

Do We Believe?

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Father, this evening, we just come to You. We just thank You for Your grace for Your mercy, for the gift of life for keeping us through this day and even bringing us into Your House, O Lord. We just thank You. As we come to the teaching of the Word, I pray, Father, that we will have hearing ears, mind that understands. Give us that understanding, Lord. Open the eyes of our mind that we might understand Your Word, for Your Word is life and in this last of last days of humanity, as we know it, we need that mind, Lord, to understand, to believe, to stand in this last hour. Speak to us. Give us strength, Lord. For in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

If you were there Wednesday, (I believe most of you were there on Wednesday), we know we looked at training, boot-camp, right? That's not a camp where you take care of your boots but where you are given boots. It's a military term where you are trained. Trained, how the army trains the recruits and then, on Sunday, we looked at the enemy we face and some of the tactics of the enemy. So, we are basically using physical symbols to learn about spiritual warfare. We are not learning physical warfare; for that, join some dojo if you want to but we are learning, using physical symbols in the Bible, how we fight this unseen, incredibly, vilely crafty, also powerful enemy. In *1 Timothy 4:7-8*, Paul talks about this this way,

1 Timothy 4:7-8

⁷But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness.

So, we are talking about spiritual training, spiritual exercise, not physical. Physical is important.

⁸For bodily exercise (that is physical exercise) profits a little, (It is good. Good for the body as long as you are in the body, it is little. Connected to eternity the time in the physical body is like a second. It profits a little) but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

So, it is talking about a spiritual exercise. We need physical exercise but even more, we need spiritual exercise. We watch over our bodies because God speaks to our spirit and then, uses our body. Remember Samson, you can have an incredible body and then, mess it up because you were not spiritually disciplined. So, every discipline a soldier receives in the army is connected with facing and defeating the enemy in battle. Whether it can be in surprise or actual planned out battle, the whole training is this – how to face your enemy, how to overcome your enemy?

On Sunday, we saw who our enemy is – he is spiritual. He is not a seen enemy, he is an unseen enemy. That doesn't mean he is not there and it doesn't mean our battles are not real. Actually, our battles are so real but because he is unseen and we don't understand how he fights, even before the battle has begun, we are defeated. In *2 Corinthians 4:4*, Scripture talks about the whole world,

2 Corinthians 4:4

⁴whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe

When we don't believe, anybody who does not believe or we struggle with believing, our minds are blinded. We saw miracles of Jesus, so many blind men being healed. The enemy has blinded our minds. We see blind people they struggle to walk. One of the main things about blind people is that they struggle to walk, they don't struggle to communicate, but they struggle to walk. Their walk is automatically affected and without help they cannot move. When our minds are blinded, we cannot move with God. So, what the enemy does is, he blinds our minds. How does he blind? By seeing that we don't believe. While in the Kingdom, we know a man has sight by the way he walks because we are called to walk by faith. So, in the world, when our minds are blinded, we may be walking and doing very well in the world but God says. "You are actually blinded, you are not walking with God." In the Kingdom, the world may think opposite about us but that man or woman may be seeing very clearly and walking with God and it is only the end that will determine who saw and who did not see. So, you will see Enoch walked with God and he was gone and his entire generation was left behind. So, we will see who saw and who did not see. Even believer who see and walk can be blinded and be taken captive by the devil. So, in *2 Timothy*,

Do We Believe?

when Scripture is talking about because the conflicts in any Church is over faith – why should it be this way? Why can't it be this way? So,

2 Timothy 2:25-26

²⁵ in humility correcting those who are in opposition,

This is talking to the man of God who teaches – the pastor, the teacher. When you hear the Word of God, so many opposing ideas will come – “Why does it have to be that way? Why can't it be this way?” But the way of God is very narrow which leads to life.

...correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, (Gently, hoping they will repent and come back so) so that they may know the truth, ²⁶ and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

He has taken them captive and they are not even aware. A lot of people who create incredible dissensions in the Church and think they are battling for the truth have no clue they have been taken captive by the enemy to do his will. What is his will? Create conflicts, break up homes, break up Churches create division in the Kingdom of God because he knows that a kingdom that is divided cannot stand. So, he can blind us and take us captive to do his will. Understand, the whole purpose of training is to battle this unseen, powerful, conniving, deceiving enemy and it is a constant battle. In the Word of God, the teaching of the Word of God is to prepare us for this battle. This battle, when will it end? The moment you die, till your last breath. You will see, like if you were there on Sunday, you will see even in her last breath, Rachel dies bitter, she loses the battle. I'm not saying she is not saved but I'm saying she's not an overcomer. Even with the last breath, people can lose this battle. Or in your last breath, you can be an overcomer like Samson – “Let me kill my enemy. One more wish I need, O Lord. One. Grant it.” So, understand, this battle will never cease with the enemy until the hour we die. So, better learn to fight. Let us be trained in godliness as *Timothy* says. But remember, in any training, any battle, always you will see the first step is very important. You have this Chinese proverb which says that the journey of a thousand miles begins with one step; let's leave the Chinese aside but the first step always matters because you will see in mathematics because God is a mathematician, that is why there is incredible order and then, He gave us freewill and we learn no mathematics, there is total disorder in our life. In Mathematics, you'll see, if you go wrong in your first step, everything goes wrong. At the end, your answer is wrong. So, the first step really, really matters. So, there is this feeding of the five thousand men, women and children besides and Jesus fed them and they were excited, incredible excited and who doesn't get excited if you can get free food. Excited and when He leaves, they follow Him and Jesus looks at them and He knows why they are following Him and He tells them, “You know what? Don't work...” I mean you look at their zeal and their enthusiasm and working and running around because He got in the boat and went on to the other side, so they came the roundabout way. Seeing that zeal and hard work. He looked at them and said, “Don't work for food that perishes, instead for that, that has an eternal value.” This is an interesting conversation. So, immediately, they said, “How do we do the works of God?” In *John 6:27*,

John 6:27

²⁷ Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.”

That's how it is. So, question is: what do we work for? Think about it, like lot of people have come back from work today. What do you actually work for? Do we really put the physical above the spiritual? The temporal before eternal. If you do, in the long run, you will be an absolute loser and it doesn't matter what the world calls you. He says, “You can do the same thing but put the spiritual first and the physical second.” So, the crowd will say, “What shall we do that we may work the works of God? What shall we do?” That's what every man wants to know, “What do You want me to do?” That's the way our mind works. See, we all put doing first. What must I do? The first fundamental work of God you and I do, must do Jesus gives the answer.

John 6:29

²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”

Do We Believe?

What is the first work? Believe! That's the first. That's why I said look at me because you did a work, you came all the way through the traffic, hard one hour and you came and sat down, but if you don't hear, you don't believe, your work is worth nothing. The first work God wants us to do is believe and to believe, you need to hear and if we haven't heard what He has to say and having believed, our second and third and fourth and fifth and sixth and seventh, every step will be wrong it doesn't matter how good it looks because we went wrong in the first step and the first step is the most important step. What is the first step? Believe! But we will ask, what do you want me to do? God says, "It is not 'do' first, it is believing first." And we struggle with that every day, because it is a natural impulse.

Saul of Tarsus (that is Apostle Paul) first encounter with Jesus in Acts 9:6, you know he meets Jesus and he knows now this is Jesus and his first response, he is trembling, astonished and said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" That's what we always think, come to Church, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" God says, "It will be told you. You are not ready to do anything." God says, "None of us are ready to do anything in His Name until we have believed." None of us, absolutely worthless to do any work of God until we have believed. Therefore, He says, "Arise and go into the city, it will be told you, you are not ready." That's our impulse. In Acts 2, when they heard, Peter preaches and they are cut to the heart, in *Chapter 2:37*

Acts 2:37

³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

Now you will say, "Okay, say twenty-one Novenas." "Ah! Vey happy. I can do something." "O, light five candles, or roll up the steps of that hills and then, roll back." "Oh, fine!" These are prescriptions given in religion and religion will always give you an answer which is in your hands, "Do this!" God doesn't. Verse 38, God says, "Repent!" Repentance is connected with believing. He said, "Repent!" In Acts 16, remember the famous scene in the prison in Philippi, verse 30 and 31. This is the jailer, he has seen an incredible miracle, chains are falling out, he comes falls at his feet, the Roman jailer and he says,

Acts 16:30-31

³⁰ And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹ So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

See, religion automatically thinks we need to do something and what does Paul say? "Believe." First thing you need to do is believe. Without believing, if you do anything; it is worthless. So, even connected with the Gospel commission in *Mark*, God will say, "Those who believe and are baptized, you are saved and if you don't believe, even if you are baptized, you are condemned," and most of us who came from Christian background will realize, we were all baptized without believing. So, our baptism was worth nothing. We did something which were done for us without us ever believing. That's why in the *Book of Acts* were the record of baptism is given, you will never hear anybody being baptized before hearing the Word of God. They are to hear, they are to believe then they get baptized. Understand, what comes first? Believing! So, if you go through the Bible, the answer seems to be always the same – repent and believe. They always go together; these two things go together. I cannot believe without repenting and I cannot repent without believing, they go together.

Somebody taught you in school that two plus two is three. Now, imagine you continue that and you believe that two plus two is three. Now, imagine you continue that and you believe that two plus two is three and you go through life, when it is just four, your loss is only one, when it is forty, your loss is ten. When it is four hundred, your loss is hundred. When it is four thousand, your loss is thousand. When it is four million, your loss is one million. If it is forty million, it is ten million. You don't realize that. So, if you go with your mathematics and you run a corporation, your corporation will go bankrupt, why? Because you went wrong with the fundamentals that two plus two is three when it is four. So, the day you hear two plus two is not three it is not four, first, you have to repent, "This is wrong and then, I have to accept the truth – this is right." So, repenting and believing always go together. You cannot believe something which God is telling you as true without negating something which you believed earlier was right. It is not putting on something. That is what Scripture is talking about to Jeremiah. We have seen that. You see this, what we do is we build like this, without changing our false foundations. So, God tells Jeremiah, "I've told you to break down and build." That is the work of God. Otherwise, it doesn't work. It is a total transcend. It is a new creation God is doing. He is not building on the old creation. Behold all the old things have passed away; everything is new. So, you will realize, every time you hear the ministry of God's Word, He speaks to you something

Do We Believe?

which you know is new and true. You have to repent from something that is old and false and it is not possible otherwise. That is walking in salvation. Because all our minds were blinded by the devil with wonderful ideas which were all false. The most dangerous and most painful part for us to understand is that, when the truth of God comes into our hearts, it is to realize that everything about me is actually false. My love for my father, my love for my brother, my love for my siblings, my love for my wife, my love for my children, everything was false. Because Christ was not there in it. It's all false. And it's a very mind-shaking thing to look. That is, look, for us to really understand – "You know what? Without Christ, I am an absolute zero." That's what Paul realizes – "In me, there is absolutely nothing good, without Christ. Because Christ is the truth." So, God says, "First things first. First thing to do is to believe." What I've believed so far is wrong, a lie. So, I repent. Repentance means? There is a change of mind. There is a change in my attitude. And I receive the truth about it. That's what happened on the Day of Pentecost. They were told. What were they told? Before Pentecost, 40 days? They've been talking, "You know about this Jesus who died? He was a crook. The priest told us He was a crook. And He was a rebel. He needed to die. Barnabas the thief, and that murderer, was better than Him." That's what they taught and heard. And then, on that day, they heard something, "The Jesus whom you crucified is, God has made Him, Lord and Saviour." They were shocked. For so many days, they have been hearing from the priestly classes, supposing to give you the knowledge about the truth. He has been telling him, "He is a thief, He is a crook, He is the murderer, He deserved to die. His body is missing but His disciples are also crooks. They have stolen His body away." Today, one of the disciples stands and says, "You know what? Who He is? He is Lord and Saviour." And Holy Spirit comes with power and convicts them and says, "That is true. What this man says is true." And when the Holy Spirit says something, there is no argument to it. You don't understand, you have no answer when the Holy Spirit convicts you. You know this is true. How do you know it is true? I know it is true, because it is true. It is the Spirit of Truth that is convicting them. They have no answer to that. That's what that happened. And all Peter used was Scripture. Simple Scripture from the *Book of Joel*, the *Book of Psalms*, used Scripture, the Holy Spirit took Scripture to convicted the hearts of the people. And they knew it was true. That should be our procedure all our life. We may use illustrations, we may use jokes, we may use humour, but ultimately, that is only to make you understand. Conviction comes through Scripture, and Scripture alone. The Holy Spirit will stand witness to the Word of God and Word of God alone. Not to history, not to psychology, not to physiology, not to sociology; nothing, only to Scripture. Because only the Word of God is true.

That is why the devil blinds us by saying, "Don't worry about this, worry about math. Without math, how will you progress in life? Worry about English. Worry about Telugu. You should worry about all that." But in the process, you will tell, "(sighs) Keep it for vacation, this (the Bible) is not so important." When vacation comes, they will say, "Watch TV. After all, this is vacation." How we struggle with this! We struggle. So, we have two choices when we hear the Word of God. We can either repent, or we can reject. Repenting is giving off away of something which we have received earlier, through parents, through school, through friends, through world's system, whatever – That's wrong. That's a lie and replacing it with the truth. But rejection, when we reject, it can come in different forms. Rejection can come in different forms. One of the ways rejection comes is scoffing. Scoffing, you know like in *2 Chronicles 36:16* and *2 Peter*.

2 Chronicles 36:16

¹⁶ But they mocked God's messengers, (and) despised his words (They mocked the messengers of God, despised his word) and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the Lord came

Until, till then, when the wrath came, it was too late. Can you imagine Noah's generation? How many would have laugh at him! "What happened to this old man?" But they all came to see. They all listened to his message and they must have laughed at him. They mocked, they despised, they scoffed, until the day of judgement came. And then they realized, "Oh, the Word you preached is true. But it's too late."

And *2 Peter 3:3* says, the same thing.

2 Peter 3:3

³ knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,

Why? They like something in the world. And when they hear the Word pointing to that same thing, they laugh. They laugh. In *Proverbs 9:8*, it will tell us how to deal with scoffers. *Proverbs 9:8* will tell us, what does it say?

Proverbs 9:8

⁸ ***Do not correct a scoffer, (don't correct a scoffer) lest he hate you;***

Leave them alone. Don't try to correct scoffers. That's exactly what Scriptures says, "God doesn't throw His pearls before swine because they are scoffers." The minute you see somebody mocking, scoff; not being doubtful and asking questions. All that is fine. The minute you see a scoffer, leave them alone. Cause God says, leave them alone. Don't correct a scoffer. Those who scoff at the Word of God leave them alone.

Another form of rejection of the Word of God is that it can turn from scoffing to violence. Especially if they have power. It can turn to violence. In *Acts 7:54*, you'll see when Stephen was speaking to the Sanhedrin and is giving the history through the Bible, starting with Abraham onwards.

Acts 7:54, 57-58

⁵⁴ ***When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth.***

They were mad. Verse 57 and 58 says because they had power. We don't do a lot of things to preachers. We don't even gnash. We go home and gnash. We get on phone and gnash our teeth about the message with others. But if we had power, this is what

⁵⁷ ***Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; (It's a mob. One accord.)⁵⁸ and they cast him out of the city and stoned him.***

It's interesting, the first martyr when he is being stoned. Just like his Master, he is being stoned to death outside the city. God is saying, "The city is not worthy of you." While they may say, "You are not worthy of the city," God will say, "The city is not worthy of you." So, remember, understand – either we repent or we reject. And reject can be so many different ways. One can be scoffing; the other can be, you know Pastor Vijay has talked about procrastination, delaying it. King Agrippa, "Okay, when it's an appropriate time, I will listen to you, okay?" Those times never come. So many ways. See, when the truth comes in, the time to deal with truth is, now. God says, when you hear my voice, today, it's now! You delay, it often becomes very late. Okay! Unless God in his mercy gives us more chances. Okay! So, remember this is the first thing we need to do is to believe. When we hear we believe, how do we know we have believed, we heard, that is true? And I repent of my lie and I receive that truth. Okay?

That is where knowledge comes in. Now, you understand why knowledge is so important because to continue in truth, we need the knowledge of truth. To continue to walk in faith, I need to know more and more of God and of God's ways. I need. That's why in *Hosea* in chapter 4 verse 6 God says, "*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.* All the knowledge you learn in school and college and universities, will help you in this world, it will not help you in the Kingdom of God. Ultimately, you will be destroyed. If you don't have the knowledge of who God is, what His ways are, you will be destroyed. That is good, you need to learn all that. Not all of it but some of it at least, as skills. But it is the knowledge of God which will take you on to the other side. He says, "Because you have rejected, knowledge. What do I do? I have rejected you as My priest." In the Kingdom, who are there? Priests and Kings. Nothing else. In the Kingdom of God, you read *Revelations* in the Kingdom of God, when it is manifested among people, there are only two kinds of people – priests and kings. Priests are those who serve God and kings are those who rule with God. Only two sets of people. And God says, "Because you rejected knowledge, I will also reject you as priest." That's why we need knowledge. So, the first thing God says is, "You need to know who I AM. You need to know My ways." We don't need knowledge of evil. But we do need the knowledge of good. Because God is good. And *Romans 16:19* says, we know that song, right?

Romans 16:19

¹⁹ ***I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil.***

Don't even go into that areas. You know something is evil. A lot of young people have fascination with evil. That's why I don't even mention names because I know you are here something connected with evil, you will google search it. And want to know it and expert in it. That's not our job. It's good to be simple about evil, be excellent about good. Fascination is with evil. There is fascination of the fallen man with evil. But the redeemed man is fascinated with good. And God says, "Be excellent, be wise concerning what is good." And be innocent, simple in concerning with what is evil. So, we need

Do We Believe?

knowledge, we need knowledge of good. Who is God? What are His ways? How does His Kingdom function? We need this knowledge. But remember guard your heart. There is an issue with knowledge. There is primary issue with knowledge, which you see in *1 Corinthians 8:1*

1 Corinthians 8:1

¹ ***Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.***

We all know we all have knowledge, and knowledge puffs up. If you have knowledge of good, and you practice the knowledge of good, automatically you think you are good. That's still okay. But the problem is you not only think you are good, you also think the other one is evil. That's what the tax collector, the Pharisee is saying, I am not like that dude. I am good. That fellow is evil. Knowledge puffs up.

Knowledge automatically, in a fallen man, in an unredeemed, unrepented heart will always think make you think you are better than the other one. It puffs up. And, God says, "Guard your heart as you acquire knowledge." Be very, very careful because knowledge is a double-edged sword. It is very powerful in your walk with God. It can kill you also. Because knowledge can destroy. Of all of God's creation of everything God has created. the most magnificent creation was not you or me. Okay? So, put that away. It will bring some humility. It was none of us. His most magnificent creation was Lucifer, satan, the devil. Of all of His creation, the most magnificent was the devil. Let's listen to his description in *Ezekiel 28:12-15*

Ezekiel 28:12-15

¹² ***Thus, says the Lord God:*** (This is talking about the Lucifer, the devil) ***"You were the seal of perfection,*** (when you put a seal, it means it is complete. God says, if you talk about created perfection, you are that dude. You are perfect. This is the devil) ***Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.*** (It's a terrible combination. Full of wisdom and full of beauty) ¹³***You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold...***

That's how he walked. Gold with all. See, you have to understand the physical part of it, the reality of it and the spiritual connotation to the New Covenant to the spiritual man. The Old Covenant, they left it alone, because it's the carnal man. The New Covenant man is the spiritual man. And to the spiritual man, God says, to the spiritual man and woman, Gods says, through Paul and Peter says, "Let your beauty be from all these things. Why? Because somebody was like that. Don't imitate him. Don't go after ornaments, don't go after gold and silver. Don't go after wealthy apparel. Because once upon a time, there was somebody who walked like that. Even when the Son of Man came, He was incredibly humble and incredibly simple in His outward form. Imitate Him that's real beauty.

...The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes, was prepared for you on the day you were created.

You were an incredible singer and musician. Imagine this man, imagine this creature. Perfect in beauty, perfect in wisdom and when he takes the guitar and sings. You know the most powerful medium in the modern world is music. More than movies, its music. Imagine this guy. Beauty, wisdom, precious stones. Gold inlaid with all this. And then?

¹⁴ ***"You were the anointed*** (you are not an ordinary cherub, you had anointing. You did not only have anointing)

I established you;

You were also ordained. There are many who are ordained in this world, who do not have the anointing and there are many who are anointed, who do not have the ordination. Think about this creature God has made him. Full of wisdom, full of beauty, walks in these. When it comes to music and musical instruments. He has no match. He was an anointed cherub. And he was ordained. You, who can walk, ascend, who can ascend. He is not even talking about ascending. He is on the Holy hill of God. He has pure hands and a clean heart. *You walked back and forth* on the Holy hill of God. Then?

¹⁵ ***You were perfect in your ways*** (Wow) ***from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.***

Till iniquity was found in you. How did it happen?

¹⁷ ***“Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; (lifted up) You corrupted your wisdom***

Heart was lifted up because of the beauty. That’s why it is very difficult to find knowledgeable people, who are humble. And beautiful women, who are humble. Very difficult. And if you are that’s an incredible combination. If a knowledgeable man is humble, he is always aware of his ignorance, of what he doesn’t know. A humble knowledgeable man is always conscious of what he doesn’t know. Not about what he knows. So, you can always make out. A knowledgeable humble man before God talking what he doesn’t know. A knowledgeable proud man forever telling everybody what how much he knows. Understand the difference. Isaiah says, the same thing in *Isaiah 14:13-14*. Isaiah and Ezekiel are the ones who are given a preview or a glimpse of what happened in the eternity past in heaven with devil.

Isaiah 14:13-14

¹³ ***For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation, on the farthest sides of the north; ¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’***

Basically, he says, “I will be God and I shall decide.” One of the primary facets of God, other than His power and all; all these gods have power. Our God has absolute power but more than that, one of the ultimate facets of God is that God alone decides what is good and evil. The day the devil decided, “I will be like God,” he decided what is good and what is bad. And he planted this in man in the Garden of Eden and all of us struggle with that. When the Word of God comes and says, “This in you is bad,” we fight, “Who told you?” See, in your office, when you go wrong, they will only say, “This process was wrong.” They don’t tell you, “You are evil.” The Word of God tells you that you are evil. Religion will tell you, “Your ways are wrong and you can correct it by yourself.” God never says that. You are evil and you can never correct yourself. The only way out is, “First believe what My Son has done. Then only you have redemption.” And the fallen man gets so mad because the fallen man’s nature is the nature of the devil. Ultimately, the devil, when you look into that, he did not believe even God. When iniquity was found in him, he did not believe in God. He had the belief about God but he did not believe in God. We may have the right belief about God and we may be able to say the Apostles’ creed out of memory but not have the right belief in God. *James 2:19* – the difference between the right belief of God and the right belief in God.

James 2:19

¹⁹ ***You believe that there is one God. You do well...***

That belief is correct. You will get 100% in that exam.

...Even the demons believe—and tremble!

Meaning – except for man and this human world, in the spiritual realm, everybody is monotheistic. In the spiritual realm, everybody knows there is only one God. Even the devil knows there is only one God. He has the right belief about God but he doesn’t have the right belief in God. Right belief about God is not going to take us anywhere. It is the right belief in God that is going to take us somewhere. So, Jesus says in *John 6:29*, the first work you need to do,

John 6:29

²⁹ ***Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”***

We want to do the work of God. God says, “That’s fantastic. I would love you to do My work.” And what is the first work you have to do? “Believe in My Son. That’s the beginning. If you don’t believe in My Son and what He has said, then it doesn’t make any difference.” Over this statement itself, the whole of mankind is divided. Jews believe in all the prophets but they don’t believe in God. But the problem is – I also believe in the words of all the prophets that the Jews believe in. I don’t believe in them. Can Abraham save you? Can Moses save you? Can Malachi save you? Muslims believe in Jesus but they believe that Mohammad is the last prophet and the final one. Can that save you? No. Multiplicities of Hindus believe in Jesus along with all the other gods. No Hindu have I ever met in life, nice people, who will say, “No, I believe in Jesus too.” And if they can get a statue in one of these Catholic book shop, they will take it and they will put that also there and they will regularly put flowers for Him also. You can’t blame their ignorance. If we put up the statues and they pick one of the

statues, we are to be blamed; not them. It was to us that God said, “You shall not make anything of graven image of anything in Heaven or below.” It was to us He told. He didn’t tell them. So, when we, to whom it has been told, make statues and keep it in front of our Churches and they buy the little ones and keep it in their houses, who is to be blamed? Not them. They are ignorant. Some Hindus also believe that Jesus is the chief of gods. Nebuchadnezzar, when Daniel interpreted the dream said, “Your God is the chief of gods.” Will that save him? No. Many Christians, millions, over a billion Christians believe in Jesus whom God sent but they also believe in Mary and the other saints. Will that help you? No. Simple question is: can Mary save you? Can Peter save me? Can Paul save me? No. They didn’t die for me. They all died but their death has no atonement. Their blood has no power to save a single sinner because they themselves were sinners who were saved by the Blood of Jesus. What is the first words of Mary when Gabriel says, “You are going to bear the Son of God which is the Holy One”? “My soul rejoices in my God, my Savior.” She realizes that the Baby in the womb which has been conceived is her Savior, who is going to save her one day. You see, when you supplant the truth of God is a lie, what they did is that, they said, “No.” The official Catholic dogma says that Mary is co-redemptress, which means – she also saves along with Jesus. Now, because you added something, then you have to add something more to buttress this lie. So, they say, “She was created without sin.” But the question is: if she is created without sin, He was born of the Holy Spirit; was she? You see, this is the problem. When we reject the truth, we have to supplant it with a lie. When we receive the truth, we have to reject that lie. It will immediately bring conflict. And the problem is – most Christians, like one billion plus Muslims, 800-900 million of them are illiterate. So, they cannot read their Quran. Christians can read but they are Biblically illiterate. They don’t know their Bible. So, they believe anything that is told by anybody. That’s why we put Scripture up there. You don’t have to believe me but what does Scripture say? My job is not to preach to you; my job is to show you and teach you from Scripture what Scripture says because the foundation is Scripture. The beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God. That is on which everything should rest. Every argument of every servant of God should rest with Scripture. Nothing else. And we struggle with that. So, believing is not a mental ascent with your mind; it’s believing with your heart. If you don’t believe with your heart, how will you perceive Him all the days of your life? That’s why Paul says, “If this is true and you have believed in the truth and you are saved and you are born again, this is your reasonable response.” He says, “Your reasonable response.” *Romans 12*. What is your reasonable response?

Romans 12:1-2

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

Now, the question is this; now, we are connecting the messages. If you and I don’t learn every day to surrender my body, that is physical discipline, and discipline my mind to the patterns of God, how will I know what is the good, acceptable, perfect will of God? God says, “The process of knowing the will of God is first – offer your bodies.” There are so many things told about offering your bodies, to be holy, acceptable and all are important. Go to verse 1 – offer your bodies. Why are you able to hear the Word of God today? Because first thing – you offered your bodies, willingly or unwillingly; but you offered your bodies. Present your bodies as a living sacrifice. That means – don’t come here and sleep. First thing, that’s what it means – don’t sleep. Be living; not a sleeping sacrifice but a living sacrifice. Second – be holy. If you haven’t walked in repentance, the Word will not strike you. It will miss you. You are here, a living sacrifice but unholy; and the Word of God is holy; you will keep on rejecting it. You will tune off and it is very easy for the devil to distract you. Very easy. It’s very difficult for the devil to distract holy prepared vessels. Very difficult. Are you getting it? Holy and you should be acceptable to God. Your ways should be acceptable. You come in a frame of mind where you accept. That’s why we tell you on Saturdays, don’t sit till 1 or 2 in the morning and then, come here. Your body is not acceptable. The way you presented your body. Or you party on Saturday; you eat so much and come to Church. You are so tired. You’ve been sitting. All those ways are not accepted because God has created the body to function in a particular way. When you have exams tomorrow, doesn’t whoever is in charge of you, a parent, would say, “Sleep early, wake up early. See that.” Don’t they prepare you for the exam? Then, how come people don’t prepare for truth? Because we don’t take it seriously. One of the reasons the Word of God misses most people is because they don’t take God’s instructions seriously. We haven’t believed. If we don’t believe, then only second pattern. Second is, what? Conforming to the pattern of the Word and not the pattern of the world. Renewing of your mind will take place. You look at the young ones struggling, eyes are going here and there; struggling. Why? Because this is discipline. But the problem is this – if I don’t repent, first accept and start working on it with God’s grace, how will I know the will of God? Now, there is a problem with the will of God. I didn’t say it; Jesus said it. Jesus said in *Matthew 7:21*. Do you know what He said about the will of God?

Matthew 7:21

²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

Now, to do, I need to know. Without knowing, how can I do? Without doing, how will I enter? So, God says, “Faith is not static; it is living.” It is not by mental acts that people enter into God; it is an active walk of faith and for this active walk of faith, there are certain parameters God has set. So, Paul says, “What should I do?” God said, “It would be told to you. Go to the city.” What does he do? He goes. He is blind. He is held and he is taken and the first thing we know that for three days, he is fasting and he is praying. What is he doing? He is preparing his body and he is preparing his mind. Third day, God speaks to Ananias, “Go to that street, go to that house; that man is there. Behold, he is praying. Lay hands upon him.” Eyes are open. He is baptized. He receives the Holy Spirit. God says, “Your work begins because you were ready. You were prepared.” How do you know you are prepared? Because you believe what you have heard. How do you know you have believed? By your actions. Three days. Are we getting the picture? The problem is, we need to ask – what is my faith based on? Simple things. Jesus appeared to over 500 disciples but Paul will say in *Corinthians*, before He ascended to Heaven. So many things which we do. So many things which have no sense with Scripture, like many Christians, when someone dies, the family will have a 40th day ceremony, saying that Jesus was wandering around for 40 days. Then only, He ascended. That’s not what Scripture says. Scripture says that He ascended to Heaven on the first day, went to the Holiest of Holies with His own Blood because what was on earth is just a replica; the real thing is there. He entered into the Holiest of Holies with His own Blood and He offered it as the one-time atonement and the Father receives His Blood. That happened on the first day. He didn’t ascend on the 40th day. He ascended and came down many times. See. Even our beliefs are not based on truth. Now, we will say, “Pastor, what should I do if somebody dies in my family? Should I have a 1st day ceremony?” No. Just have a ceremony, a memorial service any day. Because our mind will immediately go into religion. “Aiyo.” Because religion is connected with people. Because, “if I don’t have a ceremony, what will people say?” Everybody is bothered about what people will say; nobody is bothered about what God will say. “What will people say?” – is religion. What God will say is faith. That’s the difference.

So, what is my faith based on? So, there is believing and there is doing. Not doing first. First is believing. Believing followed with doing. The more you believe, the more you do to the point in *2 Peter 1:10-11*, Scripture gives a list; I’m not giving you a list.

2 Peter 1:10-11

¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do (Now, it’s not just believing; it’s doing,)

these things you will never stumble;

In your, what? In your walk with God. You can walk consistently. Let the world say whatever they want. You can consistently walk with God if you do these things but to do these things, you need to hear and to hear, you need to believe and when you believe and do, you will not stumble. Not only that, when your end happens, what happens?

¹¹ for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Your entrance into the Kingdom of God will be like Paul’s – “I see my crown.” God says, “You can be absolutely sure of a glorious reception into the Kingdom of God because you believed and you did.” That’s how the Kingdom works. This is the spiritual battle we are in. It’s a battle and it’s about this battle in *2 Timothy 4:7* Paul will say, at the end of his life.

2 Timothy 4:7

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

“I have kept on fighting and till the end, what did I do?”

...I have kept the faith.

“I didn’t lose in this fight. I kept the faith. I have kept the faith. I fought the good fight.” For many people, faith means religion. No, that’s not what it means. Faith means your walk with God. Faith comes from hearing and hearing the Word of God. So, remember – the devil is going to use, what? Sight, to trip us. The only way the devil can actually trip us is by using sight. Opposed to sight; sight has so many things. When you are conscious, the moment you wake up, sight comes in. With memories of yesterday to the dreams of today and the sights, the flesh, the hunger – everything is called sight. Opposed to the entire gamut of sight, there is one Book, one Book alone. This whole world is based on sight. Opposed to that stands one Book, one Book alone – the Word of God. Nothing else. Just one Book. That’s enough. Against all the powers of darkness who will use the world’s system to get us into sight, there is one Book and one Book alone. That’s why there has been no Book in human history that has been attacked like this Book. No Book. For centuries, especially, after Christianity came, after Christ, centuries, to own this Book, you could be killed. During the Catholic reign of the middle ages, only priests were allowed to have a Book. If a common Christian was found with the Book, you are dead. You are not allowed to have it because if you read it, you will ask, “If this is true, why are these things happening in the Church? It doesn’t tally with the Book.” So, they were not allowed to have the Book until Martin Luther came. He was a priest who had the Book. If he had not been a priest, there would have been no Protestant reformation. Why was there a Protestant reformation? Because one priest read the Book. When he read the Book, he said, “Aiyo, what is happening here? I am being told to do a lot of things which is contrary to the Book. This is the Book that gives me power. This is the Book that gives me authority. This is the Book that has made me what I am but everything that I’m asked to do is against that Book.” The Book, remember. That’s why the reading of this Book. You read any book, you don’t fall asleep. You read this Book, sleep suddenly comes. Why? Because the devil brings nidara (sleep). He knows you read this Book, you understand His Book, his game is over. Because it is by reading, by hearing actually. One form of hearing is by reading. When you come to the preaching of the Word. You see, how we suddenly rise up from your sleep when a joke is cracked in the Church and fall asleep after the effects of the joke is over? Why? Because the devil knows – the preaching of the Word, if you hear. Faith comes from the hearing and hearing from the Word of God. Remember in *Romans 10*? He will talk about faith and he will say, “The Word that can save you is so very near you. If you believe in your heart and confess with your mouth, the Lord Jesus will save you.” And after having said all this, he will come with a very emphatic statement. He will say,

Romans 10:13

¹³ For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Very emphatic statement –

¹³ For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

After that, he comes with a whole set of rhetorical questions. Interesting questions. First question –

Romans 10:14-18

¹⁴ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?...

First question. Can you call on Jesus if you have never heard the Name of Jesus? Can you call upon Jesus if the Jesus you are presented is not the Jesus who was crucified on the Cross for your sins? Can you call upon Jesus as your Redeemer if the preaching you have heard is not telling you you are a sinner who needs to repent? Which Jesus are you calling upon, the one who will give you money or the One who gives you salvation?

¹⁴ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?...

First question. Second,

...And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?

They have never heard about the real Jesus. That’s why, today, Churches are full of no faith and the world is taking over because the Jesus they have heard is not the Jesus of the Gospels. When you hear the Jesus of the Gospels, your heart is cut one way or the other. Either you will cry, “What should I do?” Or you will gnash your teeth. Three words the preacher used

Do We Believe?

– “Either you will be glad, you will be sad or you will be mad.” You will be glad because you heard, “O Lord, thank You, Lord. What I believed is true. Thank You, Lord.” You will be sad, “Lord, that is not what I am.” Or you will be mad, “I want to knock him off the pulpit.”

...And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?

Next question;

...And how shall they hear without a preacher?

Next;

¹⁵ And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!”

The best news man can ever hear is, “God has made a way. After you die, you don’t need to go to hell. You can go and be with God. While you are living, you can be with God.” There is no better tidings than that. The glad tidings is that if you believe in Jesus, you will get lots of money and houses and cars? No, find a job in Dubai. They have more than us, much more than us. Mansions without believing in Jesus.

¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. (The Gospel has been preached,) ***For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our report?”***

We have preached the Word of God. The Word of God to the ends of the world from time memorial but everybody has not believed. What does the next verse say?

¹⁷ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. ¹⁸ But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: “Their sound has gone out to all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world.”

The Word has gone to the end of the world but people don’t believe. How do you know you have believed? You obey. Obedience is proof that you and I have believed and repentance is an act of obedience. So, ultimately, faith becomes a very personal thing because the walk of God is a very personal thing. It’s a very personal thing. So, when you go back; now, we are all sitting together. It’s a very communal thing. Not communal in the sense of communalism; as community of believers, we are sitting and one person is preaching; you are listening but when you go back, faith is a very personal thing. What you heard, God is saying, “Let Me see how many believed, how many obeyed.” So, don’t confuse the pattern of the world with the pattern of God because God has a pattern.

Often, our words will see that we are making excuses for the world and not for the Word. “Ah!” Like if Vijay were to walk like a crazy man, we would say, “Arrey, jaane do (let it be). After all, men will be men.” Right? A woman, a believing woman takes two hours before the mirror and we say, “Jaane do (let it be). Women will be women.” Boys will be boys. Girls will be girls. Did somebody say that to Joseph to Daniel, “Boys will be boys”? Interesting, right? Did God tell satan, “Look at Job; men will be men”? Did He say? He said, “Look at My man.” Did Peter, in *1 Peter 3* say, “Women will be women,” or did he say, “Look at the holy women of the past, especially Sarah”? See, we make excuses because our pattern is from the world. Our nose is not pointed towards the Kingdom. We always make excuses because somewhere or the other, we want to conform to the pattern of the world and we are comfortable, actually, with those who... Honestly, we like godly people; meaning – those who have accepted and know God and who sit in the middle. We don’t like extreme people because they make us mad. We like these people who sit in the middle. So, when you sit in the middle, if you are walking with God, you feel good, “Okay, that sister or that brother is also walking with God.” When you fall away, you will say, “Okay, that’s good. He also does the same thing.” Nobody studies the *Book of Job*. Nobody studies the *Book of Daniel* to learn from Daniel. They learn eschatology. They don’t want to learn from Daniel. “Paagal. Baad mein choddho usko. (He’s mad. Leave him aside). You cannot rise in the world like that. It doesn’t work” – this is the first thing they will say. If you want to know about the future, study that Book. See, we like the world. Faith is active. Faith is a verb in the Bible; not a noun, not an adjective; it’s a verb. Faith always zooms into God’s Word and takes a stand for itself and once it takes its stand, it is immovable.

We have reached 8:30. So, I'm closing here but I want to tell you something. *Daniel* has been one of those fascinating Books for me. 12 chapters – chapter 1, chapter 2, chapter 3; I put chapter 3 aside. Chapter 4; chapter 5; chapter 6; chapter 7; chapter 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. Why do I put 3 on the other side? Because from 1-2, 4-12, you will see Daniel. In 3, he is not there. In 3, he is not there and this chapter is like one of the most important chapters when 3 men are going to be thrown into fire. He is not there. 1 is there; 2 is there. 3 young men who stood up because he stood up are asked to stand alone. One day, if I'm not there, Vijay is not there, will you stand up? It's easy to sit in Church, easy to stand up in Church. But the question is not whether you stand in Church but whether you stand in your classroom. This is irrelevant. If you are not standing there tomorrow, this is irrelevant. If you are not standing in your offices, it doesn't matter what you do here. It's irrelevant. Because faith is an active walk. What matters is not what you do here; what matters is what you do there and what you do there tallies with what happens here, then it works. Then, it's fantastic. Then, God starts. Think. If you read chapter 3, you will see a place called Durah. This is hill surrounding massive plains. Thousands upon thousands of people are there from every land. You need to understand war tactics; some kings are smart and not to smart. Like Alexander was smart in war but terrible in peace. If you were a small nation like Greece, you can rush like a leopard and conquer land after land but how are you going to hold this land? There's no point in conquering a land if you cannot hold it. Nebuchadnezzar was smart. He had so much land but he got people from every land, got them into the civil services, made them like Babylonians and sent them so that they ruled. So, there is no insurrection. That's what he has done. He's got people from all over the Babylonian land. Everybody has no problem with idols. Every Gentile has different idols. So, he doesn't have a problem with another idol. Judah and Israel have compromised under so many unbelieving kings, they have been worshipping calves at Dan and Beersheba and everywhere. They also have no problem. So, there is this huge statue made. Fire is burning over there; edict is proclaimed; there is music and celebration because this statue is going to be now instituted. And when the edict goes, everybody, you can see line upon line, tens and thousands of people are supposed to go on their knees and bow down and when the trumpet is blown, everybody bows down and you see three men standing. Just three men standing. That is the scene you have to imagine – three men standing. Just three men. God is saying, "There will always be very few number of people for God because they knew that is the right thing to do." What was the edict? If you don't, you will die. You know how a man of God put it? "All of us are going to die anyway. All of us will die one day. It's better to die early and enter God's presence in peace than to live long and to die and enter into God's presence with terror." Because anyway you are going to die. The question is not whether you are going to die or not but how will you die and how will you enter into His presence? Will you enter in with peace knowing, "I stood for what I knew, I was for God and I have died in pain but entered in peace." "I die without pain and entered with terror." That's the question. And that idol he makes is just a symbol of the idols that are within us. There are idols within us. We don't realize – God says, "No idolatry in Heaven." Every day we wake up, He says, "Either you serve Me or you serve the idol in you." It's a choice. The walk of faith is a walk where every idol is destroyed and for idolatry to be destroyed, there is a disciplining of the body and there is the disciplining of the mind in the ways of God and God says, "You will know what is the good, the acceptable and finally, what is the perfect will of God. You will." Otherwise, He says, "You will not." And if you don't do the will of God, the question is: did I really believe? What did I believe? Some myth. If I haven't believed. Like I said, the issue is not now. In one week time, you will be going for vacation. That vacation will decide what you are. That will decide what you are. Nobody is there. Your guardians don't know what the Bible is. Nobody is there to supervise. That will tell you who you are. I don't know who you are. You yourself don't know who you are but you will know. When Sabbath comes, you will know. God allows us to know who we are so that we would repent and not reject and not scoff and not fight. Repent and receive His truth. When we receive His truth, His Spirit give us grace to overcome. Grace is not given to anybody who does not receive truth. So, they come together. How did Jesus come? Full of grace and full of truth. What is grace for? For those who want to keep truth. Others don't need truth. Others need money. They don't need grace. When they say 'grace', they mean money. Grace is only for those who is after truth. God says, "My Spirit will give you the strength to stand alone in that plain, stand there alone." When they are brought before the king, they say, "This is the king, Lord. If He wants to save us, He can save us. If He doesn't want to save us, He doesn't have to save us. One thing we know – we don't bow before any idol. We serve the Living God." One thing because truth can stand on its own. It doesn't need any incentive. We need incentive to do things. When you are children, you are small, memorize two verses, you will get a chocolate. When you are 42 and your teeth is coming off your nose also, "Come to the Bible study." Please, SMS, Text, wake up call, everything. People tell me, "Wake me up in the morning, Pastor. I will come to Church." Think about it. Okay? Shall we stand? We will continue. As we prepare for VBS next week, we will continue on Saturday (for the Pastors) and Sunday.

Closing Prayer:

Do We Believe?

Father, this evening, we just come to You, Lord. O Father, the Kingdom of God is the only eternal thing. Everything else we see, we experience now on earth is temporary. It is passing away. Your Word says, "The world and its desires are passing away but the man who does the will of God lives forever." It's all passing away, Lord. We see it. Everything is passing away. Nations are being shaken. Dispensations are being shaken. Everything is passing away and there is fear, terror and complacency on different sides, O Lord. But the man of faith, the woman of faith, the child of faith is asked to keep their focus on You. On You alone, Lord. I pray, Father, every day, You will help us to believe because that is the first work of God – to believe and then, to do. I pray for my children here, Lord, all of them here. They have heard. They have sat almost for 10 years now. I pray, Father, they will walk in obedience. They will walk in faith. They will walk in repentance and they will know You. They will be a set of people who know You and therefore, they will do mighty deeds. The prophecy in Daniel will come to pass in these last days through Your chosen people, the remnant in every generation. Let there be some from this Church too, Lord. Thank You, Father. We commit the rest of the week into Thy hands. I pray for Saturday. I pray You will bring Your servants, Lord, whom You have prepared safely. You brought us safely, Lord and I pray You will reach us all home safely. We surrender our future, our homes, our families, our children, the Church and all our other Churches into Thy hands. Deal with each one as You see fit, Lord. Only You know what it will take a man to believe. So, we release everything into Thy hands. Be Thou God over our lives. For in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.