

I Shall Do A New Thing!

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Father, we just come to You. Father, we pray You speak to us. You've been faithful to us, Lord, when it came to the Word too, Lord, You have always spoken to me, Lord. I just thank You, Father. I just thank You. It's Your Word that has sustained me all these years. Your Word and Your Word alone, O God. If it hadn't been for Your Word, Father, I would not have survived; I would not have come through. So, this morning, I personally want to thank You for Your Word, Lord. Truly, Your Word is Spirit; Your Word is life; Your Word has been fire; Your Word has been everything, Father. Thank You, Lord. Even this morning, we come around Your Word and we pray that You will speak to us. Speak to us, Lord. Speak to us. The entrance of Your Word brings light. Today, some need light. I pray they will receive light. You said in Psalm 107:20, "I sent forth My Word and healed you of your diseases." There are some who need healing today. I pray, Father, that Your Word will bring healing. Your Word has set captives free. I pray, today, there will be deliverance in Your house, O God. Somebody will be set free. About You Yourself, Jesus, it is written in Isaiah 50:4 "Morning by morning, You awakened Me and You gave Me the tongue of the instructed so that I could have a Word for the weary." I pray, Father, today, Your Word will lift up somebody who is weary, somebody who is burdened, somebody who is depressed, somebody who is discouraged, Father. Your Word will lift them up. Above all, Lord, it is written, "The Word that can save you is so near. If you believe in Your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, you are saved." Your Word is salvation. I pray, Father, today, Your Word will bring forth salvation. I just, by faith, release Your Word, that You are able to minister into Thy hands. Spirit of God, come, be in control. Thank You, Lord. For in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

As a church, we stand at the threshold of a new year. New year, we stand, for us, as a Church and as individuals also. Consider this, as you belong to this Church, consider this as your beginning of a new year. So, as we stand at the beginning of a New Year and today, for the first portion, I want you to turn with me to *Isaiah 43:18-19*,

Isaiah 43:18-19

¹⁸ "Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. ¹⁹ Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

This promise was given to Israel during one of their darkest hours. Israel is in Babylon; Israel is in captivity; a set of people who had sinned against God, wandered away from God, gone into captivity; a set of people about they themselves say, "We have had no songs to sing; we have hung our harps." These were a set of people discouraged and lost. To them, God says,

¹⁸ "Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. ¹⁹ Behold, I will do a new thing...

"A thing, is such, I will make even a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." Promise of the Living God. The reliability of any promise; we all have had promises made to us by different people but the reliability of a promise depends on the person who makes it. Upon his integrity, upon his generosity, his love and above all, his capacity to do what he has promised. This is the promise of an infinite God. Everything about Him is infinite and perfect; perfect in His integrity, perfect in His generosity, perfect in His love; above all, His power is unlimited. So, this morning as God tells Israel, God tells His Church and God tells each one of you as individuals, "Wait on Him; wait for Him. The One who promised is true and He is faithful."

So, this morning on the tenth year, how are you personally? I want this word to speak to you personally; not corporately. If the past six months or one year of the Church wasn't a good year spiritually for you, then God says, "Don't worry. You didn't change. I haven't changed either. I'm still the same God; My promises are still the same – Yes and Amen." If you want God to do a new thing in your life, if you and I want; one of the primary things to do is that we need to change our focus. We have to quit looking behind and start looking ahead. Often, people are prisoners of the past. Prisoners of both past successes and failures. We don't think about being a prisoner of past successes. The problem is if you are a prisoner of past success, then God cannot do a new thing in your life. You want Him to just keep repeating the old thing. But that's not what God says. If Israel looks back into their past, there are incredible victories and incredible failures. God says, "Forget it all. Don't remember that." Because if we do it, the problem is we constrained the new thing God wants to do in our lives. We

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constrain Him. So, God says, “Forget it. Learn from it but don’t hold on to it with your flesh.” If Joshua had held on to the victories God did through Moses and the way He did it through Moses, Joshua wouldn’t have been able to go through because God did incredible things through Joshua but He never repeated one of the methods the way He did it through Moses. From the beginning, Moses lifted a rod and the red sea parted. There was no rod for Joshua to lift. He says, “Let the priests go; let them hold the ark; let them put their feet in the flooded river. Then, it will part.” From the beginning, God was the same; His power was the same; they experienced miracle after miracle but the way He did it was different. That’s why God says, “*Do not remember the former things nor consider the things of old.*” He doesn’t say, “Do not remember the terrible former things and the bad things of old.” He only says, “Don’t remember. Don’t constrain My arm.” Often, as believers, good believers, faithful believers, we also constrain God’s hands. We want God to do and we want God to do things in such a way because that is the way we have always experienced our victory but God says, “I want to do a new thing in your life.” So, God says, “Consider your past. Yes, do it. To help you; not to hurt you.” There are lessons we have to learn from our past but don’t constraint the hand of God. Fundamentals, remember, if you want God to do something in your life this year, primary, first thing – focus. You need to have a focus. I will get into it in details today. We need to have focus. Let me ask you this question: what is your focus? What is your goal? Because you and I are moving towards something. Do we have a goal? Because that’s how we will reflect on the things of the past, by depending upon your goal. One of the greatest, most successful human beings who ever walked on earth; I’m not talking about Jesus but I’m talking about Apostle Paul. This is the way he defined his life in *Philippians 3:12-15*,

Philippians 3:12-15

¹² Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. ¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind (he also says the same thing. “I’m forgetting all the things that are behind,”) and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal (He has a goal; a very clear, defined goal. He says, “I press towards the goal,”) for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

For many, many of us, our goal is not upward; it is horizontal. He says, “*I’m pressing towards the upward goal.*” My goal is upward, upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

¹⁵ Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind;

Maturity, here, in this portion, he says, “If you are matured, you will have a very clear focus and a very clear goal and the goal is upward.” We may be running our race on earth but the prize is in Heaven; it’s not on earth. If you are running a goal horizontally, then your prize is on earth; it is not in Heaven. On earth, we have only one life. Whatever other people may say, we have only one life and Scripture is very clear. At the end of it, there is an evaluation. It is called judgment. That is the day prizes are awarded. So, the question we ask ourselves individually, this day, the second Sunday of June: what is my goal? What is my focus? Because your goal and your focus will define everything in your life, including how you perceive and understand the Word that is preached. You will perceive according to your focus and your goal.

Each one has got a goal or should have a goal in your heart and a focus and you will receive everything according to that. In the Old Testament, you will see people were often consumed with one goal. What is that? Promised Land. One goal. Till today, you will see the Jews are obsessed with one goal which is on planet earth, which is a small piece of real estate called ‘Canaan’, ‘Israel’. Everything for them is connected with that land. It’s a goal. It’s a good goal but it’s still an earthly goal. In *Genesis 47:29-30*, you will see the old man Jacob is about to die and Scripture says,

Genesis 47:29-30

²⁹ When the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, “Now if I have found favor in your sight, please put your hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me. Please do not bury me in Egypt, ³⁰ but let me lie with my fathers; you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place.” And he said, “I will do as you have said.”

He says, “Please make a vow. Don’t bury me in Egypt. I lived in Egypt; I’m going to die in Egypt but I don’t want to be buried in Egypt. Even in death, I have a goal. I want to be buried in the Promised Land. Please, Promised Land.” This same son will

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honor his father's request and a great caravan will go and he will bury Jacob. When he is old, when he is about to die, he will also call all the sons of Israel. The next portion, I have given you in *chapter 50*,

Genesis 50:25

²⁵ Then Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here."

"Please! Now, I am the head here. I can't be buried in Canaan because I'm the big guy over here. So, they will embalm my body and make a small pyramid over here, over me but you guys, a day will come; God will send a savior; we will be taken out. Break down that pyramid and take my bones out of here and bury me there." I'm adding my part of fiction in here – this pyramid and all, so that you will wake up. Are you getting it? Their goal was always earthly because that's the only promise they got. Their promises were all earthly. So, their entire goal, focus, aspirations was connected with that land. And even today, you will see, every Zionist movement is connected with that land. Often, the New Covenant believers, too, can be consumed with an earthly vision and they strive towards it and therefore, messages may mean nothing to you or half the message may be lost because the messages are connected or directed towards another goal; that is the upward call of God in Christ. First thing we need to realize with everyone saved here – as soon as we were born again, our destination and citizenship both changed. As soon as you were born again and when you were born, you had a horizontal goal; that focus when you are born again your focus should have changed. *Philippians 3:20*, Paul says,

Philippians 3:20

²⁰ For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

It's changed. Citizenship has changed; focus has changed; dreams have changed; desires have changed; everything has changed because there is a change of citizenship. That's what the Bible is saying. Unless this sinks in, we will never understand what God is doing in our lives. Many believers are struggling with what God is doing in their lives and are saying, "Lord, where are You?" God says, "I'm right there." "What is happening to my life?" He said, "I'm fulfilling My goal in your life." "What is that, Lord? Why am I going through all these?" He says, "Because your goal is upward and you don't realize it." You'll say, "Lord, I've never got a promotion in my office. I've been there for ten years." God says, "Yes, I know." "Why are You not promotion me?" He says, "I am." What? No. My salary slip still says the same." He says, "No, but check in ten years, I've made you more patient, more loving, more kind. That would have happened only without that promotion. My goal is different; your goal is different. I'm working My goal in your life." You have to understand how God works. Otherwise, our focus will never ever change. Focus will never change unless we understand what the real goal in my life is.

In one evening, Rebekah's life changed. One evening, her life would never be the same again. The perspective would never be same again. How she looked at her past life experiences, everything changed. She had met a stranger at the well; she didn't even know his name. He said, "Will you give me some water?" She said, "I will give you, your men and your camels." And then, the conversation changed. She called him home; everything changed. She heard a story about a man, a man called Isaac. She understood this old man to whom she's showed hospitality had come seeking a bride for that man and he had zeroed on her. Everything changed in one night. In one evening, everything had changed in Rebekah's life. The brothers understand it. They liked it; they loved it because they are looking at it all with different eyes. They said, "This is a good match. We are all family anyways. Good, our sister has got a good match. Let's have fun. Let's have ten days party." The man said something else.

Genesis 24:57-58

⁵⁷ So they said, "We will call the young woman and ask her personally."

Eliezer says "Please! Please! Let me go. I need to go. I'm successful. So, I need to go." That's not the way we are. When we are successful in the office, we want to stay and throw a party also. Right? This is another man with another perspective. He says, "I am successful. So, let me go." We want to stay when we are successful; he wants to go when he is successful. He says, "I'm successful. Let me go." They said, "Okay, let's check with this girl. We'll call her and ask. 'Do you want to go tomorrow?' We'll call her and personally ask." They must have never taught, "O Rebekah will say, 'No, Anna, I don't want to go. Dada, mummy, of course, ten days. If possible, twenty days. I want to stay. Meaning, I'm going.'" They said, "Yes!" "Will I come back?" "No!" "I will never see you again?" "No!" "Okay, then. Thirty days." That's marriage those days.

⁵⁸ *Then they called Rebekah and said to her, “Will you go with this man?” And she said, “I will go.”*

One day! Has everything changed in one day when you got saved? Otherwise, salvation will make no sense. How would *Genesis 24* sound if Rebekah said, “Yes, I want to go but I don’t want to go now. Okay, I like the idea. I want to get married, I heard about him but I want to hang around for some more time here.” The story would never be preached. Probably, Jesus would have something to say. If the story had been like that, He would have said, “Remember Isaac’s wife.” But that’s not how it is written. Salvation will make no sense to us unless we understand the purpose of salvation, the focus of salvation, the goal of salvation. The message of the Cross will make no sense; not only will it make no sense; it will sound uncomfortable to our ears. The difficulties and the hardships of life will make no sense but once the destination is clear, everything changes. Once you and I know – I am not earth-bound; I am heaven-bound. Listen to Paul in *Philippians 3:18-19*; this is what he says,

Philippians 3:18-19

¹⁸ *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, (He’s not talking about unbelievers; he’s talking about people in the Church) and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:*

Rebekah asked, “Okay, Isaac. I like that entire house; I like all that. How far is the journey?” “Six months!” “Ah! How is the road?” “Very bad!” “How are we going?” “Camel!” “No, I’m waiting for the invention of aero planes. Then, I will come. I’m not coming on a camel for six months.” *They are the enemies of the cross of Christ.* There is a choosing, there is a destination and in-between is the cross. We want to be here and then, when we die, we want to jump across to the other side. God says, “That is a little difficult. You can but you won’t be Rebekah; you could be one of her maid servants.” They also went and they also went through the hardships but they were just accompanying her.

¹⁹ *whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.*

Just read that in the perspective of Rebekah. That’s what happens when our eyes are on the world, we start disliking the cross. If Rebekah’s heart is set on Haran, then Canaan will look like a distant land and the journey looks tedious and uninviting. Imagine the whole of Haran hears the story and she hasn’t gone, then everybody starts asking, “Why is this girl still here? Is the marriage fixed?” “Yes!” “Is she not going?” “Yes, she wants to go but she says, ‘not now’.” “Why?” “She says, “I like Haran and when I feel like it, I will go to Canaan.”” *Whose God is their belly, whose glory is in their shame.* What she’s glorifying in, all the other girls of Haran will say, “Hey, fool! What happened to you? Your future is over there. Why are you staying here? Why are you stuck to Haran?” But she’s glorying in her shame. What we see as glory in the world, what we go after, from the spiritual realm, it is seen as nakedness and as shame. We don’t realize, sometimes, Christians are glorying in their shame. If Rebekah’s heart is stuck to the family and to that city, then for Isaac, she has no passion. Rebekah was listening very carefully to Eliezer’s words. Listen to Eliezer’s word in *Genesis 24:33*,

Genesis 24:33

³³ *Food was set before him to eat, but he said, “I will not eat until I have told about my errand.”...*

Eliezer had travelled so far. He was so tired. All that said and done and now that he’s about to be fed, he says, “No, I don’t want to eat. I’m so excited. I don’t want to eat. Before I eat, I want to tell you what I have come for.”

...And he said, “Speak on.”

Let me ask you, the Holy Spirit is very excited every Sunday morning when He comes here because He wants to tell us about the Heavenly Isaac. We want to have a good time and say, “Come on, enjoy yourself, Holy Spirit! Bask in my praise; bask in my worship! Eat! Eat! Eat!” He says, “No! I don’t want to eat now. I want to see whether you are equally excited because I want to talk to you about Isaac.” He says, “I can’t eat now! I’m so excited I want to tell you about Isaac.”

Genesis 24:34-41

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³⁴ So he said, "I am Abraham's servant. ³⁵ The Lord has blessed my master greatly, and he has become great; and He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys. ³⁶ And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old; and to him he has given all that he has. ³⁷ Now my master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell; ³⁸ but you shall go to my father's house and to my family, and take a wife for my son.' ³⁹ And I said to my master, 'Perhaps the woman will not follow me.' ⁴⁰ But he said to me, 'The Lord, before whom I walk, will send His angel with you and prosper your way; and you shall take a wife for my son from my family and from my father's house. ⁴¹ You will be clear from this oath when you arrive among my family; for if they will not give her to you, then you will be released from my oath.'

She was listening to all of this. And Eliezer was consumed by his passion of getting a bride for Isaac. Remember Jesus' passion. You see the same passion with Jesus in *John 4:32-34*. Do we see about the Samaritan woman? The disciples had gone for food. They came back and He said,

John 4:32-34

³² But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." ³³ Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?" ³⁴ Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work

Do you see the excitement of Eliezer, a type of the Holy Spirit? Do you see the excitement of Jesus, a type of Old Testament Isaac? Do we have that excitement? Rebekah was listening very carefully. There is a description of Abraham, of his household and his only son and she realizes, "This man has come on a mission." What is the mission? To find a wife for Isaac. Jesus came on a mission. The Holy Spirit was sent on a mission, what is the mission? To find a wife for Jesus. That is where their excitement all is. Salvation is a process through which the wife is made but the purpose of salvation is that God's only begotten Son may have a spiritual wife. Don't think in physical terms; think in spiritual terms. That is the purpose of salvation. When she heard that, everything changed for Rebekah. From that point, it affected how she looked at her past, her present and her future. When she looked at her past, everything of her past is now defined towards one thing – "For this day, I was born; for this purpose, I was born – to be the wife of Isaac. All this, I thank you, father; I thank you, mum; I thank you for preparing me; I thank you for training me; thank you for training me but I'm going because I realize – this is the purpose of my life." Everything changed. She's not going to hold on to anything.

In one instant, on the road to Damascus, Paul's life changed; perspective changed; everything changed. Till then, he was running horizontally though he taught he was going up; he was going horizontally. Then, he met the Man from the Vertical height, everything changed. Listen to how he says that his life changed. In *Philippians 3:10-11*,

Philippians 3:10-11

¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹ if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

"Everything changed," he says. Now, he says, "There is one thing – I want to know Him. My entire life is defined by this one goal – I want to know Him." Till then, Rebekah had only heard. So, when the question was asked, "Will you go?" She said, "I will go." "Why?" "Because that's the only way I can know him." "Will you go with this man?" "Of course, I will go only with this man, because it's only this man who can take me there. This is the man who can teach me about Isaac on the way." God is asking you, "Will you go with the Holy Spirit?" He's the only One who knows Jesus. He's the only One who can release Jesus and that's the primary concern of the Holy Spirit – He's always looking for somebody, anybody who wants to know Him. And if you want to know Him and know Him intimately, He will say, "The only way you can know Me is first – you need to experience the power of My resurrection," because knowing Him will hurt your flesh and you're going to suffer in your flesh because he's all Spirit and all of God. So, you need the power of the resurrection because in the power of the soul or the power of the flesh, you can never know Him. Because in the power of the flesh, you will see – there is nothing to desire about Him. He has no beauty. That's what is written about Jesus in the power of the flesh. But when you receive the resurrection power, you know, "I want to know Him and if I have to know Him, I need to have the fellowship of His sufferings." Is that not our marriage vows – better or worse; richer or poorer; in sickness and in health? But we have changed. We have changed one side off. "I'm going to be with you only when I'm rich; you're rich, when you are healthy and when you are not sick. And if you fall sick, I'm going to put you in the hospital use your card to pay for it." That's not

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what the Bible talks about. The fellowship of His sufferings and in the process, I want to be conformed His death. What is His death? The death He lived everyday of His life in the flesh – fighting sin and not giving into sin. He says, “That’s the only way you will know Me better and better.” Not the death on the cross, but the other death which He cried out and prayed for in *Hebrews 5* that God would save Him from that.

Hebrews 5:7

⁷ who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear

“That is the death I want to express, O God! When I experience that death, I will know You. I will know You better, better and better.” He says, “If by any means after that, I can attain the resurrection from the dead and be part of the bride.” He says, “Everything changed in one day.”

The question is to the Church: what drives you? Everybody is driven by something. Israel was driven by the promise of the Promised Land. What drives the young and old sitting here? Some are driven by guilt. Read Joseph Conrad, if you know who he is. Or if you remember the old ancient days, when we were wicked in the flesh and we saw all those movies, see that Amitabh Bachan’s movie called ‘Kaala Pattar’. It’s all driven by guilt. You have done something wrong. Now, you want to make good. You are driven by your guilt. You’re doing only good. Why are you doing good? To make amends for the bad you did. Driven by guilt. God doesn’t want His children to be driven by guilt. There’s no condemnation. He says, “Don’t let your guilt, your past failures move you to the future or your present.” He says, “No. Start afresh. I have removed it. It doesn’t even exist. Don’t let it be the power and the force behind you doing good.” He says, “No.” A lot of people in the world do that. We are not driven by guilt. Some are driven by fear. Ask Jacob. Twenty years of his life, he was driven solely by fear. Some are driven by anger and hatred. Ask Ahithophel. “What makes you serve in David’s court? Why are you so smart, so kind?” He says, “You don’t know my heart. I’m waiting for one day when I can get him. Everything, my entire being, if you know, inside is one goal – I want to nail this man. That’s the only goal. Bring him down.” Driven. Some are driven by money. Ask mister Balaam. Driven. Driving force. “Ministry, prophecy, anointing, everything is there, but what drives you?” “Money.” Some are driven by ambition. Ask Absalom. What drives you? Absalom will say, “Ambition.” People are driven by success, fame, pleasure. Some children are driven by parents. Some husbands and wives are driven by their spouses. These are all real things. What drives you? What moves you? So, this Sunday, go back home, and sit with God alone and ask God, “Show me. What actually motivates me? What drives me?” What is the driving force in my life? What is my goal? What is my purpose? Like I said, everything in life centers around that.

Everybody, almost everybody. Humanity can be divided into three groups. One of these three levels – the first level I would like to put is that the whole lot of humanity lives on survival mode. It’s called survival mode. This is the lowest you can be. They just try to get along with life. They are not really living; they just exist. They don’t have any goals or passions in life. That doesn’t mean they are bad at their work. They’re good at their work, but they have no goals. They live to eat and eat to live. That is their motto in one circle – living to eat, eating to live. The majority is consumed by this life. It is to them Jesus looks with compassion. He looks with compassion at the majority, at the bulk and says in *Matthew 6:31-33*,

Matthew 6:31-33

³¹ “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Defining the lowest level. You could be a beggar on the road, or you could be a professional in the IT company. What do you live for? This! Weekend. Thank God, it is Friday. Go shopping. Go to a restaurant and eat. Have a blast. Monday, go back to work and this is your life. A circle. It’s a simple circle – what to eat, what to drink and what to wear, and you work for that. In the process, you get married. You have children, but the primary focus hasn’t changed. This is the purpose for which you are living. And then, you instill that also into your children. “Study well, work well, get a good job and do what? Eat, drink and wear. Go back into my cycle.” God says, sadly, He’s telling them and says, “That should not be your focus.” Let this not be. Like I said, it’s got nothing to do with poor people; the rich and the poor and the whole lot of people live at this level. When they are given a goal, they get excited. But when they see the journey it takes to reach that goal, they get tired. And they give up. They start living in the fantasy world. After five or ten years in your company, finally, you realize, “I have

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reached where I can reach and I am not going any further.” You start living in the fantasy world. Every second statement in their life is ‘if only’. ‘If only’ it’s in the past. The reason – you didn’t like the journey to reach your goal. And then, you start looking at the past with tinted glasses. In *Numbers 14:2-3*, listen to this set of people.

Numbers 14:2-3

² And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, “If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! ³ Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?”

What? If only. That’s how some of you think, “If only I was stuck in that old Church. This man never leaves me alone. But if I don’t come, his wife will call me up. If only. I was so comfortable in that old life. The message was fifteen minutes. Neither did I understand what he was speaking, nor did he understand what he was saying. I never had to worship because the songs always put me to sleep. It was such a comfortable life. Church was like vacation. Now I came here, I wish. If only.” “Why has God brought us to this land? If only.” To them, God says, “Forget the past.” He tells, through Paul, “Forget the past.” Because a lot of people keep saying, “If only I had studied better,” “If only I had married her instead of her,” “If only.” God is not mad at them. God is not mad at us. He says, “Forget the past. I’m giving you an opportunity to start all over again. Even in captivity, I want to do a new thing. Don’t live at this level – what to eat, what to drink, what to wear. Don’t even live on the earthly dream.”

In *Acts 1:6*, you will see. After everything, after the resurrection also, even when He is about to go also, they come and say,

Acts 1:6

⁶ Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”

“Okay, You died. Thank You, Lord. Thank You very much, Lord. We are really grateful. We are even more grateful You rose again. Otherwise, we would have nothing to say. Now that You have risen again and You have shown us, we have one question: Is the Kingdom coming?” People are like that in the Church and God says, “I love you. I understand you, but that’s not your goal.” Hallelujah! We hear about the cross. On Good Friday service, we go. We kiss the cross and after everything and after that, we’ll say, “Will I get my promotion?” God says, “I’ve given you another goal that should define your life. I told you a goal – *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.* And I gave you another instruction – *wait in Jerusalem.*” In *Acts 1:8*, He says,

Acts 1:8

⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

“And then, what will you be? You will start living My life.” You have a different goal altogether. The goal has changed. Don’t just live on survival mode. Otherwise, your life will be empty, full of worry and anxiety. Honestly, telling you, if you don’t have a focus that is God-given, it doesn’t matter what happens in your life, you can eat till it comes out of your nostrils like the children of your Israel and the next day morning, you can wake up and say, “Can God do it again?” That’s what God says. It didn’t matter what God did for them, every time they asked, “Okay. He did that but can He do it again?” Honestly, look back to the past one year, haven’t you all eaten well? Other than those who are fasting for the last forty days. Did you eat well? Did you dress well? You went to work. You had money and everything. But didn’t you worry all these twelve months? Did you worry? Just look at it. Wasn’t God faithful? Were we faithful in trusting Him implicitly. I said, “That’s fine. I’m doing what You told me to do. You will do what You have promised to do.” No, we didn’t do what He told us to do. What did we do? We ate. We drank. We worried about clothes, and He kept on giving us all these things. And we kept on worrying. That’s what *Matthew 6:34* says.

Matthew 6:34

³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things...

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He says, “Don’t worry.” If you don’t change focus, it doesn’t matter how much food you have in your granary, you’ll still worry. “O, I have supplies for one month but next month if I lose my job?” Because focus, goal isn’t there. The first level people – this is how they live. Just survival mode—living, existing. There are no defined goals in their life. No particular defined goal in their life.

The second level people are in a higher level. They live at the success level. It’s higher than the survival level. Okay? They are driven by a goal. “Why are you working so hard and double shifts?” “I want to own an apartment of my own. I’m tired of paying rent.” So, they have a goal and that goal motivates them. The question is: when you get your apartment, what do you do? Got your apartment, right? Now, what are you going to do? Possessions, prestige, pleasure and it is met. But when it is met, you will, suddenly, see that your lives are empty. Or the goal, which is an earthly goal, is consuming you and now, what has happened is in your heart is neither peace nor contentment; but covetousness and greed has taken over. That’s what Jesus tells in *Luke 12:20*

Luke 12:20

²⁰ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’

“Fool! You’re talking about building more barns, more barns. Pulling down, building more.” He says, “You fool! Your life is so empty. You are so horizontally faced, you have no clue that the call is coming from above; not from the side.” Judgment is there. Not here. He’s the one who will ask accounts; not here. Your King is not going to say, “How great thou art! You are the most prosperous.” He’s not going to say that. “I’m going to call you home today. What do you have to say? Didn’t you realize you should set goals that are up and not just horizontal, that your horizontal goals are defined by your vertical goal?” He’s a successful man; he’s not a failure. He was success oriented. You have to realize that success never satisfies. It doesn’t matter. It doesn’t satisfy. *Genesis 32:26* Never satisfies. What does it say?

Genesis 32:26

²⁶ And He said, “Let Me go, for the day breaks.” But he said, “I will not let You go unless You bless me!”

Twenty years ago, when God had met him in the night and said, “I am the God of your father, Abraham, the God of your father, Isaac.” He listened to it and he said, “Wow! This is all great.” Then, he made a deal with God. “You know, I’m going here, You bring me back and I promise You that I will give You ten percent.” He’s the original bargainer. That is, “You bless me, You prosper me, I promise You that I will give You ten percent.” There are many ten percent people in every Church. God said, “Okay. If that is what you want, that is what I will do.” Twenty years, God prospered him. Cattle, flock, sheep, servants, maids, and four wives also. At every direction he looked, he prospered, but he was empty. God said, “You got what you wanted right? You got what you wanted. Are you satisfied, Jacob?” He said, “No. Please bless me. I have everything around. Inside, I’m empty. Will You bless me?” This is what happens when you are success driven. What happens once you reach there? What happens? It’s a vacuum. You look. Honestly, young people sitting over here, I want you go back or don’t go; you’ll start searching for other things. Maybe ask pastor Vijay or somebody. Show the picture or the video that has come from the police station where Tiger Woods was taken after he was arrested for drunk driving, and look at him. The most successful golfers ever in human history. A multi-millionaire. He was married to one of the most beautiful women of his time and where is he now? What did success do to you? Because after that, it is empty. That’s why in the world, it is said, “It is very lonely at the top because you are all alone,” because you sought your success without God. But if your success comes with God, you are never alone because He said, “*I will never leave you, nor forsake you. I will be with you till the end.*” How many celebrities have died in the past one year due to drug overdose? Why? Empty! Yet, we hear messages and we are still pursuing their lifestyle. God says, “Don’t you see? Material success never satisfies. Ask Solomon.” That success, without God, will ultimately lead you to debauchery.

When did the kings of Israel fail? When they were weak or when they were successful? When they were successful. When did David fail? When he was running from king Saul or when he was successful? He fell when he was successful. Don’t let success blind your eyes to God’s eternal goals. When did Solomon fail? When did Uzziah fail? When did Samson fail? When did Gideon fail? When did Noah fail? When did Israel fail? All of them failed when they were successful. In *Deuteronomy 32:15*, this is what God has to say about Israel; the other name of Israel is Jeshurun.

Deuteronomy 32:15

15 “But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked; (I made you fat; I gave you success; I answered all your prayers; I made you rich; you are prosperous; you're successful. But what had happened?) *You grew fat, you grew thick, You are obese! Then he forsook God who made him, And scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation.*

You turned your back. That's what happens when our goal is success because that success can never satisfy.

Then, there is this third level in which others exists both in the world and in the Kingdom; these are parallels there. It is called the level of significance. That's when you have a very clear goal and a very clear purpose in your life. You have decided, “This is what I want to do.” Now, I am talking only to people in the Church because there are people in the world also who are consumed by that – their work gives them their significance. They have a cause and they go battling that cause and their entire life is defined by that cause. So, we will also identify them by that. So, if you ask, “Who is the father of India’s freedom movement?” Everybody will say ‘Mahatma Gandhi’. Why? That cause defined his life. “Who is the father of Civil rights movement in US?” It's Martin Luther king. That defined his life. It can be the Kingdom or the outside. That's where significance comes from but we are talking about the Kingdom. In the Kingdom, when we live at the level of significance, that's how Jesus lived; that is how Paul lived. The problem is – when we study the life of Jesus and the life of Paul (he is the closest apostle when it comes to imitation), what you see is their passion, what you see is their enthusiasm till the end. The word ‘enthusiasm’ comes from two Greek words, one is ‘Theos’ and the other is ‘in’. Enthusiasm means ‘In God’. Everything. That is what God is asking. Did everything change for us when we encountered Jesus? Everything changed for Paul when he encountered Jesus, like Rebekah. Have our goals changed? Has our purpose changed? Like Jacob, once he encountered God, that day at Peniel, everything changed. From that day, his goal has changed, purpose has changed, goal has changed, passion has changed, everything changed and God also changed his name. “From today, you are not Jacob; you are Israel.” He says, “I named this place Peniel because, here, I met God face to face. It's changed. God says, “Has it changed?”

In *Philippians 3:8*, Scripture says,

Philippians 3:8

⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus...

Question: has the knowledge of Christ become our passion? Otherwise, coming to Church and listening to a message which is two hours long will bore you because your passion is not the knowledge of Christ. Because you sit here for two hours or to come here in a Wednesday night or another meeting, you will start considering it in terms of loss in the world. You will not be willing to suffer loss in the world unless you consider this as gain. That's what he says. “*I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.*” He says, “I want to know Him. I want to know more about Him.”

Philippians 3:9

⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

He says, “My significance has changed.” Before that, if you ask Rebekah, “Who are you?” “Who is that girl?” “Oh, that is Nahor’s daughter, Laban’s sister.” “And?” “She is a very hard working girl. She is very good. She is very excellent. She is this. She is that.” That's where our significance comes from but today, if you ask her, “Who are you?” “Isaac's bride.” This law are the works from which we get our significance. Paul says, “I don't want that significance.” Where do you get your significance from? How do you see yourself and identify yourself? He says, “I want to be found in Him. My significance comes from the fact that I’m in Christ.” That's what I said, if you go to a Christian home, what do you see? Medals, certificates, trophies and if you talk to them, they will tell you all about their records in their secular life. Why? Because that is where their significance come from. You ask Paul, he will only talk about His Christ. “I am in Him. This is what my significance. I went through this all.” Has our significant change?

As a parent, think about it, what do we boast about? What are we excited about? “My son wants to pray every day.” No, we never talk about those things. “I want to go for the Bible study.” They will say, “Sit and study.” Do you see where our significance comes from? Because we have already decided in our mind, “These are the things in life from which I get my

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significance. Therefore, our children will get their significance.” We have put Christ away. Yet, we come to worship on a Sunday. Problem is – at the end it will be emptiness; you achieve everything. That's why in the *Book of Ecclesiastes* has to be read over and over again. A man who pursued everything, at the end, he says, “It is all air. Nothing. No significance.”

Till that day, her significance came from all that but they said, “Will you go with this man?” Everything changed. Question is: has our identity changed? What do you see yourself as? As Christ's bride or an employee or a worker or an industrialist? How do you see yourself? That is the question. What do you see? He says, “I have one goal. I want to be found in Him. Nothing what people talk about me should be of myself but about Him, that what He has given to me. That's where my significance comes from.” That's the question. If you ask Paul, “Paul, who you are?” “Bondservant of Christ.” “Oh, I thought you were a Pharisee.” “All that is lost; written off.” “Who are you?” “Bondservant of Christ.” That's how he writes his introduction to first Gospel – “I, Paul, a bondservant of Christ.” He doesn't write, “I, who was the Hebrew of Hebrews, from the tribe of Benjamin, meant to be a Sanhedrin, who sat at the feet of Gamaliel and studied.” That's how we talk. Vijay gets embarrassed when I introduce him and when tell about him where he had come from. The reason I basically tell them is not because of his secular credentials but to tell them when a man of God has a genuine call on his life, he has left something which is valuable in the world because he finds the excellence of Christ greater. That's the only reason I tell people and he gets embarrassed saying, “Pastor.” I said, “No, that's not the reason. The reason is – many of them have taken ministry as a job because they could find nothing else.” They left nothing because that's what not what ministry is. Ministry is because you found this greater than anything in this world could offer. There is no greater title you can have on planet earth other than to be called as a ‘servant of God’. We don't get significance from that; we want our secular titles. God says, “Don't you know your citizenship has been changed? Don't you know your goals and purposes, the Spirit of God working in you has changed? Don't you know that your goals and your purpose, as the Spirit of God is working in you, has changed?” Has our identity changed? Do we see life differently life after salvation? It's a question.

There was a king and there was his son, a little young boy who lived in his palace. It was mighty big palace and all the walls around and all the servants ere all there. Across the palace was the village and he liked to play with the village boys. The king told the servants, “You will not let this boy out.” But the royal order was also there; the royal code of conduct was that nobody can touch the prince or the king. You cannot touch them; they are all royalty. So, the boy knew that very well. They would put these things and try to stop him but he would walk through them; because he knew that they could not touch him. So, he continued going and playing. The father was mad; the king was mad with the servants. They responded by saying, “Sir, what can we do? We have honor to this boy.” So, the king said, “Okay.” One day, he took the boy and said, “You come up here.” He took him up to the top of the palace to the tower and he said, “Look everywhere.” And he said, “Do you see?” He said, “Yes, sir.” “That's all yours. Do you know who you are? You are meant to reign; you are meant to rule; you are meant to have authority over all this; not to play with those kids and then, get their character and lose the chance to rule.” He came back. He never went out again. That's the boy that became Alexander the great. Because he understood significance. “I have been born to reign with Christ Jesus.” That's what the *Ephesians* says, “You have been lifted up and seated with Christ Jesus. From that vantage point, do you see your significance?” If I am called to rule, destined to rule then, I be better found in Him, like Him, His character, His righteousness; His holiness. Then only, I can rule. You have to understand what salvation means, the end of salvation. Everything turns around then – this is my destiny; this is my purpose; this is the call of my life. That's what God is talking about. Otherwise, we're just taking an insurance ticket. “When I die, I don't want to go to hell.” Salvation is not an insurance ticket; salvation is the beginning of a destiny – A journey to Heaven, destined to rule. Purpose, goal – everything changes. So, the question is: ten years are over; how do we look at life? Do you have a very clear vision? A clear goal? Your horizontal goal is defined by your vertical goal. These two are there – horizontal and vertical. These are very clearly defined by this. In *Acts 9:15*,

Acts 9:15-16

¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. ¹⁶ For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake.”

Very clear. “You're going to suffer and you're going to really, really suffer but it's worth it.” Why? “You are bearing My Name.” “Alexander,” king Phillip said, “from today, your schooling starts. You won't be playing with other kids. When they are playing, you will be working; when they are sleeping, you will be awake; when they are playing in the river, you will be training with the soldiers. Alexander, life has begun for you because now, you know what you're destiny is.” “You are bearing My Name.” That's what God says, “He will bear My Name. He is a chosen vessel. As a part of it, there is suffering.”

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Paul will say, "It's fine with me." There is a mission; there will be lot of pain when you pursue it. And we are all part of that Great Mission. *Mathew 28*, God makes it very clear.

Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

The mission statement of the Church – "Go make disciples; teach them to obey." What is the Church? The Church is, let us say, like a big car or a bus. It's like a big bus. In that bus, there are ten thousand little parts – big parts, different kinds of parts. But everything together makes the bus which takes people from point A to point B. This is a Church and if we are a bus, what is your part? Everybody has to play the game. The Great Commission is given to everybody. But everybody doesn't do the same thing. But everybody is part of the Great Commission. Have you found your purpose? Read *1 Corinthians 12*, read *Romans 12* – you will see different gifts and different purposes within the Body of Christ. And they are all serving in the same purpose of the Great Commission. Everybody, the Great Commission and the work is different. The purpose is same – make disciples of nations. Have you found your purpose?

Ask Rebekah. Did she find her purpose? "Where are you going, Rebekah?" "Isaac's house." "Is the journey hard?" "Yes, I haven't slept for one single night after I started." "Why?" "The camels are very uncomfortable." "Are you going to stop?" "No." "You're not going to stop?" "No." "Are you going to turn back? You have only gone 10 kilometers from your house. Do you want to go back?" "No." "50 kilometers. Do you want to go back?" "No." "200 kilometers. Do you want to go back?" "No." "Why?" "I'm going to Isaac. There is no turning back. I know where I am going." The fact of who is going, where is she going; the fact of who is accompanying – Eliezer, the old man, who knows Isaac from the time he was born till today, there is one man in Abraham's household who knows everything about Isaac. That is Eliezer, the chief servant. There is one Person who knows everything about Abraham and about Isaac, like the Father God and the Son, that is the Holy Spirit. And that is the Spirit God said, "When you fulfill that purpose, you will always experience My presence. If you are not experiencing My presence, it's because you are not fulfilling My purpose. You are running your own goal. I will never leave you. You will always know that I am there with you because you are part of the Great Commission." Purpose and passion go together. What is your purpose?

Is that all? No, there is more. Paul will say in *Philippians 3:14*,

Philippians 3:14

¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

"Not only is there a purpose and a goal, there is also a prize. I have a purpose; I have a goal." "Where are you going?" "I am going to Heaven and I'm going to fulfill the Great Commission." "What is your prize?" "Oh, prize? There is a prize?" "Yes, there is a prize." "What is the prize?" "You get to sit on the right hand side of God with Christ." "Who is that?" "The Bride." "Oh, that is the prize?" "Yes." "For that, I just have to fulfill the Great Commission and run my race, and I will get that prize?" God will say, "No." "No? I fulfilled everything God tells me to do on earth. He asked me to preach in ten different language groups. I've finished that. I will get my prize." God says, "No. That's only the goal. For the prize, you have to run vertically. You have to become like Him, the second One in the Trinity." If it was only this, then everybody would be purpose-driven like Rick Warren's Church. Purpose-driven. What about upward? It's like the train rail; you are running in parallel on the track. One is – I have to fulfill my purpose on earth; the other – I have to grow in character and become what Christ wants me to be so that He can recognize me as His own. Are we getting it? We have a prize. Paul was very clear about it. We have a prize. In *1 Corinthians 9:24*,

1 Corinthians 9:24

²⁴ Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize?...

Who receives the prize? One receives the prize. Why? The one who is running for the prize has a goal and a purpose of finishing this journey but something else is there. "Why are you in this journey, Rebekah?" "I am in this journey for Isaac." If

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you look at that caravan, you will see Rebekah and (probably, I think, I've read this somewhere. I can't remember) ten maidservants. All of them are going with Rebekah to Canaan. Are they all going with the same goal? No, only one is going to get the prize. But they are all going in the same direction, same suffering. Everything. But they are only accompanying her; they don't get Isaac. Are you getting the picture? God says, "Everybody can be in the same direction. That doesn't mean that they all get the same prize." So, Paul says, "I'm very clear. I'm running for my prize; not just fulfill my goal here or my purpose over here." In *verse 27*, he will say,

1 Corinthians 9:27

27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

"Arrey, I have preached to others. I have fulfilled my purpose." God says, "Yes. There are many people who have fulfilled the purpose. They have preached very well but they are disqualified." Why? Because they didn't realize – there something else tied to that for the prize. He says, "I know. I can do this. This is a gift. I can do this. I can preach. I can do it. I can get people into the Kingdom. I can do it. I can teach and disciple. All that, I can do." God says, "That's great that you can do it. My Spirit gave you that gift but if you don't bring your body under subjection, you will be disqualified." 27 is very significant. That's what he is saying, "After having completed my mission, I should not lose my prize."

Life is more than a mission. Otherwise, life would be all about work. When it came to work, do you know what Paul said about himself when it came to work?

1 Corinthians 15:10

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

He says, "You pick any Apostle. I have worked harder than them. So, you don't tell me about missions. I know about missions." "I have worked harder than anybody in my company." You go and ask the boss, "Why are you not promoting me? I have worked harder than everybody." "Yes, but you are short-tempered." "Oh, was that the reason?" "Yes, I'm looking for somebody with character whom I can promote. You are going to be in charge of people." "But I've worked harder than anybody else. I come early in the morning. I am the last to leave. My work is all done. I am the most efficient." He says, "I agree to all that but the problem is your character." "Oh, you need character to rise up?" "Oh, yes, you do." So, he says, "I have worked harder than anybody but that's still not enough. After that, I still could be disqualified because we are talking about ruling; we are talking about reigning." Are we getting the picture? That's what Paul is talking about. In *Philippians 3:10*, he says, "This is what I want – I want to be conformed to Him. I want to be like Him."

Philippians 3:10

10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

Is that our goal? It's not that, "I want to serve Him; I want to work for Him; I want to labor for Him; I want to do this for Him; I want to go to the ends of the earth for Him." God says, "Pharisees also do that." I didn't say that; Jesus said that in the Gospels. He said, "The Pharisees will cross the oceans to make one convert and makes him a bondservant double as he is." Why? Because that fellow doesn't have character. God says, "No." He (Paul) says, "I want to finish. I want to do all that but I want to be like Him when I finish. When I finish, I want to be like Him." That's what I told the Pastors yesterday. I love them. They are simple and old. Many of them. I said, "One thing I ask you – you are getting older. Are you getting better?" I said, "I've seen Pastors fight over, old Pastors fight because somebody jumped into their line. You have fought over here because somebody got into your chair and you are 70-80 years old. You are not getting better. Where is your patience? As you grow older, you should be getting kinder, more loving, more patient, more tolerant – all that, because it's the grace of Jesus Christ flowing into you. That's not happening. You are powerful preachers, yes. But are you getting better? That is my question." If you are not getting better, then, we have to stop and say, "Lord, I'm struggling in that area." Don't look at your work. "I'm the best employee. I've got the best employee award as well." Forget all that. "Lord, the real fact is this – I am not getting better. I'm efficient but I'm not getting any better and I can still be disqualified. Lord, make me better." We saw Jesus' passion for His Father's work in *John 4:34*, He will say,

John 4:34

³⁴ *Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.*

He went in the heat of the sun in the day for the Samaritan woman, waited and brought her to salvation. He was so excited. He had got real passion for His work. Yes, we should have passion for missions; we should have passion to serve the Lord, yes. But along with that, He says something else too. In *John 14*, Philip asked a question.

John 14:8-9

⁸ *Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.”* ⁹ *Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip?*

“Philip, let Me tell you, every day of My life, from the day you have seen Me, I have done everything to be exactly as My Father. If you have seen Me, you have seen My Father. We are the same. The essence is the same. I’m not only at My Father’s work; I’m not only so zealous for My Father’s work, I’m trying everything, every day possible to be exactly like My Father.” He was doing both. God says, “That’s what My Spirit wants with you. I want you to labor exactly like My Son, passionate about your Father’s work and also, ask the Spirit to change you and make you exactly like My Son.” Passion. As we grow older and older, say, “Make me, Lord. That’s my desire.” That’s the desire that gripped Apostle Paul. “Conform me to Your image, God. I want to be like You.”

So, God gives us a two-fold purpose in life – “Go, make disciples. Find your slot.” Then, “Make me like Jesus.” What is that? *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.* Why? Because the Kingdom of God, God and Jesus are defined by righteousness. How righteous is your life? We all love but can God say, “I see your love; your love is righteous”? We expect that. God says, “Actually, your love is not righteous.” “But Lord, You have seen me. I love my children; I sacrificed for my children; I have given everything for my children. Don’t I love?” God says, “Yes, but can you love somebody else’s child like that? Then, I will declare you righteous because even the tax collectors love like you do.” Because that’s what we say. “Oh, you don’t know. I love my children. I sacrificed for my children. I did all this for my children. Lord!” God says, “Yes, you did. I accept it. Anybody can do that. A Hindu can do it; a Muslim can do it better than you. It is something that I put it into every heart but can you love somebody else’s child, an abandoned child like your own and give him/her exactly or more than you would give it to your own child? Can you?” God says, “That’s the way I loved you.” That’s why Jesus says in *Matthew*, “Let your love be perfect as the love of your Father.” Is our love righteous? Is our kindness righteous? Look at all the things we connect with character. Is it really righteous? Can God come stand and say, “Yes, you are righteous”? Isn’t that the first statement David makes? He came there and said, “Is there anybody from king Saul’s house?” Who is king Saul? The man who caused ten years of your life, who chased you around all the jungles and caves, like a dog. He sent his entire army, forgetting that the enemy are the Philistines; he made you his enemy; he messed your life up; it cost you ten years; it cost you so much pain and suffering and the first thing he (David) did as king is, “Is there anybody from king Saul’s house to whom I can show mercy?” Then, one fellow, Ziba said, “Yes, there is one man left. He is Mephibosheth and he is lame.” David said, “It doesn’t matter. From today, he will sit at my table like one of my own sons.” God said, “David, you are a man after My own heart.” That’s what God is bringing us to. He says, “Grow. Don’t take what is natural and human and put it as the righteousness of God’s Kingdom.” He says, “*Your righteousness should exceed that of the Pharisees.*” The Pharisees are very righteous according to the law; not according to grace. That’s why seek. Are we seeking His righteousness with all our hearts?

In *Hebrews 12:14*, God says,

Hebrews 12:14

¹⁴ *Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:*

The simple thing is that if our desire in our hearts, consuming desire is not to see Jesus, then we won’t pursue these things. This is not what we do first. “Lord, I want to pursue peace; I want to pursue holiness!” No. “Lord, I desire You. I want to seek Your face.” Yes, we sang today, “Open the eyes of my heart, Lord, I want to see You.” God said, “Do you want to see Me? Pursue peace; pursue holiness. You will see Me.” Do you really sing it, Church, this morning? I heard you sing, “Open the eyes of my heart.” Is that your heart’s real desire? “Yes, Lord. It’s my desire.” “But when you go back home, I don’t see you

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pursuing holiness. Forget about reaching home; on the way, you have started fighting with your wife. You are not pursuing peace even with this one; forget the other ones. You really don't want to seek My face. You didn't mean what you sang." So, can we say, "Lord, honestly, I didn't mean what I sang. Lord, create that desire in my heart. I want to see Your face." To see His face, we have to shut out all the other faces. Pursue peace. What does it mean? Pursuing peace with all men; meaning – when we are angry, when we are upset, we have one face in our mind; one voice that is ringing; the one we are upset with, right? Shut all those faces. How do you shut all those faces? By pursuing peace. "Lord, I forgive. I choose to forgive and I'm choosing to let go because I want to see Your face." Then, the Holy Spirit will start speaking to you. When you read a simple devotional, the Holy Spirit will say, "That's what Jesus looks like."

After this long journey from Haran to Canaan, weeks and months; we don't know. At the end of the journey, suddenly, she turns to Eliezer and asks, "Who is that man?" He says, "That is Isaac." How did she know? She had never seen him before. How did she know? "Everything that you said to me, my heart is telling, "That is that man". If we haven't known Jesus in our spirit by seeking Him now, when we see Him face-to-face, will we recognize Him? This is not a human that you are going to meet. That's the whole journey. There is a journey of fulfilling His purpose, fulfilling His mission and then, there is this journey to see His face. Awesome God. Imagine, "O Jacob, you worm." Jacob, the worm, says, "I saw You face-to-face. What a God!" What a God, that He would even say, "You worms can see My face." Have we ever looked at ourselves the way we looked at others? "Oh, shut the door!" "Why?" "The dog is coming in." "Shut the window. The cat is coming in." "Oh, these worms!" That's what we are before God. God says, "Come. You can see My face." He called Jacob all these things. He called him, 'worm'. Keep this balance in mind, always in life. Always. Otherwise, what happens? Many who sought to fulfill their purpose and their mission in life forgot this relationship and then, they went down. The way, as Scripture calls it – the way of Balaam. *Jude 1:11* says,

Jude 1:11

¹¹ Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

Why did God use these three names? Cain, Balaam and Korah. These three names. Why? Cain went the way down because of worship. Not a secular job; because of worship. He was worshipping God; his worship was not accepted. Therefore, he was mad with God, mad with his brother and killed his brother when he was worshipping. Balaam was a profit of God, hired to curse the children of Israel. He opened his mouth and only blessings came. He went down and was cut down. Was he a prophet? And Korah? "Who do you think you are, Moses? You are not the only one holy. We are all holy. We all have authority. You don't speak for God alone. We also can speak for God." Every one of them was pursuing the way of God without the character of God. God says, "Beware." These are not secular examples; these are ministry examples. That's what God is talking about. "Be careful. Be clear. You are on a journey; you are on a pursuit but that should not consume you; though it should be consumed by itself; but always be balanced." Even as you go on, fulfilling your purpose – preaching, missions, taking care, whatever you are doing in the office – keep examining yourself whether you are in the faith. And when you examine yourself, the only question is: is Christ in you? Has Christ grown? That's the only question. *2 Corinthians 13:5*. That's the only question. There is no other question.

2 Corinthians 13:5

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

Scripture says, "Do that test." There are two fallacies that can happen – one – you seek a mission and a purpose and forget righteousness and holiness; another one – they are consumed by righteousness and holiness and they have no mission. God says, "No. Balance. You have both. You have a mission to accomplish and you have an image to grow to. My Spirit will do both if you are willing." Run this race. Tenth year. Run this race parallel, like the railway line. Once we get this clear, everything else starts falling into place in life. God is able to speak to you. When we say, "Lord, why are You not speaking to me?" He says, "I do but you don't understand." "Why, Lord?" "Because your trajectory is different from Mine. We are not running in parallel lines; we are running in opposite lines. I love you. I remember the day you received Me and called on My Name. I remember that. I never forget those things but after that, nothing is happening." That's Jesus. That's Him whom we imitate.

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You have to realize, when we move in purpose and move in this passion, when Jesus moves, crowds followed Him. Why did crowds follow Him? Because He was the light of the world. Everybody saw that light. Why are you able to see me today? Why are you able to write in your notebooks today? Because there is light. Do you know what this light is? It's the light that is dispersed. Everybody sees. But can you take this light and make it into a narrow beam? Then, it can cut steel. It's called 'LASER'. Jesus was the light of the world. Then, He became a laser beam. He set His face absolutely like a flint towards Jerusalem. The crowds slowly started going. Why? Everybody likes this light but when the light becomes a laser beam, everybody runs from it. It's not enough to be this light. As you progress further with God, you also need to become what Christ became and what Apostle Paul became. Everyone left.

In *Luke 22:41-43*,

Luke 22:41-43

⁴¹ And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, ⁴² saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." ⁴³ Then (Scripture says) an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.

Nobody else came to take care of Him. Why? He was set like a flint. *Isaiah 50:7* is the prophecy.

Isaiah 50:7

⁷ "For the Lord God will help Me; Therefore I will not be disgraced; Therefore I have set My face like a flint (it's a stone), And I know that I will not be ashamed.

Do you know what the parallel verse in the Gospels is?

Luke 9:51

⁵¹ Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem,

Did you see how the mission is narrowing? Isn't that so in the secular world? You started in school – you had all the subjects. By the time you reached 11th, subjects came down. By the time you finished 12th, even more subjects came down. By the time you finish post graduation, it came down. If you go beyond post graduation, you are narrowing; you are specializing. Are you specializing in the Kingdom of God or still dispersing? Ten years are up. Ask this question, "What am I specializing in? What is my specialty?" He began with the crowds and ended up alone because the crowds were against the final purpose of God in His life. God said, "*Even if they leave You, I will not leave You. I will be with You till the very end. You are all alone. I am there with You. I will even encourage You and strengthen You with angelic visitation.*" Didn't that happen to Paul? Of course, it did. Do you know what he says at the end of his life?

2 Timothy 4:16-17

¹⁶ At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. ¹⁷ But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me...

"Paul, where did you start?" "With crowds." "Crowds were there either to beat you or welcome you but the crowds were always there. How come, as you reach in closer and closer to the end, the crowds have all left? Now, finally, you are all alone." "Yes, I am all alone." "Are you okay with it?" "I'm okay with it." "Why?" "Because He stood with me. I have been faithful to my call; I have been faithful to my purpose and He has promised '*I will never leave you; I will never forsake you; I will be with you till the end.*'" That's what I'm talking about. Can you seek Him exclusive to everything else? If it happens, will we be able to stay? When both goals are combined and become one, then we have this enormous hope, confidence.

Listen to Paul's description of his own life.

2 Timothy 4:7-8

⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

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But why? Why is he so confident? “I have gone to Asia Minor and preached. All of Asia Minor has heard the Word of God through me in two-three years. I preached in the lecture halls of Tyrannus only for two years and the word has gone.” Did he say any of those things? No. Mission-wise, he was successful but that’s not what he said.

⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness...

“I was more mission focused than anybody. I worked harder than anybody but I never kept my eyes from my prize. What was my prize? I wanted righteousness. I wanted the crown of righteousness; not a medal. I wanted the crown of righteousness. I sought and desired the righteousness of God more than everything. Therefore, I know, I will get it. Not only that,”

...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.

Oh, not to everybody; only those who love His appearing. If you love His appearing, then there is something that will happen to you. You are not just mission-focused; you are not earthly focused at all. If you love His appearing, then everything changes. That’s what I said; he never mentioned the success of his ministry.

1 Corinthians 3:7-8

⁷ So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. ⁸ Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

Success of ministry is not judged here. It’s not known here; it will be known there. So, he never talked about that. He talked of the hardship of his ministry but he never talked about the success of his ministry. But one thing he talked about, at the end. “The success of the prize of the upward call of Jesus Christ,” he said, “I got it. That was what I was.” That is what I said – you can measure your righteousness; you cannot measure your ministry though people only try to measure their ministry. You can measure your righteousness by the level of joy and peace you experience in the most difficult circumstances. You can know your righteousness. These difficult circumstances that are happening in our lives are ordained by God so that we know whether we are walking in righteousness or are growing in righteousness or not. Because how do you measure righteousness? You can’t. Peace and joy? Yes. “Pastor, I have lost my peace.” “Where did you lose it?” “How do I find it?” “Seek righteous. You will find it. You lost your peace when you lost your righteousness.” “I have no joy at all. “Honey, you lost your joy because you lost your righteousness.” If you haven’t lost your righteousness, you don’t lose your peace; you don’t lose your joy. You can be beaten up with your back broken, thrown into the midnight hour into the dirty Philippi prison, legs locked up; all you can do is worship the Lord. Why? You haven’t lost your peace and joy. So, outside circumstances cannot steal your peace and joy because they did not give it; the world did not give it and the world cannot take it away. You can lose it; they cannot take it away. That’s what God is talking about. This is what we miss. This is what we are missing in lives. Because we look and we say, “I’m working hard in my office; I’m working hard in my home; I’m working hard, giving and tithing.” All of it is true but there is something in these nine years. What is it? The passion for the Person of Christ. I’m telling this to you as a Pastor, that’s what I see missing – the passion for the Person of Christ. The passion for Him, the Person.

2 Peter 3:13-14, Peter will say,

2 Peter 3:13-14

¹³ Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which (what?) righteousness dwells. (If that is what I’m looking for, the new earth and a new heaven, then I’m seeking righteousness.) ¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;

That’s Peter’s testimony. What does John have to say?

1 John 2:28-29

²⁸ And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

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So many people have confidence which is called 'dutch courage'. Do you know what dutch courage means in English? It's the fellow who is drunk. When he is drunk, he is ready to fight anybody. He is courageous. That's why all soldiers get liquor as free ration. If nothing else makes them fight, that will make them fight. A lot of people say, "I have confidence." Really, brother? Really, sister? In the light of this Word, in the light of Scripture, do you really have confidence? I don't have confidence. Paul says, "Even I don't have the confidence. I don't even judge myself. I don't even go by somebody else's judgment because He is the One who judges. So, I am always examining myself." Dear children, that,

...we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. ²⁹ If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.

Did you see that everyone is talking about righteousness? Because that is the Sceptre of His Kingdom. That should be the quality by which we measure our actions – am I righteous in my love? Am I righteous in my mercy? Am I righteous? Lord, by Your standard, how do You evaluate me? Am I growing in this, O God? Am I growing in this?

Does Paul have something else to say? No, he says the same thing. In *1 Corinthians 16:22*, he goes even more hardship than the others because this man is passionate about his love for Christ.

1 Corinthians 16:22

²² If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come.

This is his recommendation. "Lord, don't let them in. People who don't love You should not enter Heaven. Let him be accursed." Because that is the factor that motivates everything else – this love for God. Because we know that it's the most powerful passion – this love for God. So, God is asking us, "Do we have that purpose and passion?" Then, if your purpose is earthly, like I said, when your goal is achieved or is not achievable, then you are gone. Either you achieve something... parents do it like that. To a child who cannot even write properly, "You will pass EAMCET, okay?" "Appa, I don't like Mathematics!" "No, don't tell me that! You have to be an engineer." "I don't want to be an engineer." "No, you have to be an engineer." So, he has already given up. Some people give up; some people achieve. But after achieving, what happens? Because it's very earthly.

In *Acts 26:19*, years later, the man stands there, still on fire, zealous for God and says,

Acts 26:19

¹⁹ "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,

"When did that happen, Paul?" "On that day, on the Road to Damascus. Till today, I have not been disobedient to that goal, that purpose, the vision that I've received from Heaven. I have walked in it. I have pursued in it and I have given it my everything. I love Him more than ever before. But when I look at myself, I don't want to judge. If I judge, I want to say, 'worst of sinners', 'chief of sinners', 'least of the apostles'. I am not judging myself. Let Him do that on that day." Today, you see pamphlets all around the city. Everybody is a prophet; everybody is an apostle. It's so sad. Young chudhka fellows, 22-23, 'Apostle from Nigeria'. I look at him and think, "When did he become one?" How can you give a title yourself? I can understand 'Pastor', which means a shepherd of a Church. You have a Church and you are a shepherd. If the Church sends out somebody, you call him an 'evangelist' but how do you call yourself a prophet? How do you call yourself an apostle? They have real thick skins. God says, "I offer you a heavenly price. A heavenly vision and a heavenly price."

In *Colossians 3:1-4*,

Colossians 3:1-4

¹ If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Are you really raised with Christ? Look at these 3 verses.

²Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Are our minds and things on above or in the lunch that is outside? Where is our mind? Or the future that looks bleak or exciting? Where is our mind? That's how, when we read this Scripture, Church, we will know where we are; where we really are; where our heart is. We have everything in life. One man of God said, "We have our calendar; we have our schedules but we don't have a compass." What does the compass give you? Direction. What do we have? Calendar and schedule. Where are you going? "I am going to Kurnool, preaching on this day; I'm going to Warangal; I'm going to Vijayawada. My calendar is full; my schedule is full." "Where are you going?" "I'm going to Warangal." "That's not what I asked. Where are you going? Have you grown in the past 5 years?" "Not exactly." No compass. Do you have your calendar? Now, calendars are all in the phone. "Oh, I know my schedule. Monday, no time; Tuesday; no time; Thursday, no time. I'm very busy." Finally, you become so busy that even God can't get into your schedule. That's what is happening. Young people also. They become so busy, consumed with passion for a career. They are so busy. No time. God is fitted in somewhere. "Oh, I have exams. I will read my Bible tomorrow." I thought it's God who prospers you. "Oh, exams, Monday. Next week, I have exam. Ailsa Aunty, I'm not coming on Wednesday." You know, instead of fitting our schedules around God, we fit God into our schedule. And then, we are expecting when He, who is my life, appears, I, too, will appear with Him in glory. God says, "No. I love you but this is the truth. My Kingdom is the Kingdom of righteousness. The scepter of My Kingdom, I don't bend it." "But You healed me." "Of course. There is mercy." "You delivered me." "That's mercy." "You fed me." "That's mercy." "You clothed me." "That's mercy." "You gave me everything." "I did it for those people in the desert too. That's mercy." Don't confuse mercy with righteousness. Don't, Church, don't. At our own peril, we do that. Don't confuse mercy with righteousness. Righteousness has to be sought; righteousness has to be practiced; righteousness has to be grown in. Then, when it happens, we experience Him and we realize, "I am dying daily. My life is hidden with Him. I love it." That's why this culture in which we live in, the corrupt culture has changed everything. In the old culture, when a woman, Rebekah, goes and marries Isaac, what is her name? "Mrs. Isaac." Her name is gone. Have you ever seen any woman in the old days that carried her own name? No, she always had her father's name or her husband's name. Now, you don't need it. They said, "It's not needed." What does it mean? Identity is gone. "My life is hidden with You. I have no separate passion. I have no separate dreams. All my dreams are swallowed up in You. You tell me what You want me to do. You tell me. I have nothing separate." Everything is summed up in it.

I'm not saying that you shouldn't work hard, or you shouldn't study hard. Paul also worked hard. I'm not saying that. But Paul never lost his passion for the Person of Christ. That's what I'm talking about. Have you grown in your passion? Have you grown in your passion in these nine years? That's how I check myself. I check myself not at my work. I work more than before. It's irrelevant. I can preach better than before. It's irrelevant. That's all knowledge. That's irrelevant. None of those things matter. I can preach in more languages today than I ever could. Irrelevant. The only thing by which I want to judge myself is – am I more passionate about Jesus, the Person, today than I was before? Because that's exactly how you will measure your marriage. That's exactly how God measured the first Church in the *Book of Revelation*. "You are fantastic; your doctrine is fantastic; your works are good; you are good but I hold one thing against you and that one thing will take you down – you have lost your first love. One thing I'm looking for." The Church in Philadelphia, He doesn't give them the nine yards like He gave the Ephesians Church. But He says, "You know one thing? You've got little strength. You have hung unto Me with all your life. Therefore, you, Church of Philadelphia, when this trouble is coming upon the whole earth, you alone, I give you the promise – I will take you out and you will stand with Me because you are My wife. You will not go through what the rest of the world and the Churches will go through. You will not because I see your passion for Me." That's what God is talking about. Rekindle that passion. These forty days were for that passion alone – rekindle that passion. Lock yourselves. Spend time with God and say, "Lord, even if You don't want to use me at all, it's fine with me. I just want to love You." Then, turn around and say, "Lord, even if You kill me, Lord, I will still serve You till You kill me." That's what Job said, "Even if You slay me, I will still serve You." What does he mean? "Lord, everybody is gone. All is lost and my wife tells me to kill myself and commit suicide. But Lord, I started this journey with You. It was all about You. All this is gone. I am okay with it. You gave me; You took away from me. Everything is okay. My desire and everything is about You. This doesn't come through a preaching; this doesn't come from hearing a Word; this is a fire that can be kindled only by God from Heaven. That's why you have to seek Him and say, "Touch me, Lord." The fire in the holy place in the temple was not started by man; it was started by God and then, He told them, "Guard it with your life. Never let it go off." Maybe for some of you, your fire was never started by God. Go to God and say, "Lord, touch me." Then, guard it with your life. "I will not let that fire go off, O Lord. I may fall; I may fail; I may do everything but Lord, I want to rise up and fan those flames

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back, O Lord, because it was not lit by man.” That’s what Paul was telling Timothy. “Timothy, that fire was lit not by man. Fan it back to flames. Come back, Timothy. Come back.”

This morning, my prayer for the Church is that. My prayer for myself is that. Let that fire come back. If you never had it, ask for it. It doesn’t matter how young you are, God doesn’t look at age. It doesn’t matter how old you, it’s irrelevant. Fire can be strated with a young man called Samuel or an old man called Moses. It’s irrelevant. The light was going out in the temple. That’s what Scripture is saying and I believe Samuel’s whole life was centered around the lamp, guarding the lamp, the light should not go out and then, one day, he heard, “Samuel, Samuel, I saw you. I saw you, Samuel, in the temple. When all the priests are doing these abominations, you little boy, wearing little ephod your mother bought, are trying to guard that fire in that temple. It is to you that I want to speak.” I believe, in that wilderness on that day, there were many shepherds in the wilderness at Sinai but when the bush was burning, Scripture says, “Moses looked; turned aside and came to look at that fire.” Scripture says, “When God saw Moses had turned aside, He said, ‘Moses, take your shoes off. You are standing on a hallowed place’.” That’s when the fire touched him. From that day till the day he died, the fire kept him. From that day, Saul of Tarsus was touched by Jesus. Till the day he left, he guarded that fire. Guard the fire. Then, when He appears, He is our life. He becomes your life. When does He become my life? Because my life is hidden in Him. I have no life on my own. Therefore, His life is my life and His life is your life. Your life is hidden in Him and when He appears, we appear with Him. Do you understand the deep theology of this?

Christ is the One who is coming but along with Christ, who will come? Everybody whose life was hidden with Him will appear together with Him. That is the Second Coming. Enoch was the first man to have walked with God. He says, “When He comes, tens upon thousands of His saints will come together.” What was he seeing? The lives of all those who were hidden in Christ appear with Him, suddenly, outside. The glory of it. Not the glory of the Prince of Glory alone but the glory of His Bride will be revealed because all whose lives were hidden in Him will be revealed that day. That’s what *Romans 8* says, “The whole of creation is groaning to see the sons of God to be revealed because they know that these are the ones who will rule them for a thousand years.” The overcoming Bride of Christ Jesus. This is the prize. He says, “I never took my eyes off the prize. He saved me; He called me; He put me into apostleship; but I realize – there was something much bigger than all of that. What is that? The upward call of Christ for which He grabbed me. He grabbed me and said, ‘if you finish, you will become My wife’. I said that I want to. Forgetting everything behind, I am running towards.” Forgetting the bitterness, the anger, the unforgiveness, all that people have said and done against you, forget it and put it behind. Don’t let that steal your crown. Leave it all behind and say, “Lord, I am running.” Let me tell you – learn from Paul; learn from Jesus. The more closer you are to the goal, the more God will allow enemies to rise against you, to test whether your love is righteous or not. It’s not that they become less; they become more. It’s not that your troubles lessen; your troubles increase because it’s the test of your faith; the test of your love so that you know your hope is real. Therefore, Paul says, “*Of all these three, (what are the three? Faith, hope and love) the greatest of it all is love.*” Shall we stand?

Closing Prayer:

Father, we just come to You, Lord. Father, I have spoken out from my heart. What You have laid upon my heart for Your Church and all our Churches around the world. I pray, Father, the same fire... some Churches are on fire; for some Churches, the fire is going out; for some Churches, the fire has gone out but Father, I pray, You will rekindle that fire, Lord. Rekindle that fire; that passion, Lord, like Jeremiah; Old Testament prophets who did not have the Holy Spirit birthing them; they could say, “Your Word is like fire, shut in my bones,” Father. The disciples on the Road to Emmaus said, “Our hearts burnt within us when He was talking to us, when He walked with us.” O Father, we, too, Lord, are disciples. We want our hearts on fire. We want Your fire to be hidden in our bones. We want to know, Lord, everyone will let us down; anybody can let us down but You are the true love of our lives; the only One who will never leave us nor forsake us; the only One who has loved us with an everlasting love; the only One who rises up each day, when we rise and says, “My mercies are new each morning.” The only One. The fairest of ten thousand. The only One, O God. O Father, I pray that carnal eyes will shut, soulish eyes will shut and spiritual eyes will be open to the beauty of Jesus Christ, O Lord. O, the beauty of the only Son of God. The beauty. And we will look into Your eyes and see Your beauty and see through Your eyes the beauty that You long and will cry out to the Holy Spirit, “Make me beautiful, O God, in the eyes of my Lord Jesus. I don’t care if I don’t look good to the world. I don’t care what the world says.” I only care that my Lord should say, “You are beautiful in My eyes.” Help us, O Lord, to know that our significance comes from You and You alone, O God. Nothing and nobody else. Touch, Lord. Touch, today. Heal the broken hearted. Heal the wounded. Heal. Deliver the oppressed, O God. For this purpose You came, to deliver, to heal and to set free so that we might pursue our eternal destiny, Lord, to be the Bride of the only Son of God. Touch Your

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servants, Pastor Vijay, Pastor Eric, Pastor Rueben, all our other Pastors, touch. Touch Sydney, Sammy, all of them. Touch Paul Samson. Touch, Father, touch Your servants. Let no one's fire go out, O Lord. O Father, if we are not on fire, how will the people be on fire, O God. O Father, I pray, today, Your servants will be on fire. They will never slacken; they will never go backwards but they will keep on pressing on as Paul said, O Lord. Pressing on. Touch the sisters. Touch the women. Touch the girls. Touch, Lord. Touch, Father, touch. Cover Your Church. Protect Your Church. Preserve Your Church until the hour of Your Coming. Even our babies, the little and small ones. Even the ones in the womb, touch them, Lord. We believe because it is written that John the Baptist was filled in his mother's womb. Touch our babies, O God. Let their destinies be defined even now when they are in their mother's womb, O God. Touch, Father. It's only people on fire can change this nation, O God. Touch our children. Touch; those who have strayed away, bring them. Touch; those who have fallen away, bring them back. Touch, O Good Shepherd. Pick them up, lay them on Your shoulder, bring them back, O Lord. Touch, Lord. We just love You, Lord. This hour, we just want to say – we just love You. Help us to love You more and more. Cause us to love You. You said in Your Word – these are things that we cannot do; You have to do it in us. All we do is surrender and allow You to do it. You said, "I will circumcise your heart that you will love Me, your God with all your heart, all your might." We, today, this ninth year, the end of the ninth year and the beginning of the tenth say, "Lord, circumcise our hearts that we love You with all of our hearts, all of our minds and all of our strength." Then, fill us with Your fire. Fill us. Consume everything that is not of You and let us always be ablaze for You, O Lord; that what Moses saw on the wilderness, people will see – on fire, but not consumed. People on fire but not consumed. People on fire for God but not consumed by the fire. Thank You, Father. That's our prayer, Father. This is our prayer. Thank You. I bless Your people in Your Name. Meet them at their point of need. Whatever it is, meet them there, Lord. Thank You, Father. Thank You. Once again, we thank You for nine years of Your faithfulness as a Church. Thank You, Lord. This tenth year, we pray, Father, we need You more than ever before. Go before us; order our crooked paths; straighten our ways; teach us to walk in Your ways; cause us to walk in Your ways and Lord, be with everyone – youngest to the oldest – be with them, guide them, protect them, preserve them, Lord. Thank You, Father. Thank You, Lord. We give You glory; we give You honor; we give You praise. Thank You, Lord. In Jesus' Precious Name we pray, Amen.

Benediction:

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