

Lord, What Do You Require of Me?

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Hallelujah! Come, Lord Jesus. As we sang, Lord, You be truly our life, our strength, even now. Cause us to hear Your voice. Left to ourselves, our minds will wander. Cause us to hear. Help us, Lord. Give us that understanding, Spirit of God, that we might understand what we hear. Increase our faith, O Lord, that we believe what we hear. Strengthen our will, Lord, in Your likeness that we obey what we believe. Help us to lift Jesus even tonight, O Lord, in Your house; for You alone can draw all men towards You. Help us, Father. Speak to us, Father. Empower us, Father. For in Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

We will continue from where we left on Sunday. These are the subsequent messages for some time, maybe for a few weeks. I do not know what Pastor Vijay is planning to preach on Wednesday and Sunday but I know, usually, he goes the same route. But, once again, let me make clear from this Pulpit, about this Pulpit. When the Lord called me and gave me a Pulpit to preach from, He, very clearly, defined my call from the *Book of Acts* from the ministry of Apollos. He said, "I've called you to strengthen the believers in the Church." So, from the first message, you will find on the website, titles like 'Called, Chosen, Faithful'; every message which I preach and even Pastor Vijay preaches is aimed towards believers. So, by some chance, if you are outside the Kingdom, meaning, truly not born again, it often may not make much sense to you. But I believe everyone on a Wednesday evening is part of the Kingdom. But remember, the messages may even create hostility in your mind because the Kingdom of God is directly opposed and opposite to the kingdom of this world. And Jesus Himself says, "*The Kingdom of God advances with great violence, spiritual violence.*" If you ask, "What does that mean?" We know *Romans 12:1-2*; it says, "*Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice.*" It takes enormous violence, spiritual violence to teach your body regularly, to use today's illustration, regularly, to submit to the rule of the spirit so that you are present on a Wednesday evening. It doesn't matter how tired you are. I don't know how far you have come from; I pray that you would rather catch half a message than not to catch the message at all. That is being spiritual violent to your body. And Paul will put it across in *1 Corinthians 9:27*. He says,

1 Corinthians 9:27

²⁷But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection (it's part of the Kingdom of God - subjection), lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

The disciplining of the body to the Spirit of God and to your own spirit, the disciplining of the mind, which is the renewing of the mind by the Word of God are so that we are not just hearers; we receive the Word of God and we practice the Word of God. That is when the truth of God, the judgments of God, the justice of God and the righteousness of God come. That's the reason we come to hear the Word of God. We are not looking for principles in the world; we are looking for the righteousness of God to be established in our lives. It is because Scripture is very clear that, "*If we judge ourselves, we won't be judged.*" And Scripture also says, "*The spiritual man judges all things; yet he himself is not judged.*" But the issue here is – to make judgments, I need truth. Without truth, I cannot make judgments because that's how God functions. Scripture says in *Isaiah*, "*Jesus does not judge by what He sees or what He hears but in righteousness, He will judge.*" So, it's in truth He judges.

Abraham Lincoln said, (let me try to recollect my memory. He said,) "Do not believe anything that you hear and only believe half of what you see." Now, he is saying something similar. He says, "You cannot believe anything that you hear and you cannot even believe all that you see." It may not be the truth. How does Jesus put it across? Jesus says in *John 17:17*,

John 17:17

¹⁷Sanctify them (set them apart for a holy use) by Your truth. Your word is truth.

His Word is truth. How does the Word or the truth sanctify me? By the judgments I make on myself. You and I, we are called to meditate on His Word day and night because His Word is the truth. And then, when I apply that truth and make judgments upon my life, I am set apart. The judgments I make, I make only in the areas where God has given me authority. There has to be justice. When I make a judgment, the judgment is aimed towards justice and when justice comes, it leads to righteousness. And this is important. This is very important because, three times in Scripture, (I've said this before – when God repeats something three times, it is very important) which says, "*The just* (new translations will use the term

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'righteous' but KJV will use the word 'just') *shall live by faith.*" And *faith comes from hearing the Word.* Let's use 'Word' as 'truth' because the Word is truth. *Faith comes from hearing.* We don't get so rattled when we say, "*Faith comes from hearing,*" because we immediately think about building and pulling down and all that. Great acts. But what if I were to say, "Faith comes from the truth"? Then, suddenly, we get a little disillusioned because everybody doesn't like truth. *But faith comes from hearing and hearing from the Word of God and the Word of God is truth.* We get all excited when we read or hear pastors saying, "*You are a chosen generation; you are royal priesthood.*" Wow! We get so excited by that term 'royal' and 'priesthood'. But yet, which priesthood is the Holy Spirit talking about, through Peter? It's found in *1 Peter 2:9*. Which priesthood is He talking about? He is not talking about the Levitical priesthood because it's a failed priesthood. No, he is talking about the new priesthood that is found in *Hebrews 7:11*.

Hebrews 7:11

¹¹ Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron?

It's not Aaron, the Levitical priesthood; it is the priesthood of Melchizedek. And what is the nature of this priesthood? That is what Scripture is talking about in *verse 1-3*,

Hebrews 7:1-3

¹ For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, ² to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated (Melchi-zedek is translated as) "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace," ³ without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.

So, what is it saying? It is saying – in the New Covenant, we are called priests under that order; remember, even in that priesthood, it is the order of righteousness. The kingship, *the scepter of that Kingdom is righteousness.* The order of that priesthood is righteousness because Melchizedek means 'king of righteousness'. So whether you want to be called, a 'royal priesthood' or a 'priest' or 'royal', in the New Covenant, it is all connected with righteousness.

Now, listen carefully to the statement I'm making and I'm reading it carefully so that I don't go wrong – *God is love;* Scripture says so. God is full of grace; God is full of mercy; God is full of loving-kindness – all that is true; yet, one of the most important, if not the most important, attribute of God connected with His Kingship and His Kingdom is this – God is just and it is about His justice. God will never be unjust. Meaning, for His grace, for His love, for His mercy, for His loving-kindness, He will never bend His justice.

Like I was saying, when we look at the Cross, we see grace, we see love, we see mercy, we see loving-kindness, all that; but when God looks at the Cross, what He sees is – His justice. We see all these but what God sees is – perfect justice is met on the Cross. So, when you look at the Cross, don't just see mercy, grace and loving-kindness alone; yes, all that is there. The primary lesson of the Cross that we need to take is – the justice of God. God always judges only in truth. The problem is – Jesus said, "*I am the truth.*" Therefore, God's yardstick for judgment is Himself. When God swears, He does not swear by anything. He swears by Himself. When you and I go to a court, they may give you whichever holy book of whichever religion and you will say, "I swear to say the truth and nothing but the truth." But when God swears, He swears by Himself because *He is the truth.*

Only when God has judged in truth can there be justice. And then, what we enjoy is called 'righteousness'. Righteousness does not come on its own. We cannot be declared righteousness unless we look at the Cross, where the justice of God is met. There is no way a man can be declared righteous unless he looks at the Cross and accepts, "This is the justice of God. I am everything what God calls me and I accept Your verdict but I look unto the Cross where Your justice is met; I repent; I believe in Your Son, that He has taken my punishment. Then only, God can call me 'righteous'." It is not repeating of words; it's about believing in the justice of God. That's why Scripture says, "If a man believes in his heart, the justice of God..." That's why Jesus says, "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness...*" That's why Jesus said, "*Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness...*" And all the other things, basically, peace and joy, all will be added. We have to

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seek the righteousness of God. The question is: how can I seek the righteousness of God unless I seek His truth? Therefore, God says, *“Meditate upon My Word...”* Or, in the Old Covenant, He will say, *“Meditate upon My law day and night. Meditate upon it because My Word is truth.”*

In *Psalms 119*, this is how David will put it across. The Psalmist David will say this in *Psalms 119:11-13*,

Psalms 119:11-13

¹¹Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You. (How do we not sin against God? By hiding His truth in our hearts because we sin against truth) ***¹²Blessed are You, O LORD! Teach me Your statutes.*** ***¹³With my lips I have declared all the judgments of Your mouth.***

Do we declare His judgments? First, he meditates upon His law, upon His Word and then, he proclaims the judgments according to that truth. You cannot proclaim judgments unless you have learnt the Law. Even if a judge has to proclaim a judgment, he has to, first, learn the Law. Therefore, even as we judge ourselves and make judgments, we live, also, conscious of this one fact – ultimately, God alone is just. And there is a Day set called the ‘Day of Judgment’ where all wrongs will be set right; justice will be upheld and that Day onwards, righteousness will flow like a river. This is because, if you are going after justice in this life, we are going to be miserable. All we can do is seek righteousness and we can see to it that we uphold justice in our own lives.

Scripture says in *Romans 1:17*,

Romans 1:17

¹⁷For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

The righteousness of God is revealed; only the just can live by faith. It also means, when it says, ‘*from faith to faith*’, it also means – in this fallen world, we live confidently, knowing that, one day, the justice of God will be revealed. We can only live by faith; we cannot live by sight. In sight, I want justice now. “Lord, I have been wronged! I want justice now!” God says, “No, you live by faith to faith, knowing, one day, the justice of God will be revealed.”

Again, coming back, every one of us, adults sitting here, have an area that he or she is responsible. Now, we are coming to justice and righteousness. It automatically brings us to judgment because we have to make judgments. What God is doing here is – He is putting us as interns in His Kingdom now, training us to make judgments in truth, in righteousness. But we have to be careful to judge only that area and not those we have not been given authority over. The examples are given, both, in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. We have to be very careful because of what will happen in eternity.

In the Old Testament, the example is given by Moses in *Deuteronomy 1:12-16*,

Deuteronomy 1:12-16

¹²How can I alone bear your problems and your burdens and your complaints? (He says, “There are two million people are here. You’ve got too many problems. I can’t handle all these.”) ***¹³Choose wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men from among your tribes*** (those who know the Law of God. The Law of God has been given), ***and I will make them heads over you.*** (And how is it done?) ***¹⁴And you answered me and said, ‘The thing which you have told us to do is good.’*** ***¹⁵So I took the heads of your tribes, wise and knowledgeable men, and made them heads over you, leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, leaders of tens, and officers for your tribes.*** ***¹⁶“Then I commanded your judges at that time, saying, ‘Hear the cases between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the stranger who is with him.***

We’ve looked at this part on Sunday but *verse 15* is what you need to look at. Those who have been given charge over ten, only judged within that area. He didn’t judge the eleventh. He didn’t. He did not have authority. He may have an opinion but he kept it to himself. The one who had authority over the fifty, judged only those fifty. The one who had authority over the hundred, judged only the hundred. The one who had authority over the thousand, judged only those thousand. Finally, it went up and it ended with Moses. That’s exactly the way our judicial system is formed. You have Sessions Court; you have this court; you have the High Court; and finally, you end up with the Supreme Court. And in the Supreme Court, you finally

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end up with the full bench and there, it stops. Area is defined. There and in the New Covenant too. In the New Covenant, you see this in *Romans*, where they say in *Romans 14*,

Romans 14:1-4

¹ Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.² For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables.³ Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. ⁴ Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

Again, demarcation is given – don't judge where you have no area or authority. Two – don't make judgments about disputable things, where things are not clear. It is because a lot of things are not very clear in life because, as culture changes, new things which were never ever there in history, comes in. So, you can only go by principle. "Is it right to watch TV?" TV wasn't there when the Bible was written. If you are looking for 'TV' in the Bible, you will never find it; but the principle may be there – *do not put an evil thing before your eye*. So, you have to decide whether the TV is evil or not. The TV is not evil; the TV is neutral; the programs may be good or bad. Disputable things.

Romans 14:10-11

¹⁰ But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. ¹¹ For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God."

What does it mean? We, immediately, take it as salvation but that's not what it is saying. "Every tongue and every knee will bow, one day, and accept Your judgments are right and are true." So, when it comes to judgments, principles are set. These are very important principles because, do you remember the Song of Moses which is sung in Heaven? There is only one. It is called 'The Song of Moses' on earth and in Heaven, it is called 'The Song of Moses and of the Lamb'. What is that song? Why is Moses' song sung in Heaven? It is because of the nature of the song in *Revelation 15:1-3*,

Revelation 15:1-3

¹ Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete. (When the wrath of God, that is, the judgment of God is complete, suddenly, there is a song) ² And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. ³ They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways..."

When do they say it? When judgment is over. That's when they understand, "You are just, absolutely." Till then, they are crying, "How long, Lord?" Basically, saying, "Lord, when will justice come?" But when judgment is complete, what do they sing? They sing, "*Just and true are Your ways*. You are just, absolutely just." What are they singing? When the wrath of God is complete and billions are gone; they are not saying, "Lord, have mercy. Lord, how hard-hearted You are!" They are not saying all that; they are saying, "You are absolutely just." For now, they see what they could not understand earlier. So, remember and keep this in mind. Meditate on truth day and night so that we, personally and individually, can make righteous judgments in life because it is important. I will tell you why this is important as we go further.

Remember this, what I told earlier. Everyone, every adult sitting here, has an area where you are responsible. Even if you have nobody under you, you are responsible for your life to make your judgments. Every man has to judge himself. To make correct and righteous judgments, he needs to know the truth and God's Word is truth. And examples are given in the Word of God, the examples, the doctrinal truth we learn from the Word of God.

In the *Letter to the Church in Ephesus*, first, it talks about spiritual blessings, our position in Christ, how we are made alive in Christ, the five-fold ministry and their purposes; and then, about life in the Kingdom. After that, the Holy Spirit, through Apostle Paul, comes to the government of the Kingdom. He comes to government. Government has got to do with ruling or judging. Judging and ruling and the territory are marked out carefully. You cannot have a judge without telling him what his territory is. The government doesn't just appoint a judge. He also appoints him into a particular place and defines his

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boundaries. So, you will see how it is demarcated in the Bible. Get the principles. First, we see it in *Ephesians 5:22*, the basic unit.

Ephesians 5:22

²² ***Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.***

So, what is he saying? The home is the first area of judgment and it is given to the husband. The second area is the home, when you have children.

Ephesians 6:1

¹ ***Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.***

So, judgment is given to the parents, over their children and not to the children next door. We don't make judgments about the children next door. Let them be whatever they want. Pray for them; don't make judgments. Husband is given only authority over his wife; not his neighbor's wife. Let her dress however she wants; let her say whatever she wants to her husband; it's none of your business.

Ephesians 6:5

⁵ ***Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters...***

Judgment, ruling, power and authority are only given to the masters; to the employers. They are judges at the workplace; not to someone else's employees or someone else's employers. So, it applies to us. The world may not accept it but it applies to us.

When it comes to the Church,

Hebrews 13:7

⁷ ***Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.***

Hebrews 13:17

¹⁷ ***Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.***

When it comes to the Church, God says, "The shepherd judges his Church. He gives counsel to those who seek. He judges only his Church. He does not judge another man's Church. He does not and he judges only in the areas connected with the Church and what affects the Church; he does not judge what you do in your office. It's none of his business." If somebody comes and says, "You know what? This is what Raj did in Google." I'll say, "Go and tell his manager. Why are you telling me? What has that got to do with me? He did not give me authority over Raj's office. There is somebody demarcated and appointed for that. It is not my business. My business is only connected with the Church." When you have an issue in your home, I don't judge your home, unless you come to me for counsel. Even then, I give you counsel; I don't judge you. It's only connected with the Church; it's very clear; demarcation is clear.

When it comes to the civil government, again, there is an order in which it is given. *Romans 13:1* will say,

Romans 13:1

¹ ***Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.***

We don't see them as appointed by God; we see them as appointed by people. God says, "No, it is appointed by God." It doesn't matter who wins the next election on November 8th in the US; ultimately, it is appointed by God.

So, ruling an area is clearly demarcated. Almost all problems in a home, in a Church, in an office and finally, in the society, nation, arise because someone wanted to judge in an area that has not been given to him or her; or the miscarriage of justice in the area given to him or her. This is the reason all problems arise. Either somebody is judging an area that he is

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not given or there is a miscarriage of justice in the area that he is given. That is why the entire topic about judging or ruling begins with *Ephesians 5:21*, the government; how a government in a home, in a Church, in a business, in this country – it begins with *Ephesians 5:21* saying,

Ephesians 5:21

²¹ submitting to one another in the fear of God.

Ultimately knowing that all authority is delegated and final authority only rests with God, who has given it to Jesus; that it is His justice we are called to uphold; not the husband's particular brand of justice, the parents' particular brand of justice, the employer's particular brand of justice or even the government's particular brand of justice; it is God's. And *Ephesians 5:21* has a deeper meaning. If we look at *verse 21 and 22* together, we understand the principle of God's government. *Verse 22* will say,

Ephesians 5:22

²² Wives, submit to your own husbands (in all things), as to the Lord.

What does it mean? Listen carefully, brothers and sisters, especially those who are married and those who are planning to get married. If you want to be a eunuch, praise God. It doesn't apply to you. But to the others, listen. The wife should submit to her husband because it is a part of God's government and the husband (this is a principle) knowing that the final authority lies with him, when his wife is submitting to that, is actually freed, by her very submission, to seek her counsel and submit to her counsel. Did you get it? When a wife, understanding this principle, submits to her husband in all things and the husband realizes that, "I am the final authority and she is submitting to me," now, he is able to submit, seek her counsel and listen to her counsel. That's what it means,

Ephesians 5:21

²¹ submitting to one another...

It's easy for the husband to seek the counsel of a wife who submits. But on the other hand, when a wife does not submit to his authority, even if her counsel is purely from Heaven, he won't listen. This is the principle that God is putting over there. He says, "That is how it works." This can be taken and applied at every level. When a follower has submitted to the authority or the rule of a leader, then the leader is actually freed to seek the counsel of the follower in making a decision. This is true of a husband, true of parents, true of pastors and true of civil leaders. I am sure if Joseph had continued to grow up in his house and if Jacob had to ask for counsel, he would have asked Joseph, "What do you think about this?" Why? Because he knew Joseph submits to him. Therefore, he can seek his counsel. He cannot ask Reuben; he cannot ask Simeon; he cannot ask Levi because he said, "*You have made me a stench in the nostrils of the people.*" And everything that he heard about them was an evil report. Understand. That's how the principle works; that is how the Kingdom of God functions on earth.

I could give you personal examples because years ago, I was caught in a very strange situation. This was fifteen years back. I was working in this institution. It was basically to work in an underground Church but I was working in this private institution as well. There were two bosses above me – one was the principal; the other was the vice-principal. The principal is Buddhist; the vice-principal is Christian, undercover. The principal, ten years earlier, had sat in my class as an intern teacher and I had taught him. Thirteen years later, the situation has been reversed where he is my boss and I am not his. But I understood very clearly the order of God's Kingdom. I have said this before – when I entered his office, I never sat down unless he told me to sit down because I knew he was my boss; because chairs have importance. More than sitting, it also defines something else. When you enter into the office of your boss, you don't just pull a chair and sit down. You sit down only if he tells you to sit down. It's simply because you are respecting authority.

In all those years I worked there, I never sat down unless he told me to. He used to call me 'sir' out of respect because I was once his sir and I always used to call him 'sir'. But you know, because the Principal understood the way I functioned, the funny part is that – I am the newest lecturer in the college because I joined last; all are before me though I am older; yet, if I just pass his door, he will call me, ask me to sit down and ask me for counsel, "How do I do this?" I never offered my opinion unless he asked because that is how it works.

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On the other hand, I go to the vice-principal's office. It's even more interesting. He calls me 'sir' and I call him 'sir' and he says, "Sir, sit down." He asks for counsel. Sunday, it is reverse. Sunday, he comes to my Church; I am his boss; he is not my boss. He listens, now, to everything that I preach and he does in the Church what I tell him to do. You may be caught in a similar situation. You need to understand – never cross boundaries. When you cross boundaries and you become very familiar with the authority, you start actually having contempt for law. A police officer may come, sit here, get saved and be part of the Church. But when he goes outside and when we are outside, he is over us and not we over him. That's how it works.

It is only when this principle works, then the leader can receive counsel from those who have been placed under him. If the other doesn't matter, it will not work, they will not receive counsel. If only we keep learning the principles of the Kingdom of God and keep repenting and changing by applying, what we are actually doing in our own lives is upholding the justice of God in our lives and establishing His righteousness in our lives.

We need to be very careful about what we understand; it has to be from Scripture and Scripture alone. It is absolutely important that we uphold justice and the judgements of God. Why? It is because this is what God tells in the letter of Thessalonians. He says, *test all things*, everything, test it. Don't take it by just hearing. See if it is upheld by the truth of God, hold fast what is good...

Thessalonians 5:21

²¹ Test all things; hold fast what is good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil. ²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That at the coming of Jesus Christ you have applied the principles of the Word of God, which is truth, you upheld justice in your life. You have been declared just, not just in believing but progressively and at the time of His coming you are declared blameless.

Why is this important? Now you may not realise that this is important but in eternity you will realise that this is the thing that matters the most. Look at what Paul says,

1 Corinthians 6:2-3

² Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? ³ Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?

What does that mean? God says, "There is a near future that is coming where a set of people are going to judge this world and judge angels." And it is foreseen by John, the Apostle. What does he see in *Revelation 20*?

Revelation 20:4

⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them.

Who sat on them? The Father has handed it all the judgement over to Jesus, and Jesus hands all judgement in the hands of the overcoming saints. The question is – can the Son give judgement to those who did not hunger and thirst after righteousness while they were on earth? Can God hand over judgement into the hands of people who did not uphold the justice of God in their own lives? For, on what basis do you judge? Everybody wants to be kings and rulers, but the question is, God says, "That is what I am putting you through; you are on training. Do we uphold justice of God in our own lives? That is why Scripture says, *"The justice shall live by faith."* That is why God will always uphold His justice; He will never bend His justice.

And when we think about justice, please remember, even when we think about justice, we think about punishment. Right? We think about courts, crime and punishment. That is a very narrow definition of justice, because justice is as much positive as it is negative. If someone does something, which deserves honour or reward, and yet doesn't get it, it is injustice. And if someone doesn't get punished for transgression, but gets away without repentance or restitution, that also is injustice. Are you getting the picture? Both are injustice; when somebody does something good and is rewarded, you will say, "Oh! He is

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very justice.” When somebody does something very bad and gets away with it, you will say, “He is very unjust.” Both are connected with justice.

So the judgements of God are two-fold. To those who are saved, justice is in the form of rewards, it is not in terms of punishment, they may be lost there, but you will get rewards. Or you may get no rewards, you may just come through the fire with salvation alone.

Revelation 22:12

¹² ***“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.***

That is the justice of God. You will say, “Lord, I am upholding justice, nobody appreciates me, nobody understands me, but I am standing here all alone.” God says, “Don’t worry, I am coming quickly. There is a day when justice will happen in your life, where I will reward you.” In the same token, for those who are not saved, who rejected the salvation of Jesus Christ, there is again another judgement where the degree of punishment is decided to the rebellious. It is not the same. Like I said on Sunday, it will be on a different level. Bible, itself, proves it. Both are part of God’s justice system. Understand justice. Understand why it is so important for us now and then.

Let’s look at the cry of most believers, not unbelievers but believers. The cry of most believers is, “Lord, how can I please You?” Much of our activities are connected with pleasing God. “Lord, I love You so much. I am so grateful to You for saving me and now I want to please You.” And some people even come on a Wednesday to please God (which is good, as long as God is pleased with you). We know from *Hebrews 11:6* Scripture says,

Hebrews 11:6

⁶ ***But without faith it is impossible to please Him,***

And Scripture also says – *the just shall live by faith*. Let me reverse Scripture a little. Not change it, but reverse it and prove it from Scripture. That is – *if the just shall live by faith*, that also means that those who walk by faith will live justly. Remember, this was the cry of the Old Testament and the New Testament saints - “Lord, how do I please You?” Listen to Micah,

Micah 6:7-8

⁷ ***Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?*** (This is the cry, “Lord, what should I do? What do You want from me? I want to please You. What do You want? 10,000 rams? Oh! You are not satisfied with rams? May like Abraham I will give You my first born. Will that please You?”) ⁸ ***He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?***

This is a rhetorical question which God Himself is answering. What does the Lord require? Three things – first thing is - to do justly. He says, “The first thing I require of you, the most important thing is to be just.” The most important thing in this faith life is to do justly. The first responsibility of every person, especially if you are in a position of authority, is to do justly; whether you are a single parent, or a king. Single parent, even if you have only one child under you, what does God require of you? To do justly. Or if you are an employer with one employee, what does God require of you? To do justly. If you are a king with a nation under you, what does God require of you? To do justly. And therefore it is very wrong to jump to conclusions and administer justice, before we have examined all the facts and truly arrived at the conclusion of what is true or what is the truth.

Suspicion is not a basis for justice. Accusation is not a basis for justice. Truth alone is the basis of justice or a verdict or punishment. The greatest perversion we see in this world and also among believers is in the perversion of justice. I will give you little examples as to how we can go wrong, especially in this day and age, more than in any other age. Let’s say you are missing money from your wallet and you suspect that your child took it. It is not just to punish the child unless you are absolutely sure that he took it. Suppose you punished the child and later your wife comes and says, “I took hundred rupees from your wallet,” you will realise that you have judged based on suspicion rather than on truth.

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To do justly, that is God's top priority. Parents have to be just.

Ephesians 6:4

⁴And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

Now it is addressed to the authority. Don't provoke your children to wrath, meaning be just. If you are unjust, they will fight you back, ultimately; they will rebel. Deep inside they too are crying out for justice. You cannot punish one child for one thing and let the other go for the same crime. (We will look at it in more detail in another message, about crime and punishment; how rules have to be written down that you cannot punish somebody for a rule which is not there).

Adam and Eve must have done many things in the Garden which could have been wrong, but it is not considered sin because there is only one Law – *don't eat from that tree*. Where there is no Law, there is no sin. Understand that. So we have to be very careful as parents, that we clearly tell the children as to what is acceptable and what is not acceptable and don't punish them for something which you never told them. That is why everything is framed in the Word of God and everything is framed in a Nation, in the Constitution and in the Law books and in every company. Why? So that you know which way to turn and which way not to turn.

Parents have to be just. Employers have to be just.

Ephesians 6:9

⁹And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

You masters, be very careful when you are trying to be unjust and threaten and coax your employees, remember that you also have a Master above you and He is not a respecter of persons. So be just. Servants of God or authorities have to be just,

Matthew 24:48-51

⁴⁸But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' (therefore justice can be perverted) ⁴⁹and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, ⁵⁰the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, ⁵¹and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

So God says that everyone who has authority needs to ask help to be just. And to be just you need to know truth. And unless you have absolute truth, don't take decisions. Remember, that is why Solomon is famous for his judgements. Remember the two ladies with that one child who was alive. He had to make a decision and he is going through the whole process to get to the truth because he can only make a decision based on truth. And what does *Micah 6:8* say? *To do justly*, and the second thing is *to love mercy*. Why? It is because this is intimately connected with the first one – *to do justly*. We usually see mercy from a very narrow frame. Mercy has two sides. One – I am guilty, I acknowledge my guilt and I cry out to the judge, in this case Jesus Christ, for mercy and the Judge shows mercy. I am a sinner, I acknowledged my sin and I cry out for mercy, He shows mercy. The other side of mercy is not believing or passing a sentence because you don't have the whole truth. That is also mercy.

I am a judge, evidence is produced, but the evidence is not proving anything concrete, therefore I have to err on the side of truth. That is mercy, saying, "No, I have to pardon." The judge can go only by what is presented in the court, not by words, not by opinion, not by a gut feeling. No. Even if it is a Spirit-filled judge sitting in a court and he feels the conviction of the Holy Spirit saying, "He is guilty," I still have to go by evidence. That is how even the Bible puts it across. Remember the triangle? The Spirit of God – the Word of God – the Person of Jesus Christ. When these three come together you hit the truth. Otherwise you are still not truth. Even if one side of the triangle is missing it is still not true.

Believers make all these gut-feeling judgements. "I have this gut-feeling that he is at fault." Who told you? That is where mercy comes; *to do justly and to love mercy*. This is what God requires. We often err on both counts of mercy. The Pharisees were quick to judge without knowing the truth and they were very reluctant to show mercy for those who were

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penitent. If somebody was repentant they didn't want to show any mercy, but they were very quick to judge where they did not know the truth. By both we fail to be just.

So as a Pastor, when couples come to me, usually I try to get them both because husband will say one thing and when I talk to the wife she will say another thing. But I need to truth and the only way I can possibly get the truth is to get them to sit together and talk and contradict each other, "No, I never said that." "No, you said that." I will be like, "Okay, you fight it out, I am listening." It is because when you fight it out, the truth comes out. Are you getting the picture? That is what Micah says, this is what he says, "Lord, first thing let me not even by mistake pervert Your justice. And if I don't know the whole truth I will leave it at that, I will choose to show mercy." And you will think that the judge is going with the accused. The judge says, "Yes, because I don't have the truth. He is just an accused."

If you know the nature of Law, a person is considered innocent until he is proved guilty. That is how the Law functions. Until he is proved that he is guilty in the court, the onus is not on the one who is accused to prove himself innocent, but the onus is upon the State to prove that he is guilty. He doesn't have to prove that he is innocent, the State has to prove that he is guilty. Until then, in the eyes of the Law, he is innocent. The problem is that we listen to the media and he is already guilty.

That is where God says, "My people are different. They will base things only on truth and nothing but the truth." So Jesus says, "I will not judge by what I see, or what I hear, but only in righteousness; on truth." So Micah says, "First thing is to do justly. Second thing is to love mercy and thirdly is to walk humbly with our God." This is all connected with God's justice, don't separate them. In this verse all three are connected with justice. Why walk humbly? It is because we are not to think of ourselves more highly than those whom we may have to judge. There is only one perfect Judge; that is Jesus Christ. No other judge is perfect.

Paul will put across this in *Philippians 2:3*,

Philippians 2:3

³Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

The judge is sitting there in that chair, but that doesn't mean that in eternity he is better than the accused. Or maybe even in the court he may not be better than the accused, in the eyes of God. So he has to be very, very careful that he walks humbly before God. We do not pre-judge in our minds, we do not judge without facts, often (listen careful, this is very subtle English) we may have evidence but have no proof. You must be thinking, "I thought evidence and proof are the same." No, they are not. Let me explain, because I have encountered those situations so many times in my life. Let me give you an example. First let us define them, because we think evidence and proof are the same. Let me define them, evidence is something which shows that something exists or maybe true. Proof is the evidence or argument establishing a truth.

Often we may have evidence but not proof, so we go ahead and pronounce guilt without knowing whether the individual is guilty or not. The premise of Law is that a person is innocent until proven guilty. Let me give you a very simple example which even a child can understand. Imagine, an empty cookie jar and a small child sitting with crumbs all over his body. We take it as evidence that the jar had cookies and the baby ate it. But the fact is that we have no proof. We have no proof that in the first place there were cookies in the jar or that the baby ate it. What if the elder brother ate it and took the crumbs and put them on the baby? Do you have proof? But we have already judged the baby based on evidence, not on proof.

When Scripture says – *in the mouth of two or three witnesses*, it only means the accusation has to be investigated, but it is still not proof. Jesus was condemned through the mouth of two witnesses and they were both false. Naboth was stoned to death by the mouth of more than two witnesses, all were false. Even if there are two or three witnesses, it still doesn't mean that it is the proof. That is why the system spends so much money on establishing truth. Forensic Science and all are on that. But today we are living in a time when evidence can be manipulated into anything. You name it, anything can be manipulated in forensic science, even your finger prints can be manipulated. They know how to do it. They will give you a pen, you hold the pen and they will take the pen back and put your finger prints in the crime scene, if you pay them enough. They can make you guilty if you are innocent and they can make the guilty innocent. So the only One who knows the truth is God and God alone.

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Nothing that is produced in this 21st century can be trusted; they can change everything. Understand that. So Scripture enjoins us that the sceptre of His Kingdom is righteousness. Righteousness happens only because justice is upheld and justice happens only when truth stands up. And you know what? Finally we understand that truth can stand up only in my and my street alone. I cannot make truth stand up in another person's life. I can only ultimately judge myself, I cannot even judge my wife or my children or anybody. That is Isaiah's lament,

Isaiah 59:14

¹⁴ Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.

When truth falls in the street, equity or impartiality also goes. It doesn't even enter and everything is perverted. That is why Jesus says, what will He do when the Holy Spirit comes? *When the Holy Spirit comes He will lead you to all truth.* He will lead you and guide you into all truth. He will only guide you to the truth, but it depends upon how you apply the truth. Jesus will say,

John 8:32

³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

This word 'know' is a very intimate verb. *Adam knew his wife and she conceived.* It is not intellectual; if Adam knew he had a wife she would have never conceived. He knew he had a wife, but that is not what brought forth the conception, it is the oneness. He says, "When you know the truth, meaning you have become one with the truth; when truth has stood up in your life you are free." Only the truth can set you free. Why? Why is it free? It is because justice is upheld, righteousness flows and the Kingdom of God is established in your life.

So what is our response to justice? What do you do when you feel that you have been treated unjustly? Usually in every structure, there is a mechanism to address injustice, especially in this age. If you want to go that way, go prayerfully and with humility. But there is also another Scripture.

Romans 12:19

¹⁹ Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

Avenge and vengeance are words that deal with justice. They deal with the way our mind wants to respond to injustice. Be careful, God says. Avenge is our response to authority when justice has not been performed. We see it as injustice and we want to avenge it and most movies are made on that. And people love it. That is why you see the weapons growing; in the old days it was a small knife, now we have big knives and swords; small guns to bug bazookas. All are avenging because the system has failed. Terrorists are birthed on that premise. Now when this happens, our reaction is not against the ruling, it is against the Ruler.

Scripture says – *every authority is established by God.* It is not against the ruling. Avenging is against the Ruler. God says, "Be careful." Authority will stand by authority. That is the nature of authority. Leave it to God to straighten out injustice.

You look at parallels in history. A navy commander is in a battlefield, the commanding officer gives an order, the second-in-command knows that it is wrong so he disobeys the order and brings victory. But when he comes back with victory he is not given a medal, he is court-martialed. Why? It is because he broke the chain of command. The authority sees it differently. The people, newspapers, everybody will say, "Give him the congress medal of honor, give him everything." But the system sees it differently, "You broke the chain of command." I hope you are getting what I am trying to say. You can go for redressal when you have injustice, but never do it at the cost of demeaning the authority who passed the sentence.

A very common example for everybody – a teacher disciplines your child, your child comes home and complains. You don't agree with the teacher. What do you do? Mothers, usually, will react emotionally, go back the next day to school and fight with the teacher. I will tell you what happened to me. Once the zonka teacher (the Bhutanese language teacher) when I was in class five whipped me. They had a wooden stick with leather thongs and they'd hit you on the wrist. So the teacher whipped me on my wrist. It didn't matter to him even though I was the principal's son. I don't know what his reason was,

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but even though I don't understand that language he whipped me. When I came back home, my mom saw the wells and she was furious (you know mothers).

Evening when my father came back from the school she told my father, "That teacher whipped your son." What do you think my father did? (You know a little bit about my father by now) what do you think he did? He whipped me once again. It is because authority will stand with authority. My mother thought that my father would go and call the teacher to the office and shout at him. He didn't do any of that. He said, "No, I will not question him as to why he whipped you. My son must have done something wrong and now I will punish him as a father, at home. Why were you disrespectful to authority in the class?"

Instead, what do we teach our children? "Fight authority! I will fight for you!" No. We must not do that. We are teaching our children something wrong. For authority stands with authority. Understand, that is how the Kingdom works. We have to be very, very careful how we deal with these things, because all of us are human. Not one of us know what justice is, therefore none of us will execute perfect justice. That is why the rule book was established. That is why we go by the Book (Bible). Constitution is established to governing authorities and they have to go by it. But ultimately everything has to be governed by this (Bible). That is why that important verse in *Psalms 138:2* which I preached on months back.

Psalms 138:2

² I will worship toward Your holy temple, and praise Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth; for You have magnified Your word above all Your name.

God says, "This is My rule Book, when I uphold this (Word of God) I uphold justice. When I uphold justice righteousness flows. I will not bend anything that mars Your justice. You will know one day that I am just." In *John 12:46-48* this is what Jesus says,

John 12:46-48

⁴⁶ I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. ⁴⁷ And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. (He says, "I haven't come to judge now.") ⁴⁸ He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.

Can you understand? This (Bible) is the Law Book by which God will judge us. We have been given an incredible opportunity to know the Law and judge ourselves with this (Bible) before He judges us with it. Think about that. This (Bible) is God's Law Book, this is the truth; on this we mediate day and night and "Your judgement, O Lord, I will speak." It is because on this (Bible) alone justice will come and righteousness will be declared. Vengeance on the other hand is anarchy. It is every man deciding that I will take justice in my hands and try to enforce it outside of proper authority. That is what you see in the Book of Judges. The last judge is gone; after Samson is dead there is no other judge now. What does Scripture record?

Judges 17:6

⁶ In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

The rule book was there but the enforcer of the rule book was not there. What do you see in the Old Covenant? Everybody had the rule book, but when the judge or the king is gone they did whatever they wanted. God says, "The New Covenant people are different people, they are born of the Spirit, the Kingdom of God is within you. Even if somebody is not watching you, you walk under the Law. You fulfil the Law." That is the difference. You don't need an enforcer. If you need an enforcer all the time; if you are walking in a company and if you need a manager for you to work, that means that you are under the Law. If you need somebody to give order in your life at home that means you are under the Law. If you need the Pastor to constantly monitor you to keep order in the church, that means you are under the Law. God says, "No, you are not under the Law." These people were under the Law.

The next 17 to 21 chapters are total anarchy; absolute anarchy. You know about the Levite, you know about the concubine. Before you know it the concubine is cut into pieces and sent into every tribe, before you know it everybody is fighting Benjamin. Benjamin is destroyed, only few men are left and they had to take unbelieving girls for them. What a mess! Why?

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It is because everyone thought, "I shall do it the way I think justice should be implemented." And how does the Book of Judges end?

Judges 21:25

²⁵ In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

This is true of an individual, a home or a nation. That is why the Law was given through Moses to the nation of Israel so that there would be order in the home of Israel, in the stounds of Israel and ultimately in the nation of Israel there would be Law and order. When you have Law, you have order. Law and order go together. But Law and order is only connected with outside behaviour. The Law was given through Moses so that there would be order in the nation of Israel. But what came through Jesus Christ was not Law, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. What is that? The righteousness that came through the Law only affected the outside and not the inside. By that nobody was counted right before God. To be counted right before God truth has to be found inside.

With Jesus, what came was not the nation of Israel, what came was the Kingdom of God. And Jesus declared that righteousness is the sceptre of His Kingdom. The sceptre of His Kingdom is righteousness. The order of priesthood in that Kingdom is that of Melchizedek and righteousness comes only when truth is established. And a day is coming when truth will reign in every life, righteousness will flourish and everyone will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. And everyone will one day look at and say, "You were just, absolutely just."

Understand these principles. That is why God says, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness," because we are living in a day; saddest days of modern human history to see, probably the greatest nation ever in human history just falling apart: morally, ethically breaking. It is the end of America. After these elections, it will never be the same again. What marks out this election? It is all just accusations, nothing else. The whole world holds their head in shame because that was another nation which was established by their founders, under God. Remember there were only two nations: one Israel and the other U.S.A, under God; one nation under God. And God's name is mocked every day. Accusation, accusations, accusations; the worst kind. And we are living in those days, that the Gentile nations look at that nation and put their heads down with shame, "What are they doing?"

But this is what happens when every man becomes king of his life. He does what he thinks is right. Taking it down to an individual, personal level, God says, "How do you handle truth? How do you handle judging?" *A spiritual man judges everything and then he himself is not judged.* Like I keep saying, walk through God's green channel: "Nothing to declare." We are just beginning, we have more to go in the coming weeks, because for me this is probably the most important series of messages that God is giving me in these last days. This is connected with how we finish our race.

If Paul is able to say, "*I have kept the faith,*" he is basically saying, "I have kept His truth in my life. I am absolutely clear and I know that my crown is waiting for me." It is a crown of righteousness. He said, "I have upheld justice in my life, I have been just. I am finishing as a just man. The just shall live by faith unto faith. I have finished my race. I have kept His truth, there is justice and I know that I have the crown of righteousness." He is able to finish his race like that. And we should be able to finish our race like that. Amen?

Shall we pray?

Closing prayer:

Father, this evening, we just come to You. As we continue to study about Your Kingdom; the Kingdom that is within us, spiritually and the Kingdom that is coming physically, we know Lord that the Scepter of Your Kingdom is righteousness. O Father, when truth is fallen, righteousness, justice and equity all stand far back. You came with truth and grace. Help us to seek Your righteousness each day, to seek Your truth each day. Only what You say is true, not what we see, not what we hear, not even what we feel. Help us to receive that truth and judge ourselves daily by that truth so that You can declare us righteous, and grow in that righteousness. So that one day You can give us the crown of righteousness, that one day we can be found fit by You, to judge the nations. Help us Lord, teach us Lord. Let us not fight Your Word; let us receive Your Word and meditate upon it daily, apply it daily. For those are Words of life. you brought us safely and even as we go back, reach us home safely, Lord. We put our trust in You and in You alone. For in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.