questioned.

Acts 5:28

²⁸ saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!"

His name and His doctrine. You see, religious people are scared of doctrine and they are scared of questions. That is why they like to sit behind the camera and never come to you, face-to-face. And if you send them a letter questioning their doctrine, they'll never answer. But if you are a servant of God and you speak, you are accountable for your words. And if people question you, you shouldn't get angry. You should show them why you believe. And if somebody else contradicts you and actually proves from the Word, you are wrong, humbly, receive correction. Because this is not your doctrine or my doctrine; this is the doctrine of Christ on which the Church is established. And they were amazed, "Where did this man get this doctrine?" Now, listen carefully to what Jesus said. If you understand it, it will change your life as it changed my life. It'll change your ministry; it'll change your Church; it will change everything that you believe. In *John 7:16*, this is what He said,

John 7:16

¹⁶ Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.

First thing He says is this; can you imagine how humble He is? John, who begins the Gospel, saying, "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, the Word was God," that Word is saying, "My doctrine is not Mine, My doctrine is His who sent Me." First question is this: who sent you? Who sent me? It doesn't matter which denomination you belong to.

That's not what matters. You can be called and sent only by God. If you are not sent by God, but sent by man, you'll ultimately end up teaching the doctrines of men and you'll end up serving man. That's why the question I asked, "Who sent you?" You know, the New Covenant, when it begins, it begins with the ministry of a man called John. You know how he is introduced to us in the Bible? In *John 1:6*,

John 1:6

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

That is how he is introduced. It doesn't say, "There was John, who was sent from the Baptist Church. Therefore, he was John the Baptist." No. "There was a man called John sent by God." Why I'm telling you, as I have met so many servants of God, they do not have this confidence, they were sent by God. John was sent by God. In *John 20:21*, you will see the disciples were sent by Jesus,

John 20:21

²¹ So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

John was sent by God; Jesus was sent by the Father; the disciples were sent by Jesus.

In *Acts 13:2-3*, now, there is a Church in Antioch, and using the vehicle of the Church, Scripture says,

Acts 13:2-4

² As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. ⁴ So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

Did you see that? The Church sent them out, but the next verse says, "They were sent out by the Holy Spirit." This is the procedure. John and Jesus were sent by the Father; the apostles are sent by Jesus. And when the Church comes into being, the Holy Spirit separates people through the Church and He sends them out. The question is: Who sent you? Are you sure? Because I see so much uncertainty in your lives. Did God send you? I do not know; I can only answer for myself. Did the Word of God come to you? Look at *Luke 3:1-3*,

Luke 3:1-3

¹ Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, ² while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. ³ And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins,

Why should all this be written? Let me explain to in terms, which you will understand. During the time Narendra Modi was Prime Minister and K.C.R. was the CM of Telangana, Chandra Babu Naidu was the CM of Andhra Pradesh, Jayalalita was CM of Tamil Nadu, Sitaramaiyya was the CM of Karnataka, when Francis was the Pope of the Catholic Church, Justin Welpie was the Arch Bishop of Canterbury, the Word of the Lord came to John who lives in Suchitra. How will you take it? That's why it is written there. God said, "I skirted all these people and went to one man who was ready to receive." So, it doesn't matter which village, which *gali* (lane) you come, if the Word of the Lord has come to you, your call is as genuine as John's. You need to believe, you need to hear, you need to know, "I was sent by God." That's why all these details are given. God is not a respecter of persons. The Spirit of God is forever looking for one man whose heart is stayed on Him. And then when John came out, he has a message. And he went to the entire region around Jordan, preaching a Baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. When God calls you and speaks to you, he won't send you without a message. He will give you the message to speak. All the Old Testament prophets, all preached, repentance, "Repent, repent." But when John preached, it was little different. He said, "Repent for the Kingdom of God is near." If God has to restore our soul, if God has to put the bones back, then He has to put doctrine back.

Second slide – they are not two friends; they are just two different slides. See, if these bones aren't there, this person won't stand. Now, all these bones are lying there in the valley and God says, "Will these bones live?" Ezekiel says, "You know,

Lord." He says, "Breathe over them," and suddenly, there is a rattling sound and the bones start coming together. You ask any medical professional, if all these bones are scattered, if you want to put the bones back, do you know what you first put back? You put the spine back. Everything is connected to that. You can have the strongest legs; you can have strong hands and a hard nut but if your spine is broken, you still will not walk. You cannot walk. So, when God puts us together, we need to ask, "Lord, what are the fundamental doctrines I need to know? What are the fundamental doctrines of Your Kingdom?" They are very simple; they are there in *Hebrews 6:1-2*. In this spine, there are only six bones. Okay, Pastors who do not know, please mark this and note this in your Bible. These are the foundations on which every Church is built and every other, whatever you teach has to fit with this six.

Hebrews 6:1-2

¹ ***Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ*** (they are called the primary elementary principles of Christ), ***let us go on to perfection, not laying again*** (the first doctrine) ***the foundation of repentance from dead works*** (second) ***and of faith toward God,*** ² (third) ***of the doctrine of baptisms,*** (fourth) ***of laying on of hands,*** (fifth) ***of resurrection of the dead,*** (and sixth) ***and of eternal judgment.***

These are foundational doctrines. I do not about you. Wherever I go, I meet Pastors; some of them don't even know these things are there in the Bible. I also didn't know for a long time but then, when I found it, I realized that your spine can be put back. These are elementary. Elementary is a term that we use for primary school. Do you know what you learnt in primary school you will use all your life? You can forget what you learn in class X. You can forget what you learn in class XII. You can forget what you learnt for B.A. You can forget what you learnt for M.A. Primary School, you can't forget. What did you learn? A,B,C,D...1,2,3,4. Can you live without that? You cannot. Elementary principles, foundational, fundamental principles, from there only you can go to perfection.

What is the first thing John preaches? "Repent." Scripture doesn't say, "Repent from bad works. Repent from dead works." Every work you and I did before we met Jesus, was neither good nor bad; they were dead. That is the problem with righteous people. Righteous people struggle with that because they are good and when they hear, "I need to repent," they say, "What do I need to repent from?" That your good works are dead works in the sight of God. It doesn't matter whether you built a synagogue for the Jews, helped all the poor people among the Jews and pray regularly. God will look all that and then, send an angel and say, "Cornelius, I will send a man called Peter. You listen to him and then, you decide what you want to do." If he doesn't receive the word that Peter preaches and doesn't repent and accept Christ, Cornelius with all his good works will go to hell because repentance from dead works. God doesn't see it as good or bad, He sees it all as dead. That is what is so difficult.

First thing, John will say is, "Repent. Turn back to God. Turn away from all your dead works. Turn towards God and get baptized." Did John get his doctrine, right? He didn't teach the others because that was for Jesus. He didn't talk about laying on of hands and judgment and resurrection of the dead; that all, Jesus will teach. He taught the first three. And he got it absolutely right which so many denominations get it wrong. Doctrine of baptisms. In Telugu, is it written *baptismalu* (baptisms)? *Baptismalu*? Then, who told you there is just one baptism? When God says, "There is a doctrine of baptisms," then, why do denominations teach there is only one baptism? Millions of people sitting in Churches by their denominational doctrine have been kept away from the baptism of the Holy Spirit because they refuse to accept the doctrine of Christ. Do you see that that's become a doctrine of man? When God talks of a doctrine of baptisms. Did John preach that? He says, "I will only baptize you with water. There is one who comes after me, whose sandals I'm not worthy to untie. He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit for there is a second baptism and fire, because there is a third baptism. O, there is more than one baptism."

Jesus said, "I have a baptism to undergo." That is the baptism of martyrdom. They said, "We'll also drink from that cup." And He looked at them and said, "Yes, you will." So, there is another baptism. Doctrine of baptisms. If we don't get our doctrine right, we block people from receiving the power of God. We go back to one Scripture, which is talking about faith by saying there is only one baptism, which is true. Everybody is baptized into the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit or in the Name of Jesus, there is only one baptism. But there is a doctrine of baptisms because our God is a living God. He's a God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, He's not a dead God; He's a living God. Everything about our God is continuous. I have to repent from dead works. I have to keep on repenting from dead works in my life and your life.

If you came to Church today just to have the lunch and the offering, it is a dead work. Though outwardly you are sitting in the Church and listening, but God knows why you came and God says, "Your work is a dead work," and He says, "Until you repent from that, you can never have any faith towards Me." Do you know how much dead works are there in our lives? And unless we go to God, God will not show, "You know, son, this is a dead work. Repent from that." Unless I repent from the dead work, I cannot have faith towards God. "Repent," said John. "Repent," said Jesus. "Repent," said Peter. "Repent," said Paul. Did you see? They all sounded the same. All of them were saying, "We don't teach a doctrine that is ours, we teach a doctrine that is of Christ." That is what Jesus is saying, "My doctrine is not Mine. It is the doctrine of God." It is the doctrine of the Kingdom of God. It is a doctrine that establishes righteousness. Where you have not repented and where you have not turned to God, if you got baptized, it was just a free bath; it has no meaning in the Kingdom of God.

I was baptized on the eight day as a Catholic. It meant nothing in the Kingdom of God until I had to hear the Gospel and repent and accept and get baptized. Every other baptism has no meaning in the Kingdom of God. Understand that. It has no meaning. There is order in God's doctrine because, in this city, there are denominations who will say, "There is no need for baptism. There is no need for the Lord's table." There may be Pastors sitting here who say, "There is no need for the Lord's table." Keeping the Lord's Table is part of this doctrine – eternal judgment, because every time you keep the Lord's Table, you are saying, "He is coming back." It is at the table that we judge our life with God and with one another.

This laying on of hands is an entirely different teaching. If you'd understand this teaching, you will not stand in line in this miracle crusades for them to lay their hands upon you. You will be very careful who puts his hands on you. Do you know that man? Did you judge his ministry? Did you study his doctrine? Do you know the authenticity of his calling? How would you let him put his hands on you? What is passing on? Do you know? Do you know, what most of these people preach with huge Churches, do you know what they actually believe? Let me tell you – Jesus died on the Cross. Peter will say, "He went into the prison and preached to the spirits and on the third day, He rose up from the dead." This is the heresy. Jesus went down into hell, in His soul, He became a demonic figure and He was tortured by the devil for three days. Do you believe this? This is false; this is not truth.

Now, you look at the signs, you look at the miracles, without looking at the basic doctrine on which their ministries are founded. And if you question their doctrine (we don't question them; we just question their doctrine), do you know what they actually say? "If you question our doctrine, you'll die." They have said that publicly in crusades. "If you question our doctrine, you will die; your children will die." God said, "Test the spirit. Check doctrine." And when Paul's doctrine was tested by the Bereans, he said, "They are more noble than the Thessalonians." Don't be carried away. Everything I said, I can give you with date and their statements, which crusades they said it, which TV program they said, what's the heresy they have spoken. I can give you with dates with their words. That's why we have to be careful. That's why this is so important because this all part of how we will be eternally judged. So, Scripture says, "Test every spirit," because many deceiving spirits have gone in. God says, "Even if there is a prophecy, let three people in the Church judge it." So, remember; it is the doctrine of God that establishes righteousness. It is the doctrine of God that restores my soul. "Lord, how do I learn this doctrine?" Jesus gives all the answers. You don't have to search anywhere else. Jesus Himself gives the answers. In *John 7:16-17*,

John 7:16-17

¹⁶ ***Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.*** (and then, in *verse 17*, He gives us the clue. Young or old brethren, this is the key,) ¹⁷ ***"If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.***

Right there, Jesus puts a line. It is not education; it is not hard work; it is not perfection; all these are secondary. The key thing is this – Before God will teach you one doctrine, do you will to do His will? That is the key. Because if you don't will to do His will, you will not learn doctrine. This is Jesus' own principle. You know what He said? Do not throw pearls before swines. He will not. If I have to receive His pearls, I have to bend my knees and say, "Your will is my will." That is the beginning; that is the beginning of understanding, even doctrine. You can never go out to God and say, "Teach me and I will believe." God says, "No." "Teach me and if I will like it, I will keep it." God says, "It never works that way in the Kingdom." He says, "I need surrender." God will not and cannot teach an unsundered soul. Surrender one time and increase in surrender as you go on. If you and I will keep on surrendering to His will, He will keep on teaching us His doctrine. And it doesn't matter whether it is Abraham or a New Covenant believer today, the road is the same.

Doctrine is taught only to the obedient. I have to will to do His will. It is very simple. Everybody here knows that the service begins at ten o'clock. Why are you here? Because you will to come. Reasons may be different. But everybody wills to come and willing includes, getting up, getting ready, starting from your house and reaching here. Thirty of you will to reach here before ten. I counted. You will never realize until that day, you'll be more blessed than the others because you came before the Lord came. But that's the protocol in the Kingdom. Nobody comes after the king. In the kingdom, that is the rule. You cannot come after the king. In the democracy, you can call even the Prime Minister, Mr. Modi. You cannot call a king like that. Your head will go. That is why the first thing John says, "Repent for the Kingdom is near." God's Kingdom; not 'God's democracy is here'.

You know why we struggle to understand doctrine? Because we are not obedient even in the small things. And on top of that, we are hypocrites. Why? Tomorrow, in the Church, you will all tell your congregation, "Come on time!" Will you tell anybody, "It's okay. Service is at ten. Come at eleven also; it is fine,"? Tomorrow, you will tell them, "Come on time," and there is no offering; you put your offering. Today, did you see the rush at eleven o'clock? Ten fifty five, I went down and there is a long line because everybody knows offering cut-off time is eleven o'clock; everybody is rushing at eleven. I feel like that teacher I was thirty years ago. All the children who failed will come and stand in a line, "Sir, two marks, sir," "one mark, sir," "two marks." Now, at four o'clock, some will come, "Sir, two minutes late," "Pastor, five minutes late," "Sir, offering, five minutes." Is that what grace is? Do we see our struggle? Are we really looking at that and saying, "Lord, where is the Kingdom?"

Scripture talks about Jesus that "He went to the synagogue as it was His practice..." Practice for how long? "Thirty years." "Why do You have to go to the synagogue?" I told my Church, "Can you think about Jesus, sitting there in the synagogue, listening to this boring sermons from the Rabbis about Himself?" Never saying anything, can you sit like that? The Son of God sat in a synagogue in Nazareth for thirty years and He was a carpenter and never opened His mouth. Why? Because He knows that is the Kingdom. The Father told Him, "You will not speak until thirty. Sit there and listen." And He sat there and He listened. That is the righteousness of the Kingdom. You know where we have to start our repentance from?

Do you know if God says, "Start repenting from dead works," if we look back, there is nothing alive, everything is dead? You don't have to look at anybody's life; just look at Jesus' life and say, "My gosh! Is this how the Son of God was?" God doesn't say everything in one day. But when I hear and obey the first thing, He shows the second thing. Then, He shows the third thing. It is connected with obedience. Otherwise, let me tell you, I could give you the purest doctrine from the Bible, you still will not understand because God will block it in your mind. Three things in the Bible – wisdom, knowledge and understanding. All three come from God. Have you noticed these incredibly educated people – scholars, scholars in the Bible? Yet, they do not know Christ. Why? God has shut their eyes as they will not repent from their dead works. They will not repent. That's what God is talking about. It begins with surrender.

"Abraham, leave the Ur of the Chaldeans and go to the land that I show you." If he doesn't obey, will God speak anything else to him? God will not speak anything further to him, even if your and mine obedience is half and not full. In the Kingdom, half obedience is not accepted; it has to be full obedience. Did Abraham leave? Yes, he left. Did he take his father with him? Did God ever speak to him? No more revelation. Did he obey? "Lord, I am not in Ur, I left Ur. I've come so far. Why are You not speaking to me? I'm waiting, I'm waiting. You are not speaking to me. Why?" "Because I told you to leave your father. I will not speak to you until your father dies. Either you have to leave your father or I will wait till your father dies." Do you see, as soon as his father died in Abraham's life, the Lord comes and speaks to him the next level of revelation? Did you see? That's how it works.

After that, he has encounters with God and everything, but there is no revelation. Experiencing the provision of God, experiencing the protection of God and experiencing the revelation of God, is not the same. He protects Abraham; He provides for Abraham, but gives him no further revelation until Lot leaves. Why? Because Lot is part of the father's household. He had told him to leave. As soon as Lot leaves, then God says, "Lift up your head; look to the right; look to the left; look to the north; look to the south, everything that you see, I give it to you. Do you know when I called you, Abraham? Do you know how many years have passed? You still don't know what I want you to do and you are busy living. You don't know what's God's will for you. But now that you are separate, I will tell you, what's My will for you." He will tell Abraham, "Now, walk the land. Claim it for your descendants. This is My will for you." That's why he keeps on moving his tent, place

to place, claiming the land for his descendants who will come one day.

If anyone wills to do His will, Jesus said, "You will know what doctrine is." Every step, Abraham obeys; there is revelation. He has to obey the voice of God and there is a revelation of the works of God, the ways of God. Look at *Genesis 26:5*; listen to what God tells Isaac,

Genesis 26:5

⁵ ***"because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."***

And we thought, the law came through Moses. The law came through Moses for a nation. Before that, Abraham already knew what was the law, the statutes and the commands of God. How did he know? This is the key. When Abraham willed to do the will of God, God says, "Here, know My ways. He obeyed My voice." Where did it begin? In the Ur of the Chaldeans. Where did it end? On Mount Moriah. He obeyed. When he heard first the voice of God, he delayed. The second time, he went into Egypt. But you see, he's getting faster and faster. And now, in his old age, he hears the voice of God, "Take your son, your only son and go to the mountain and I will show you and offer him as a sacrifice." You know what Scripture says? Next day morning, he went. What happened to you, Abraham? "I have learnt to obey." Every time we obey, the doctrine will become clearer and clearer. There is no other way. And then, when you listen to anybody, good or bad, whoever that speaker is, you will also be able to discern whether his or her doctrine is from God or not because the very God who spoke to you will also give you discernment, how to discern between truth and error; because doctrine is taught to the obedient.

Elijah comes down the mountain. And he comes; there is Elisha at the end of twelve yoke of oxen, all excited. After three and a half years, rain has come, "I can farm again." Prosperity! He is looking ahead and there an old man puts a cloak on his shoulders. Immediately, he understands, "This is the call of God upon my life." You know what Elisha says? "Shall I go and say, 'bye' to my father and come?" What does Elijah say? "What do I have to do with you, son of Shaphat? You want to go and say 'bye' when your God is calling you? Don't you know the story of Abraham? When God called him, he went to say bye to his father. Instead, his father took him by and by." He understood. He killed his oxen, he cooked the oxen and he followed Elijah. Did the revelation come? In following Elijah, year after year, and then, the day Elijah is going, is come. In *2 Kings 2:3*,

2 Kings 2:3,5,7

³ ***Now the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" And he said, "Yes, I know; keep silent!"***

⁵ ***Now the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho came to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" So he answered, "Yes, I know; keep silent!"***

⁷ ***And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood facing them at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan.***

Elijah is going. Everybody is teaching in every channel about the end days. To many of them, you should say, "Shut your mouth. I don't want to hear from you. Why are you standing at a distance? You are not willing to cross the river of death." "Oh! You know Elijah is being taken today, right? And he taught you in your Bible College also, right? Then, how come you are not following him? Because you know, if you cross that river, you stand to lose everything." This man is willing to lose everything. How far will you go or we will have all these revelations but stand at a distance?

Do you know something about the Bible? There were schools of prophets then and now also. In India also, plenty of schools of prophecy, schools of prophets are there. Then also, there were plenty of schools of prophets; not one genuine prophet of God ever came from the school of prophets. They were all the false prophets; all came from them. Every genuine prophet of God in the Bible was forged in the wilderness, who surrendered to God, heard from God and was sent out by God. Problem is – when they come from their schools and their seminaries, they will always stand at a distance. Elisha did not stand at a distance. He had willed to do the will of God. When? Not that day; years ago, ten or twelve years ago, when the mantle had fallen on his shoulders and he had killed the oxen and burnt all the agricultural equipment, that day, he had

willed to do the will of God.

That's what Paul will also say, "King Agrippa, Governor Felix, years ago, the Lord Jesus appeared to me." "How many years have gone by, Saul?" "Ten years, twenty years, twenty five years. And what do you have to say, Paul, about it?" "I am still faithful to that vision." How faithful are we to the vision God has given us? How faithful have we been to the will of God? Elisha will experience the will of God now. Elijah took the mantle, hits the river Jordan and the Jordan splits. The God of Israel will open Jordan for a nation; He will open it for one faithful servant. That is what David is saying, "*The Lord is my shepherd.*" Did Elijah say, "Oh! Where is the ark? Where are the priests? I have to cross Jordan. If the priests don't come, how will I cross?" He says, "No." Did he say anything like that? Elijah took his mantle and hit, and the river opened up and he crossed over. Then, he says, "What do you want? What do you ask?" And he said, "I want one thing. I have walked with you all these years and I have seen your life. I want a double portion of that Spirit that is upon you." "Anything else you had asked, I had, I would have given you but the Spirit is not mine to give you. But I will tell you a secret. I will tell you whether you can get it or not. You know I am going, right? They also know I am going. Everybody is talking about rapture. But if you see how I am going, that means you will receive. That means God is opening the eyes of your spirit. If the eyes of your spirit are opened, that means your soul is ready to receive the double portion of the spirit." Chariots of fire came and took him. Did the others see? They had no clue. He cried out, "Father, my father, my father." And only one thing fell down, the old mantle.

Now, you know what he does? He rolls it back and he hits it. Where is the God of Elijah? The river parts, God is telling him, "I am no longer the God of Elijah; I am the God of Elisha." You know what he does? He rips his cloak apart. If I have to walk in the spirit of Elijah. I cannot go in my old dress. He is willing to tear away all the things that will stop him from moving into the next level. How much are we willing to give up that has brought us thus far to move to the next level? You need to understand; that's how Scripture works. Anyone wills to do His will. The wise men came to Jerusalem, they went to Herod's palace and they asked Herod, "Where is He that is to be born the King of the Jews?" Scripture says, "All of Jerusalem was troubled." Herod called all the scribes, the Pharisees, the Levites; he called everybody.

So, these people have come asking this question. They all looked at the scroll. Everybody's answer was correct. "Your Majesty, the Son of this God will be born in Bethlehem." Was their answer right? Did one person go? They didn't. What's the point of knowing answers? If you don't will to do the will of God, where is the revelation? Not one scholar from Jerusalem went to Bethlehem, though he knew it was in Bethlehem He was being born. Why? Because, like the sons of the prophet of Jericho and Bethlehem, they also stood far away. So, Jesus was born. The angels went to a few poor shepherds and gave them the news, "There born in David's town is the King of Jews." They happily, excitedly left their sheep and they went around and they met the Savior. Why? Because they chose, at that point, to do the will of God. That is our issue. Because that is the only way genuine ministry will flow. The rest of it all is dead works – wood, hay, straw. When fire comes through, it's all gone. When you ask me this question: You look at a haystack and a gold coin, which can you see? If you can see, you'll see the huge haystack. That is how ministries are now. God says, "Judge nothing before it's time. Don't judge anything before it's time." A day has been set and every man's work will be judged by fire. Repentance from dead works.

Let me tell you this. It's an interesting part. The entire New Covenant is based on God's mercy; not the Old Covenant. The Old Covenant is based on the law; the New Covenant is entirely based on God's mercy. It's on God's mercy. You don't have to do anything. All you have to do is repent and God forgives you. In the Old Testament, no; you have to do this offering and that offering and so many things, you have to do. Everything in the New Covenant is based on God's mercy. Let me ask you this question: if you don't preach repentance, why do people need mercy? Why do you need mercy? Because it's when you preach repentance, the Holy Spirit convicts people for the need of mercy. The Kingdom of God begins with mercy. Please don't confuse mercy and grace. Grace is given to you and to me to overcome. By grace, you are saved, saved from, what? From the world, from sin; mercy forgives sin. Grace is given to you and me to overcome sin and overcome the world. But do you know the false doctrine to legitimize sin, what do we say? This is the age of grace. Isn't that what you hear? But is that what Scripture says? Look at *Romans 6:14*. We have to get these fundamentals; else, we won't even understand what it means to repent.

Romans 6:14

¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

So, what does that mean? If you are under grace, you cannot have sin to have dominion over you. If you are under law, then it is fine; you sin and you go do your sacrifices. But if you are under grace... You see, how we confused even the fundamental doctrines of Christianity? Now, do you understand the joy of the apostles? They are able to overcome because they understand, "*Your grace is sufficient for us.*" They are not falling and saying, "Lord, show grace." They are saying, "Lord, have mercy." And they get up and say, "Lord, I want grace." Do we realize how much we need mercy?

We'll read two verses from what Jesus said and then, we will ask ourselves, "Do we need mercy today?" This is one verse nobody believes, *Matthew 12:36-37*. Lunch will take another ten minutes. So, you can shake yourself.

Matthew 12:36

³⁶ ***"But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.***

Do we believe that? Do we really believe? For every word, you will give an account. Every word. Do you know how difficult it is going to be if you don't believe what God has said? Because when I look at some of you, my heart breaks. Because I know you are not a Pastor, I know you don't even have a congregation. Yet, you have come here month after month and given your name as a Pastor, taken the money and gone. You have nothing. Some of you just play the keyboard. If you play the keyboard and take an offering, half my Church should get an offering. Do you realize the hole you are digging deeper and deeper? You are actually selling your soul for a hundred rupees? How difficult you are making it for yourself! I am just giving you one example because you do not believe that on that day, you will be judged and I will be judged, we will be judged for every idle word we have spoken and we haven't repented and made restitution.

More than congregation, let me tell you, when I see Pastors around the world, I get scared. I really get scared. You just think, I am just saying; just think. Because I don't know, but I know. I don't know; yet, I know. I'll never ask you to get me a picture of your Church or your visiting card. I will never ask. I expect you to be faithful. This is about God. We only can live our lives before God. Have you set a price for your soul because grace, in the Kingdom of God, is like money in the world? Those who receive no grace will perish. Those who receive little grace will just scrape through. Yet, what we were promised was the abundance of the riches of His grace. But He gives grace only to the humble. God opposes the proud. I keep telling my Church, the greatest sin in the Kingdom of God is not murder. Murderers have entered into Heaven. It's not stealing; thieves have entered into the Kingdom of God. Adulterers have entered into the Kingdom of God. Ask David; he must be playing the harp now there. But not a single proud person will enter into the Kingdom of God.

You know what is the danger of pride? You may and I may think, "But I am not proud, Pastor." How do you know? The proud will never be able to repent. Did you see the Garden of Eden? Jesus comes into the Garden, talks to Adam, talks to Eve, covers them, and sends them out. Did you ever hear one of them saying, "I'm sorry." Why? Because the pride of the devil had injected into them. Did you hear Cain saying, "Well, I'm sorry; I killed my brother"? That's what Scripture says, "There will be no room for repentance." If they don't find room for repentance, then you don't find room for grace. Before we go for lunch, let's go to *2 Thessalonians 2:7*,

2 Thessalonians 2:7

⁷ ***For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work (How do you know?); only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.***

Mark that in your Bible. Do you know who He is – the restrainer? The restrainer is the Holy Spirit. You don't have to look into the world; you don't have to look anywhere. We judge only ourselves. If the Holy Spirit is being lifted from our lives, slowly being lifted from our lives, we go more and more into sin. We are able to lie and cheat and steal and slander and do all kinds of things; there is no conviction anymore. In the world, we know – God is lifting His Spirit off. In spite of every advancement, every technology, the world is only becoming more evil, because He who now restrains is being slowly lifted.

What happens when it happens to a Church, to an individual? We don't have to look anywhere. I can judge only myself. Each one of us knows, "Am I growing in righteousness or am I growing in iniquity?" It's a very dangerous place to be, very, very dangerous place to be. That is why you need to know very sure, who called you, who sent you, what did He tell you to teach. Because there is a hardening of heart that is taking place.

I was teaching last week in the Church, when Moses went in to the Pharaoh and told the Pharaoh, "The God of the Hebrews says, 'Let My people go'." And to make the Pharaoh to let them go, plague after plague came. Scripture records, "The first five times Pharaoh hardened his heart." The sixth time, Scripture records, "God hardened Pharaoh's heart." How does this happen? You know how this happens? God will tell you through Jeremiah, he says, "We are like clay in His hands." How does the clay become soft? It needs water. As long as there is water in the clay, the clay is soft. Keep the clay under the fan, after some time, the clay will become hard. Why did the clay become hard? Because only the water went away. When the water goes, the clay becomes harder and harder. Do you know why we are quick to repent and able to repent and able to change? Because the Holy Spirit, who is called water, is still there. When the water starts withdrawing, our hearts get harder and harder and after some time, God hardens our heart. That's a line. Once that has happened, there's no coming back. Understand; there is no coming back. Scripture says, "Even though Esau cried with tears, he could not bring forth a change of heart." Even though Saul said, "David, you are righteous; I am not righteous," and he turned away and left David, Saul could never come back to God. After the tenth plague, though Pharaoh said, "Take your people and go. Bless me also," and even though Moses blessed him, Pharaoh could not change his heart.

That is why Scripture talks about foundational doctrines. Keep on repenting and that's why Jesus never tells, "Don't grieve Me." He never says, "Don't hurt the Father." He says, "Don't grieve the Holy Spirit." Why? Because if the restrainer, who restrains us from lawlessness, is removed, we will go headlong into lawlessness. It is the Holy Spirit who restrains the wicked from destroying the righteous, He's also the One who protects the righteous from falling into lawlessness. When Abraham's wife was taken by the Pharaoh and Abimelech, it was the Holy Spirit who restrained them from even touching her. When two old men, one eighty and one eighty-three stood with their sticks before the greatest king of the world, he couldn't do anything to them because it was the Holy Spirit which was restraining the Pharaoh.

Yet, Scripture says, "When the Holy Spirit left king Saul, an evil spirit came upon him." He's a tormented man now. He's still sitting on the throne he still prophesies but he's sitting with a spear. And he's an angry man and he wants to kill David. He's still the anointed king of Israel. He will sit on the throne for another thirty-five years. Where did he begin? Where will he end without the Holy Spirit? Please don't fool with the Holy Spirit. God doesn't stop any man. I was telling my younger Pastor that when Samson was lying on Delilah's lap, the anointing was still there. The gift was still working. Where is he lying? In Delilah's lap. The gift is still working but the Spirit will not tell him, "Within five minutes, you are going to lose your eyes. In a few hours, you will be tied like this between the poles." He won't tell him. Why? Because he had hardened his heart to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. So, all these things, these gifts and miracles and workings have only meaning if you are walking with God, when our hearts are sensitive. That is why the first doctrine of the Kingdom is repentance from dead works and faith towards God. Otherwise, we are in a very dangerous place. Very, very dangerous place.

In the afternoon, I will tell you of destructive doctrines mentioned in the Bible. The doctrine that has come into these last days and gripped masses and how you use discernment to judge ministries. Not all of them are false. Many of them are genuine. But the problem is – there is so much pressure to be like others. You don't have to be like anybody; you just have to be like God called you to be. John came wearing a leather belt; Jesus came wearing a robe. John was in the wilderness; Jesus was in the towns and the cities. Both were content with their ministries. Don't try to imitate anybody. There are so many imitators around. It is the devil that makes imitations. God creates only originals; every one of you is an original. Don't become an imitation of somebody else's ministry. Scripture warns to the Church at Philadelphia, "Don't let somebody steal your crown. Hold on to your crown. Don't lose it." Let's pray and go for lunch now.

Closing Prayer:

Father, even as we break for lunch, we thank You, Father. And I pray, Lord, that what You have given will be enough for everybody. We receive it with thanksgiving. Bless it; bless the ones who made it, bless the ones who brought it and bless the ones who partake of it. For everything comes from You, Father. For in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.