

Father, once again, we come to You. We thank You for the gift of life; we thank You for the provision of food for us. You have given us everything that we need. We just thank You, even for this time, this place; even the Word that we are going to hear. Help us to know, Lord, everything comes from You because You are a giver. God loves. Therefore, He gives. Help us also to be givers like You, Lord, that by the time You come, we would have poured out our lives as an offering unto You, Lord. As Paul said, 'my life is being poured out as a drink offering'. Help us to live that life, Lord. Speak to us, O Lord, now. For in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

So, we continue to look at how we need to be prepared and ready when He comes anytime. One lesson we learn from the Parable of the five foolish virgins is – you cannot be ready when He comes; you have to be ready always. At the hour of His Coming, if we don't have an ongoing relationship with God, it will be big trouble. Every act of God is connected with a relationship. That's why the Holy Spirit has been given. Jesus told His disciples, "It's good for you that I go but I will send Somebody just like Me." And He said, "He will be with you always and forever." The Holy Spirit is represented through the Bible in different ways – as a mighty wind, as fire, as rain, as oil, as dew – these are all different ways the Holy Spirit is described, showing us the different ways in which He works.

And we saw in the morning that the core of any relationship is sacrifice. Relationship demands sacrifice. Without sacrifice, there can be no genuine relationship. Therefore, when the record of faith begins with Abel, it begins with sacrifice. But we saw in the morning, also in the study of David, that you can have sacrifice and still not come under God's order. So, therefore, we need to understand – what does God demand from us? How do we do it so that our sacrifice is acceptable to God? That's why God says, "First, offer your body." He says, "Sit down." That's why He tells Martha, "You are so busy but Mary has done the right thing. She is sitting at My feet. *Be still and know that I am God.*" We don't have to do anything for God. First, we need *to be still and know God* so that we can hear from God, so that we know what must be done and how it needs to be done. But remember, the story is the same in the Old and the New Covenant that the crowds that follow, often, are only looking at what they can get from God and are not interested in a relationship. And if we are not interested in a relationship, even if we were to receive anything from God, He still denies His heart from us. That's one of the lessons of the Bible, powerfully written in *Psalms 103:7*.

Psalm 103:7

⁷He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel.

He only showed His deeds to Israel; to one man, He showed His ways because that man desired a relationship with God and he was willing to sacrifice everything for that relationship. And *Hebrews 11* will say, "He turned his back to the treasures of Egypt for the reproach of Christ." So, all our testimonies about our work mean nothing if we don't have a genuine relationship with God. For four hundred plus years, the children of Israel were groaning in Egypt because of their slavery but they were only longing for a release from their misery and not for a relationship with God. Yet, God's desire was that He would bring them out and He would have a relationship with them. God heard their cry, their groaning and when He sends Moses to the Pharaoh, this is what He told Moses to say in *Exodus 5:3*,

Exodus 5:3

³So they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice to the LORD our God..."

Do you know what God is speaking through Moses, prophetically? At the end of three days, God will have a separated people who will sacrifice to Him in worship. Two days are over; the third day is coming. After the third day, He will have a set of people who will know Him as God and He will know them as His people. It's all about a relationship. It is not about freeing from our misery and from our problems. The whole purpose of God is that we might relate to Him and He might relate to us.

Exodus 5:3

³So they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice to the LORD our God..."

Oh, it's a three-day journey. Abraham took a three-day journey to Mount Moriah. On the end of the third day, he got his son back from the dead. That's when he realized, "Jehovah is a giver – Yahweh Yireh." And he realized, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Everything of God is a three-day work. In *Hosea 6:1-4*,

Hosea 6:1-4

¹Come, and let us return to the LORD; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. ²After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight.

As far as people are concerned, He is the One who is tearing; He is the One who will heal us. He is the One who is striking us; He is the One who is binding us. After two days, He will revive us and after the third day, He will raise us up. What is God doing? So that we may live in His sight forever. It's all about a relationship. In *verse 3*, He will say,

³Let us know, Let us pursue the knowledge of the LORD. His going forth is established as the morning; He will come to us like the rain, Like the latter and former rain to the earth.

This is talking about the Holy Spirit. This is talking about a deepening relationship with God. This is God's desire for us. But what can God do?

⁴"O Ephraim, what shall I do to you? O Judah, what shall I do to you? For your faithfulness is like a morning cloud, And like the early dew it goes away.

Isn't that true? We get excited in a meeting; by night, it is gone. Tomorrow morning, it's gone. Sunday, everybody gets excited; Monday, we are like Judah. Yet, God is there, ready to pour the former and the latter rain together. Yet, Scripture says, "At the end of three days, God will have His people." After two days of the Church and the third day of Jesus' millennial rule, *Revelation 21:1-4* says, that everything will be cleansed by fire, the work of the Holy Spirit.

Revelation 21:1-4

¹Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

Why? Why no samudram (sea)? Because samudram (sea) is a symbol of the first judgment. In the second judgment of fire, even the sea will disappear.

²Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men..."

Deva nivasam (the tabernacle of God). This is what God is waiting for. More than we are longing for it, He is longing for that day when God can come with us and stay with us.

...and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. (And all the pain that we went through, Scripture says.) ⁴And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; (He will wipe it away) there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

This is what we look forward to at the appearing of Christ. The ruler of this world does not want God's people to take this three-day journey into the wilderness. He hates people who are separated from his world.

In *2 Corinthians 6:17-18*, the same God will say,

2 Corinthians 6:17-18

¹⁷Therefore “Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.” ¹⁸“I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty.”

God is saying, “Come out! ***I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters.***” “Let My people go!” God tells Pharaoh. “Three day journey into the wilderness to offer a sacrifice.” What does Pharaoh say? “No problem. Sacrifice? No problem.”

Exodus 8:25

²⁵Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, “Go, sacrifice to your God in the land.”

“Oh, you want to sacrifice? No need for separation. No need to go so far away. You can do it in Egypt.” Have our Churches become like that? No need for separation? We can worship just like the world, just the Egyptians do, in this land itself? Did you see? God said, “Take a three-day journey and sacrifice.” Pharaoh said, “Sacrifice, but don’t take the journey.” That’s what we also hear, “You can worship God without separation.” This did not come from the Church; this came from the Pharaoh four thousand years ago. Is that the way we worship in our Churches? Take the customs of Egypt, this world and make it into our worship so that the people will be very happy. And if you are very insistent, “No, I will not worship that way. I will go on a three-day journey,” then, the Pharaoh will say on *verse 28*, “Okay, okay.”

Exodus 8:28

²⁸So Pharaoh said, “I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Intercede for me.”

“Go, go. But don’t go too far. This three day journey is not required; only two days is enough.” “Don’t drink whiskey; beer is okay.” “Cigarette chod dho (leave it) BD pheelo (have it).” You see how we bring compromise and that, too, we make it very spiritual by saying, “Pray for me, brother.” “Go and separate but don’t go too far.” We don’t realize – it is a trap.

Do you remember Lot? When he left Abraham in *Genesis 13:12*,

Genesis 13:12

¹²Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom.

Did you see? Where is Lot? His tent is pitched like this – if he opens his window, he can see Abraham saying ‘Hallelujah’ at his altar; but when he opens his front door, he can see the TV show in Sodom. Don’t go too far. Do you remember king Herod? In the morning, he will listen to John the Baptist’s Sermon; evening, he will watch Salomi dance, right? “Will you go? Don’t go too far.” What does it mean? “Go to your God but stay where I can watch you.” We don’t realize that so many Churches teach this, “Don’t be radical.” If you meet the burning bush, will you not become radical? If you meet the Man with the drawn sword outside the walls of Jericho, won’t you become radical? How can you meet this God, who is a consuming fire and say, “I am not radical”? But that is where we have to be careful with the Pharaoh. “Don’t go too far.” That’s what they said, “You can sacrifice but don’t go too far.”

But again, if you are insistent, Pharaoh will say, “Okay, go far. Take a three-day journey.”

Exodus 10:10-11

¹⁰Then he said to them, “The LORD had better be with you when I let you and your little ones go! Beware, for evil is ahead of you. ¹¹Not so! Go now, you who are men, and serve the LORD, for that is what you desired.” And they were driven out from Pharaoh’s presence.

What did God say? “All of you go.” What did Pharaoh say? “Go three days, offer your sacrifice but leave your family behind; only men go.” Pharaoh knows, if your family stays behind, after three days, you will come back. So, what did Joshua say, “As for me and my household, we shall serve the Lord.” So, what does Pharaoh say? “Let your family stay here. You people go and sacrifice and come back.” Is that true? “But Pastor, you don’t know my situation.” The simple situation is this. You say, “Pastor, my wife won’t come with me to Church; my children won’t come with me to Church.” You know why? Because you

should have married somebody who is separated in the first place. That's why God said, *"Do not be unequally yoked with an unbeliever."* So, don't blame them for your mistake. Start right. First, you be the separated person, who longs for a relationship with God. Then, if you get married, marry another one who is separated and longs for a relationship with God. Otherwise, Pharaoh will tell. Pharaoh also gives dreams. "Let your husband go. You don't go." Are you getting the picture? Everything is connected with a journey, which is connected with a relationship that involves sacrifice. Whenever God sees a man or a woman or a child who is longing for a genuine relationship with God, the devil will try to bring in compromise. If, finally, you say, "I will go. I will take my wife. I will take my children." Pharaoh will say, "Okay. I can't stop this guy. You go, but one condition. Okay, take your wife; take your children; everything."

Exodus 10:24

²⁴ Then Pharaoh called to Moses and said, "Go, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be kept back. Let your little ones also go with you."

What is that? "Leave your money behind and go serve your God." Isn't that true? Sunday morning, ting! Isn't that true? What does the beggar say? The last time I saw a beggar, he said, "Sir, aaj kaal pachaas paise nahi chalta. (Sir, nowadays, fifty paise does not have any value)" Parameswar ke mandala mein abhi bi chalta (It's still being given in God's house). And we are worshipping God after a three-day journey in the wilderness with our one rupees, two rupees. We come with our whole family. "Hallelujah!" We tell the pillas (children) also, "Come on, Hallelujah!" Where is your money? Left it in the world. Left it there. Who told this? The Pharaoh said. "You can go worship your God; three-day journey; husband, wife, children, everything. Leave your wealth behind." What did Moses say? He says, "No. We worship our God. We will take a three-day journey of separation; we will take our whole family and we will take our everything. And we will serve God." You see, the problem is, when it comes to money and possessions, we proclaim the power of God only in receiving and not in giving. Even when they say, "Give one to the Lord and you shall get ten times more," it is about receiving; it's not about giving. *Where your treasure is, there your heart will be.* There is no sacrifice in our giving. There's no sacrifice. When this meeting is over, many of you will come and say, "I'm half an hour late, one hour late." There is no sacrifice. But which do you think is more blessing? You, who receive or I, who give? Do you believe? Paul said and Jesus said, *"It is more blessed to give than to receive."* Do you know, when Paul talks about all the Churches that give, he picked up one Church? In *2 Corinthians 8:1-4*, he picked up the Churches of Macedonia.

2 Corinthians 8:1-4

¹ Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: (Look at those verses. This is not a rich Church; it's a poor Church. He says,) ² that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of giving. (You don't have to be a rich Church; you don't have to be a big Church; you can be a small Church and a poor Church but a giving Church.) ³ For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, ⁴ imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

Which Church is this? The Church of Macedonia. Do you know who came from Macedonia? Alexander, the great, who took the whole world. But when Christ came, in Macedonia, He raised up a set of people who gave to the rest of the world. That is the work of God. Now, we realize why we struggle in the depth of our relationship with God? Because there is no sacrifice in what we are giving to God. I'm not talking about money; it could be anything. Tomorrow is Sunday. All who are Pastors will preach tomorrow. But do you see it as giving it to God or as giving it to man? How much sacrifice is there in your preparation in giving it to God tomorrow? Or do we take it lightly?

Long time ago, during the British days, in Banaras, there was a missionary. He knew a lady who had two children. One was a normal child; the other was a cripple. And she worshipped her gods. One day, he saw her running with the child to the river. And then, she came back empty-handed. And he said, "Where is your child?" She said, "I offered my child to my god in the river." He said, "What? You gave your child to your god?" He asked, "Which child did you give? The crippled one?" She said, "What do you think? I will give the crippled one to my god? No, I gave the good one." If a pagan knows to worship their dead god like that, what about us? That's what happened to Israel. God loved Israel; Israel never loved God. I have no doubt about God loving Israel. *Exodus 4:22*, this is what God says about Israel and about us.

Exodus 4:22

²² **Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD: “Israel is My son, My firstborn.**

In Hosea 11:1,

Hosea 11:1-2

¹ **“When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son. (But what did Israel do? Look at verse 2,) ² As they called them, So they went from them; They sacrificed to the Baals, And burned incense to carved images.**

What do we do? God calls us out; He says, “You are My child and I love you.” What do we do? God says, “Israel is My inheritance and My portion.” But by the time the Old Testament ends, what happens to Israel? Listen to God’s final cry to His son, Israel.

Malachi 1:6-9

⁶ **“A son honors his father, And a servant his master. If then I am the Father, Where is My honor? And if I am a Master, Where is My reverence? Says the LORD of hosts To you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, ‘In what way have we despised Your name?’ ⁷ “You offer defiled food on My altar, But say, ‘In what way have we defiled You?’ By saying, ‘The table of the LORD is contemptible.’ ⁸ And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, Is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, Is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?” Says the LORD of hosts. ⁹ “But now entreat God’s favor, That He may be gracious to us. While this is being done by your hands, ill He accept you favorably?” Says the LORD of hosts.**

Do we offer the blind to our God? Many sisters can sit before the mirror and take care of themselves for hours; but when they come to the Word of God, they are blind. Many men of God can sit before the TV and watch cricket for eight hours. When they open the Word of God, they are blind. There are two mirrors; there is one mirror on your wall and Scripture says, “There is another mirror here.” There are two places where you can shop; one, you can go to the mall and spend five hours; there is another mall in your hands, where you can shop for the things of God for hours together; things that are precious and eternal. Do we take the things of God seriously or are we really waiting for the appearing of the Lord? We want healing; we want deliverance; we want prosperity; Pastors, we want big offerings; we want everything except a genuine, sacrificial relationship with God. Because we know that it will cost us.

That’s how we end up from Abel’s sacrifice, the first man, to *Hebrews 11:5*, to the next man.

Hebrews 11:5

⁵ **By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, “and was not found, because God had taken him”; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.**

We also say, “I also want to be taken away when Jesus comes. I’m waiting. When Jesus comes, I will be taken up.” But the question is this: why was Enoch raptured? Everybody is waiting for rapture, right? If you are not waiting for rapture, you are preparing for capture. We see, in that list, the second man was taken away. So, what do we know about Enoch? Only three things mentioned. *Genesis 5:24* says,

Genesis 5:24

²⁴ **And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.**

So, Scripture says, “He walked with God.” *Hebrews 11:5* says,

Hebrews 11:5

⁵ **By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, “and was not found, because God had taken him”; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.**

So, we are all waiting for the appearing of Jesus and we are looking for Him to take us away; and here is the first man who was taken away. First thing we know about him – he walked with God. Second thing we know is that – he pleased God. Then, there is the third thing mentioned about him in the Bible, which is in *Jude 1:14*,

Jude 1:14

¹⁴ Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints,

Okay, that's enough. You have to put these three together. First thing we know – he walked with God. That means he had a deep abiding relationship with God. Two – he knew about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the judgment that will come upon the ungodly. So, he lived in the light of Jesus' Second Coming. He walked with God; he had a deep relationship. Second, he lived in the light of God's judgment. And third thing, he was the seventh from Adam and he was taken. So, what does it mean? Seven is the number of God; not the number of man. Because he reached perfection in his age what God demanded, to be taken away. There is a perfection God demands to be taken away for rapture. That's what Scripture says, "Two are in the bed; one is taken." What does this mean? The whole world was in one bed; only one was taken; the rest of the world was left behind. What do you understand from *Hebrews 11:5*?

Hebrews 11:5

⁵ By faith Enoch was taken away...

You cannot be taken away by faith if you haven't walked by faith before. If you and I are not walking by faith now, then what is the hope we have that we will be taken away by faith? We all want to be taken away but where does that blessed hope come from? Where does it come from? Is our hope real? Seventh from Adam is gone. So, Abel worships; what does God mean by that? "If there is genuine sacrifice with your relationship through the second man," He says, "you can walk with God." If you and I cannot walk with God, it's because we are not able to worship Him in sacrifice. And then, therefore, we are not able to work for God. The work for God only comes with the third man, who is called 'Noah'. Worship, walk, work. And then, comes the fourth man, Abraham, who was called to walk through the land to witness. Out of your worship will come a walk. Out of your walk will come a work. Out of that work will come a witness. That's God's procedure. Instead we start, forever, running and doing a work and say, "Lord, approve me." God says, "No, you haven't even worshipped Me." He said, "You haven't even walked with Me." Isn't that what *Genesis 6* says? Look at *Genesis 6:9* onwards. First thing, what does it say?

Genesis 6:9

⁹ This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.

No work is given. How old was he then? Six hundred years old. Six is the number of man. You need to reach the perfection of man to do the work of God; and reach the perfection of Christ to be taken away. Who is Noah? Tenth from Adam. Ten is the number of judgment. You have to live in the light of God's judgment and do a work accordingly. What is the work told to Noah?

Genesis 6:11-13

¹¹ The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.¹² So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. ¹³ And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

"I am going to destroy the whole earth." Have we been told that He is going to destroy this whole world by fire? And on that is our work based on. Our work is based on that. Listen carefully to what God says in *verse 13*. Judgment is coming. Make a place of security. Read *verse 14* carefully.

Genesis 6:14

¹⁴ Make yourself (for whom?) an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch.

We are very good at preaching to others, except preaching to ourselves. "Oh, brother, you need to get saved!" What about you? "You need to repent and stop drinking!" And you say that to somebody else while you are drinking in secret. God did not tell Noah, "Build an ark for others." He said, "Build it for yourself first. First, you build for yourself. You get it and see if others get in." That's what Paul says, "I beat myself, bring my flesh under subjection so that after having preached, I will not

be disqualified.” Make yourself an ark. I will tell you the difference – imagine Brother Srikar is a contractor. He is an engineer; not a contractor. I want a house. I meet Srikar and say, “I want a house built.” He’ll say, “No problem.” He makes a plan and he will say twenty-five lakhs for a small house. I will say, “I will give you an advance.” He is building the house. Even when he is building, his main thought is, “How do I build the house as cheap as possible and keep the money in my pocket?” He built a house for me. It cost fifteen lakhs but he took twenty-five. Rain has come. It is leaking from here; it is leaking from there. Now, he is building, the next year, a house for himself. He made a plan. Estimated. It cost twenty-five lakhs. But as he builds, he is very careful. The final cost is thirty lakhs. No problem. Why? Because he is building for himself. *Build for yourself an ark.* You are not a contractor building for somebody else; build it for yourself. You and your family will get in first. If your family won’t escape judgment, nobody will escape judgment. Build it that way. How do you build your Church? That’s the question God is asking. How do we build our Churches? Will it stand the judgment of God? Yes, *verse 11-12*, oh, so much violence! So much sin! What do we say? “Oh, the world is full of sin.” But what does Scripture say?

Romans 5:20

²⁰ ***Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,***

Where papam (sin) has vistarichu (abounded), there krupa (grace) is increased. Do you believe? Do you believe *He is the same God yesterday, today and forever*? The earth is full of sin. In Noah’s time, it was abounding with sin. Yet, in Noah’s time, the man who was born in the earth, the eighth generation, Methuselah; he is not dying. He is seven hundred years old; eight hundred years old; nine hundred years old; nine hundred and fifty years old; nine hundred and sixty-nine years old; why? Because this was the most sinful age and even in that age, God’s grace is being poured out because when Methuselah dies, judgment will come. “Let him live the longest so that people may know that I am a merciful God.” Do we see that our God is the same? Only eight people got saved. Didn’t God know? But He still allowed Methuselah to live nine hundred and sixty-nine years for eight people. It doesn’t matter how much sin abounds, His grace will abound. That’s our God. If we don’t understand the heart of God, we will never long for a relationship with Him.

It is not just the work of faith; it is the labor of love. Because you see how much this God loves man. Do we see this? Do we see this in our lives? That’s what the disciples saw. This is what the Apostles saw. This is how they labored and Paul will say, just before his death, “I am nothing. I am dying as a rich man because I have nothing left. My whole life is poured out.” There’s a difference between the world and the Kingdom of God. In the world, you are considered generous by how much you have given. If Ambani gives one million, we will say, “Generous man.” But in the Kingdom, that’s not how you are counted. You are counted generous by how much you have left. On the Cross, Jesus had nothing left. Paul, when he died, he had nothing left. A whole life poured out in the love of God and man. When you and I finish, what will be left? Or we will be counted by how much is given. At the end of the day of twenty-four hours, how much time? How do we calculate time? “Oh, I prayed for thirty minutes today! Oh, that’s enough.” So, you kept back twenty-three hours and thirty minutes. “Oh, Service is too long. Three hours, I have given.” Oh, really? So, twenty-one hours, you kept for yourself. How do you count? Is it with a relationship? We count it all. That’s why Paul says, “*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*” We still haven’t come anywhere near what the saints that have gone before us are. Because worship should lead to a walk. And closer the walk, greater the sacrifice that is required. For Enoch to be taken in his time, he had to be willing to lose everybody. That was the price he had to pay. At the end of the road, it was he and God alone. No wife, no children, no brothers, no father, nobody. As he walked further and further with God, others were falling away. That is why Paul will say, “*I have finished the race.*” He doesn’t say, “We have finished the race.” Will ‘we’ finish the race or will ‘I’ finish the race? Do we understand what this God demands? Because He has given us so much.

We want to be taken by faith when we struggle to walk by faith. That’s what Paul was saying in *2 Timothy 4:7-8*,

2 Timothy 4:7-8

⁷ ***I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.***

All those who have loved the appearing of Jesus, fight the good fight of faith. There are four things here – they fight the good fight of faith. They don’t start or quit; they finish the race. Not only finishing the race, how do they finish the race? They finish the race by keeping the faith – third thing. It is not enough to finish the race; you have to run according to the

rules. And that's what he says. And all those who love His appearing are also longing for His righteousness.

A Pastor had a small child and she was practicing very hard for one sports. He asks, "What are you practicing for?" She said, "I'm practicing for fourth prize?" Does anybody practice for fourth prize? First prize, second prize, third prize – but fourth prize? Pastor said, "Why are you practicing for fourth prize?" "Because," she said, "fourth prize is pink ribbon. I don't like red, blue and yellow. I want pink." If you are not hungering and thirsting for righteousness, why should you long for the crown of righteousness? Everybody is running. He was very clear what he was running for. He was not running for any crown; he was running for the crown of righteousness. Why was he running for the crown of righteousness? Because he understood the command, "*Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.*" *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness and they shall be filled.* He had run his race like that all his life and he says, "Now, I will be filled. The crown is waiting for me." That is why every Apostle in every Epistle is telling us, "Run! Remember His appearing." We are just looking at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Peter will say in *2 Peter 3:13-14*,

2 Peter 3:13-14

¹³ Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which (dwells what?) righteousness dwells.

If you are not seeking for righteousness here, will you seek where righteousness dwells? We have reasons why we don't long for Jesus' Coming. It is like a magnet. Magnet will only attract iron; it won't attract plastic. If we are not hungry and thirsty for righteousness, through the Spirit, we won't be looking forward to live in the place of righteousness.

¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him (first) in peace, without spot and blameless;

First is peace, right? Samadanam (peace). Be found in peace with God. *Romans 8:1*. We all know *Romans 8:1*. What is *Romans 8:1*?

Romans 8:1

¹ There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

We need to be very sure that there is no condemnation. But wait a second. In Christ, okay? In Christ.

2 Corinthians 13:5

⁵ Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith...

We examine. How do we examine? "I prayed for thirty minutes today." Did God say, "That is the answer"? "I go to Church regularly." "I fast." "I preach." "I study the Word." None of these are the answers. When you and I examine, is Christ in you or not? That is the only answer. The right answer is only when we examine, is Christ there? Is He growing or not? So, Peter will say, "First, be found at peace with Him." Peace with God. And then,

Romans 12:18

¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

When it comes to man, God says, "As far as possible. Some people, you cannot live in peace but as far as possible, *live peaceably with all men.*" Is it true? You ask any person who is in the deathbed; only one thing they want. They want to make peace with everybody. Suddenly, they are not interested with anything else. You may have ten cars, four houses, all this money – it makes no difference. One thing – we want to make peace. God says, "Peace with God, peace with men when He comes." You don't know when He is coming. So, He says, "Walk in peace with God and with man as far as possible every day."

Second thing – go back to Peter.

2 Peter 3:14

¹⁴ *...in peace, without spot...*

Do you know that is why Jesus gave Himself?

Ephesians 5:25-27

²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, (what was the sacrifice for Jesus for? For Himself) ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

Is this our ministry? Tomorrow is Sunday. Is this what our ministry will be? The purpose of the Word that it will go and create spotless people. Do you see, when we stand under the shower, whichever way you take your snanam (bath); whether in the river, in the pond or in a bucket or under the shower, when water comes, water is not your enemy; it's not your enemy. The water is not directed at you. The water is directed at the dirt on you. The Word of Christ is not directed at you; it is directed at the dirt in us, to make us spotless. If you are truly born of God and are slowly walking in the Spirit, you will like the washing of the water. Otherwise, you will get angry with the Word. If you take a little pig, give it a nice bath, put Ponds powder, nice ribbon and you have a cat. Take them both for a walk. While you are going, because it rained, there is some mud. And you jumped over it; both of them fell into the mud. Do you know what the pig does? "Ahhh!" What does it do? He loves it. What does the cat do? It quickly licks itself clean. Why? It's the nature inside. If you are born of God's Word and God's Spirit, you will like the washing of the water of the Word because you know – the One who birthed you is holy; so, I have to be holy. Even if you fall, you will be miserable, crying out to God, "Cleanse me! This is not what I am." To be found spotless. The Spirit of God is near everyone with the water of the Word to make us spotless. And not only that, and then, not enough to be spotless, you need to be blameless at His Coming.

2 Peter 3:14

¹⁴ *...and blameless;*

Ephesians 1:4

⁴ *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,*

Understand that. If you are saved, before the foundation of the world, we were chosen to be blameless before Him. It is not enough to be blameless before man; it is not enough to be blameless in our own eyes; we have to be blameless before Him. Read *Genesis 17:1*,

Genesis 17:1

¹ *When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.*

There is nobody who is ninety-nine years old here. But if you are ninety-nine years old, can God still speak to you and say, "Walk before Me and be blameless"? Abel worshipped God; Enoch walked with God; this is not that. This is walk before God. They are not the same. 'Walk before'. Will we able to tell God, "Help me to walk before You and correct me from all my faults, even my hidden faults"? That's what David cries. This is what we understand about how people waited by looking for the appearing of Jesus Christ, found in Him, in Christ. Peace with God; peace with man, without spot, blameless before Him. You walk like that each day, it doesn't matter if He comes today or ten years from now, you are longing for His appearing. And that's how Enoch walked. And God said, "Time to come." By faith, he was translated; he was taken.

So, this afternoon, as we close, we have looked at Scripture. The Scripture is for Pastors. Now, you go home and be gentle with your sheep. Let them grow. Our job is to feed them. We cannot make anybody grow. We can plant; we can water; we can pray; we can fast; we can counsel; we can exhort; only God can give the increase. But we have to do what we have to do. Because when we stand before God, He should tell us, "Well done, My good and faithful servant." Good – you have to be good. It's not enough to be faithful without being good. Good and a faithful servant. That's what God is talking about.

And we prepare our Church for that. Amen? Take heed; don't give up. Remember, Scripture says, "You have to finish." There is no certificate in Heaven called 'participated'. Only one certificate – 'finished well'. That's all. Shall we pray?

Closing Prayer:

Father, we just thank You, Lord. I thank You for all Your servants who are here. All Your servants. Every one of them. And I thank You, Father. I thank You, Father, for every one of them. I pray, Father, that Your Spirit would continue to speak to us, minister to us, prepare us that we may prepare Your people; so that at the hour of Your Coming, each one would arise and find that their lamps are shining; that You might have a spotless, blameless Bride on earth. Help us never to count the cost of our relationship with You, willing to pay any price because You were willing to pay the highest price. I commit Your people into Thy hands. As they go through another month, I pray, Your hand would be upon each one, upon their household and their ministry. Touch them, Lord. Help us, Lord, to know it is not the work; but it is the worship and the walk that comes first. And then, the work will flow. It will be a work that will save Your people. Bless Your servants. Protect them from harm and from danger. Touch their bodies and heal them of their sicknesses. Touch their wives, O Lord, so that they may have comfort and peace in their hearts. Touch their children, O Lord, so that the children do not rebel; that together, as a Church, they may be able to worship You. Thank You, Father. I just bless them in Your Name and we, together, as Your people, we bless Your Name. We, as Your servants, we lift up holy hands and we bless Your Name. We bless Your Holy Name. Thank You, Father. Thank You, Lord. For in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

Benediction:

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