

# His Resurrection And My Life!

Pastor Vijay Eathakota  
www.gracetabernaclehyd.org

*Father, we thank You, Lord. We praise You. We worship You, Father. You are a good God, Your mercy endures forever. What a day, O Lord, when the world calls it all fool's day. Father, You said, "The foolishness of God is greater than man's wisdom and the weakness of God is stronger than the strength of man and we just confess that, O Lord. We might be fools for believing in the resurrection but we know, Father, that what is foolish in the sight of man is power in the sight of God and You said, O Lord Father, in Your Word that You choose the foolish things of this world to confound the wisdom of this world and the weak things, the base things to bring to nothing the things that are strong and mighty. O Lord, enable us to be a part of those fools, O Lord, who are fools for Your sake. O Father, and let Your power shine through us, O Lord, so that when people see us, they will know that it is not us; it is the power of God through us. Thank You, Father, and even as we meditate on Your Word this morning, I pray that You'd empower us, that You'd anoint us, cleanse me, cleanse each one of us and continue to cleanse us by the washing of water by the Word. By faith, we apply the Blood of Jesus over our lives and over our ears that You would open the ears of our heart and the eyes of our heart to see and to hear what You have for us in this last hour of time, I commit this time into Your hands. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

Albert Einstein was called to a function in a school to give a speech and a bunch of students were waiting. They were all sitting and waiting for the speech and they invited Albert Einstein to come to the dais and Albert Einstein came to the podium, waited for a few minutes and he said, "I have nothing to say to you," and he sat down. And after a while, he got up and he came to the podium again and he said, "Just give me five months' time, I will come back and I will have something to say to you." The reason why I'm saying that is, I have nothing to say, except that God gives me anything and the thing is that, today is the first time I'm preaching on a resurrection Sunday. I heard a man of God who said, "This is my fifty-fifth resurrection Sunday message and he got up and he said, "Just like Albert Einstein, I have nothing to say to you, because I have said it all." But the fact of the matter is even though I'm standing for the first time before you, I have nothing to say except that God gives me. Resurrection Sunday, the first time in my life. So, pray for me and for yourselves as well. So, let us see what God has for us.

I've titled today's message as 'His resurrection and my life'. And it is not a coincidence that we celebrate resurrection Sunday and I think it happens for the first time in eleven years that we also have communion, this Sunday, possibly, second or third time maybe, I'm not sure but very rarely, we have both on the same day. We'll begin with a question. This is found in *Job 14:14*;

## **Job 14:14**

***<sup>14</sup> If a man dies, shall he live again? all the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes.***

That was Job and that's the song that we sang, the first song. 'I know my Redeemer lives!' The question is, everybody, by the way, irrespective of religious background, all of them except the atheist, if I'm right, wants to know what happens when a man dies, what happens life after death, what happens. Jesus has a very clear answer. This is what He has to say in *John 5*, kind of an answer to Job's question. *John 5:28-29*

## **John 5:28-29**

***<sup>28</sup> Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice <sup>29</sup> and come forth*** (All who are in the grave irrespective of religious background. Whether a Christian or a non-Christian it doesn't matter, all who are in the grave will hear His voice)—***those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.***

So, we all are going to live for eternity and let me tell you something, when we enter into eternity, our consciousness, our soul will go into eternity with all our memory and everything, we will know each other. That's what happened to Lazarus and the rich man. The rich man knew Lazarus, the rich man not only knew Lazarus, he also knew Abraham. So, you will recognize our forefathers. We will have a consciousness. Lazarus knew the rich man, Abraham knew the rich man, everybody will know one another. That is a small glimpse God gives about eternity. So, we will live forever but the problem

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is – where would we live? That is the question. In the *Book of Acts*, in one of the places which I'm going to use as a launch pad for today's message, where Paul goes to Athens and he looks at the entire city and looks at the idolatry of the place and his spirit is stirred within him and he goes to the market place and starts arguing with those people and lot of epicureans and stoics and all the philosophers listening to this all and they said, "This guy is giving some new gyan (wisdom), nice interesting thoughts and ideas. We are all searching for truth and he is also talking about truth. Let's see what he is got to say to us." And so, we know the famous sermon on Mars hill and to the end of the sermon, this is what Paul says to all of them who are searching for truth. This is what he has to say. *Acts 17:29*,

#### **Acts 17:29-32**

***<sup>29</sup> Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. <sup>30</sup> Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, <sup>31</sup> because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness (How is He going to judge the world?) by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."***

In other words, he was telling all of these guys, you are searching for the truth, right? He rose from the dead. Your search is over. You see, the point is this – as long as we are searching for truth; if we say, "You are searching, I am searching, we are in the process. You can live the way you want, I can live the way I want," we are not really accountable at all. But once we come to the point where we say the search is over, then everything that we do, we will be accountable. So, what happened?

***<sup>32</sup> And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, "We will hear you again on this matter." <sup>33</sup> So Paul departed from among them. <sup>34</sup> However, some men joined him and believed,***

Let me tell you something, even today, in the Church of God, there are three categories of people who will listen to any sermon because every sermon we talk about resurrection and this day we specifically talk about it in more detail probably but every sermon is about Jesus' death, His burial and His resurrection and there are always three responses. The first response – some mocked, scoff, scorn, they are indifferent. It's a very interesting word in the Greek, the word 'mocked' actually means to misrepresent, the act of misrepresenting; in a way that is not in conformity to the truth that they have supposedly agreed upon. Like for example, you made a mockery, what does it mean? For example, Gilchrist famous statement after the entire fiasco that happened after the ball tampering, if you know what is going on, if you follow test cricket, for those of you who don't know test cricket, it doesn't matter. There is something called as 'test cricket'. They play with a red ball and also nowadays, with a pink ball, just in case. They did this ball tampering thing and Gilchrist made a fantastic statement. He said, "They made a mockery of the Australian spirit. What the Australian stands for, they made a mockery of it. They were misrepresenting Australia." That is what it means. Some mocked, some said, "You know what? Give us some time please. We are not ready yet." Some joined and some believed. So, I'm just going to just talk about few truths about the resurrection, what the resurrection of Jesus meant, what is the truth that it conveys and in the light of that, if we are mocking, or are we saying, "Give me some time, Jesus!" Or are we believing? Are we amongst the mockers, the procrastinators of the believers? Look at this, let's look at the first truth.

#### **1 Corinthians 15:12-13, 17**

***<sup>12</sup> Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? (In other words, there is the resurrection of the dead) <sup>13</sup> But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. <sup>17</sup> And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!***

Meaning – positively, if Christ has been risen from the dead, you are not in your sins and the greatest need of mankind, you know what it is? It is the need for? What is the need for? Forgiveness! I'll tell you something. Why don't we have joy in our hearts when we come into the house of God, most often, I mean it's my own personal experience and I'm not speaking for you, I'm speaking for myself, you don't have to include yourself with me, if you don't belong to that category. Most often when I come into the house of God and I'm not worshipping, primarily it is because I fell short through the week and I have a sense of guilt and therefore you know there is no real joy because after all there is only freedom when the guilt is removed, we know that. I'm going to read an interesting confession, guess who said this. Let us see your general knowledge if you are up to date. "I will do everything I can to make up for my mistake and the damage that it has caused. I know I will

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regret this for the rest of my life. I'm absolutely gutted. I hope in time I can earn back respect and forgiveness." Who said this? Steven Smith's recent confession. It was not Augustine's confession. It was Steven Smith's confession and he was absolutely devastated and he was crying and he said, "I hope in time I can earn back respect and forgiveness." Let me tell you something; yes, respect and trust you have to earn but forgiveness, never. No amount of work that you do, you will never be able to earn your forgiveness. Steven Smith this message is to you. You know when Australians get caught, some of the people who have animosity against Australia will come with some interesting analysis and one such analysis was one of the editors of Cricket, before he wrote an article. He said, "What if Steven Smith was not caught and this entire thing about ball tampering was not known, would he have repented the way he has repented? Would he say if they had won the match and his conscience is bothering him, would he go to the media and cry and say, "Oh no, you know what we tampered the ball and won the match." Would he say that? And that guy said, "I don't think so, knowing Australians. They will do anything for winning a match." See, Jeremiah has a very interesting word to say about this people, this kind of people. I'm just taking Steven Smith as an example, maybe he's really repenting, we'll pray for him that he'll come out of this but look at what it says in *Jeremiah 2:26*, it captures the psych and the mockery of the human heart in a fantastic verse. It says in *Jeremiah 2:26*,

#### **Jeremiah 2:26**

**<sup>26</sup> "As the thief is ashamed when he is found out, so is the house of Israel ashamed; they and their kings and their princes, and their priests and their prophets,**

Meaning – dorikithey, andharu dongale but when you are caught, even a thief is a gentleman. For those who do not understand Telugu, let me translate it. If you are caught, then you are a thief. As long as you are not caught, you are still a noble man. You see, there are so many people, only when they are caught they respond and you know what they are saying? "Yes, I'm caught let me do something to earn my forgiveness." You know what God says? "You can never, never earn forgiveness." Your sin has an infinite cost that has to be paid nothing is possible, no amount of work that you do will take away the guilt of your sin. So, the greatest need let me tell you something, the greatest need of humanity is the need for forgiveness.

Look at this incredible passage, one of my favourite passages in the Bible, like Pastor James has his *Acts 16*, I have my *Luke 5*. This is one of my favourite passages because it relates to it a lot. This is *Luke 5*. Now, this is a guy when Jesus was preaching in one of the places there were Pharisees and Sadducees that were coming and taking notes. There was a huge crowd. They were all listening to Jesus and there was this guy who's paralyzed and he didn't know how to come Church. So, his friend brought him in a bed, remember? And when they saw that the crowd was there, you know what they did? They broke open the roof and they lowered him from the roof top and Jesus makes a very fantastic statement. Look at what He says, this is in *Luke 5:20*,

#### **Luke 5:20-22**

**<sup>20</sup> When He saw their faith, He said to him, "Man, your sins are forgiven you."**

I was just thinking about it. See, when Jesus opens His mouth, He doesn't use sentences randomly, even for shock value or for attention value, no. He knows precisely what the person needs. For the rich young ruler, He will say, "You know what? Give off your wealth and come after Me." To Zacchaeus, He will not even say a word, Zacchaeus will do what his heart's conviction is. He will ask Bartimaeus, "What do you want?" and He will speak exactly. Some people wanted to come and follow Jesus, He said, "Foxes have holes birds of the air have nest but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head. You want to come?" Another guy said, "Lord, I'll come to You; let me just bury my father." He said, "Let the dead bury their own dead." "O let me just say farewell to all my people." He said, "No man who puts his hands on the plough and turns back is fit for the Kingdom of Heaven." So, He was very precise when He uses words. He never uses words for shock value and He looks at this guy and He says, "Your sins are forgiven!" And I looked at this and I was thinking about this statement. Why did this guy not want to come to Church? I believe that this guy was absolutely paralyzed by guilt. He says, "You know what? Forget it, man! My guilt is too much, nobody can save me. I've sinned so much against God. I don't think that God can see me and say, "You know what? I'll do a miracle for you." He looked at this guy and he was paralyzed by guilt. He looks at him and say, "Your sins are forgiven." Suddenly, the religious class will get upset.

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**<sup>21</sup> And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"**

And then, look at what Jesus says,

**<sup>22</sup> But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts? <sup>23</sup> Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise up and walk'?"**

"Rise up and walk," is your answer. Why? It's very interesting when one guy is caught in the act, the entire nation is hurt and for them to really forgive, it's a traumatic experience; they can't forgive. It's difficult especially for the Australians of because of the kind of game they play. Very difficult for anybody to overlook somebody else's fault. One of the most difficult things for any man or any woman or any son or any little one is to extend forgiveness and to overlook someone's fault. You know from your own experience. It's easy for you to forgive? No. Is it easy for wives to forgive their husbands? No, it's not easy. Is it easy for a husband to forgive his wife? No. I mean, there was one guy. Some time back, I think even Eric was telling about this – there was one guy who was celebrating his 75<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. A hundred-year-old guy – both wife and husband are alive, BBC, this was in England. Seventy-five years of marriage. The entire nation was, "Boy, how did you live together?" And then, the interviewer asked this question to the husband, he said, "Seventy-five years of your marriage, did you never get the thought of divorce in your mind?" He looked and he said, "Divorce? Never! Murder? Often!" You know it, right? I mean, come on, honestly, wives, don't you want to beat up your husbands sometimes? "I wish, Lord. I could just..." it's not easy to forgive, saints. It's not easy. Especially in the closest of relationships. You know why? In the closest of relationships, the expectations are very high. I say something to my wife, somebody else says something to my wife, and it's a total different ball game altogether. The way she perceives my appraisal of her and somebody else's appraisal is totally different. It's a completely different ball game. And you know what Jesus says? "I bore you, I birthed you in My own image and you sin against Me. You think it's easy for Me to forgive you? You know what? It will cost My own life to forgive you." And He's asking those people, "What is easy? Is it easy to say your problems are solved, or to pick up your mat and walk, or your sins are forgiven? The most difficult thing to say that your sins are forgiven, because that will make Me and cause Me to overlook every offense – past, present and future." But thank God, the resurrection of Jesus purchased the forgiveness for my sin. Look at what it says in *Romans 4:25* and *Romans 5:1*,

#### **Romans 4:25**

**<sup>25</sup> who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.**

#### **Romans 5:1**

**<sup>1</sup> Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,**

So, what is the first word? When the disciples are gathered together and Jesus comes into that place, what is the first word that He speaks into their lives? You know what He says? This is,

#### **John 20:19**

**<sup>19</sup> Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.**

"Peace!" Wow! Look at that. I don't hold any of your shortcomings against you. All your sins, I bore for them. Peace!" You know, I'm not sure how many of you here in this place from time to time, paralysed by guilt? The past keeps coming back to you over and over and over again and you can't progress one step with God because you are absolutely full of guilt. Is there anyone among you? God says, "Today, Peace!" Isn't it interesting when everything was shut, Jesus appeared in His Body, you know what that means? Jesus, in His resurrection power, can come to every situation in your life and meet your need, no matter how bleak, or how strong the doors are shut. He can come there, right in the middle, and give you peace! That's exactly what happened to Paul and Silas, right in the middle, where it was an impregnable prison, right there. Stood beside them. Here, the peace! He can enter. This morning, do you believe that? Do you believe? Do you need forgiveness of your sins? Do you have a constant cry in your heart? "Lord, my sin, my sin." You know that song, 'It is well with my soul'? He says "My sin, O the bliss of that glorious thought," he says, "my sin," he stops as, he gives a pause over there and he says, "my sin, O the bliss of that glorious thought. My sin, not in part, but the whole was nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more!

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Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, O my soul!" "At the cross, at the cross, where I first saw the light, was it for crimes that I have done that He groaned upon the tree. Amazing pity grace unknown and love beyond decree. At the cross, at the cross, where I first saw the light, all the burdens of my heart have been rolled away," and today, this morning, if you need forgiveness, God says, you know thing first thing He says, peace. But there was always, as I said, three responses, what are the three responses? Some mock, some say, "Give me some time." Some believe. How do we mock?

### **1 John 1:8**

***<sup>8</sup> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.***

That's what it means you know? That exactly what happened to the Australian team, you see. They were caught, in the act, you know one guy was one commentator was saying, "They thought that they were good, they came and openly confessed their crime, but did they have a choice? They did not. Because the entire world's camera was looking. You know, it's amazing – they were caught in the act! Will we wait till the time that we are caught in the act? Or is the Holy Spirit probing something in your life that you have done? Something in your life that you have done. Some mock? What will some people do? Ask me, they'll say, "Give me some time." You know what Jesus tell those people?

### **Hebrew 3:7-8**

***<sup>7</sup> So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, <sup>8</sup> do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness,***

Not today, not tomorrow, not after lunch; now! Don't say 'tomorrow'; "Just give me some time, no? I need to get my thoughts in order. It's very difficult." And some people believe. You know what is the characteristic? How do I know I believed? I will tell you how I know, I believed. This is found in *Matthew 18*. You know how I believed?

### **Matthew 18:21-22, 35**

***<sup>21</sup> Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" (He gives the perfect number) <sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.***

***<sup>35</sup> "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."***

Don't withhold forgiveness today. If you really believe that you've been forgiven open forgiveness to everybody. You know, there is one power that we all possess. You know what is that power? The resurrection power, once the resurrection power comes into our heart, the one power that we all possess is to freely forgive everybody. I don't have to say that. Let *Proverbs 3* speak to you. This is *Proverbs 3*, one of my favorite *Proverbs* chapter. This is what he says,

### **Proverbs 3:27-35**

***<sup>27</sup> Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in the power of your hand to do so. <sup>28</sup> Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, And tomorrow I will give it,"***

In other words, "Wait, wait, and let me see how you will behave. Today, tomorrow, day after, one week, I will observe. Consistently, if you are doing, I will forgive, okay?" How many of you say that, even to your children? "Wait, wait, wait." You know, God never says that you see? He never waited for the prodigal son to come and behave. You see? He says, "Freely, from his heart." If you need forgiveness this morning, God is saying, "You know what? Let go. It's not worth it. Don't mock God and say, you know what? "I have never sinned." Who are those people who never extend forgiveness or those people who think that they have never done wrong? And they don't need forgiveness? That is the reason why they will withhold forgiveness from others. You see? Don't be among them. This morning.

Second, second truth about the resurrection,

### **1 Corinthians 15:14**

***<sup>14</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.***

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Your faith is empty, your faith is futile. In other words, if Christ has not risen from the dead, your faith is futile or, in other words, if Christ has risen from the dead, your faith is not futile. What does it mean? Let me tell you what it means. One man of God puts it beautifully; this is what he says, "Because Jesus is risen from the dead, He can be trusted." What does it mean? Every one of us, deep down inside our heart, we have a need to have lasting relationships. You see? We are all made for that. We want people who we can trust all the time. How many of you want really good people? That is the reason why most of that, we've looked for fulfillment in the marriage, or any other relationship, in career, whatever it is. You are looking for fulfillment in some, in a relationship, without expecting that person that we can always trust, we can be vulnerable, we can be open, and we can be ourselves. We are all looking for that. That is how we have been made. But God, you know this is what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 1; I'm just going to expound upon this, the principle behind it.

#### **2 Corinthians 1:8-10**

***<sup>8</sup>For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. <sup>9</sup>Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, <sup>10</sup>who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us,***

That means it's talking about a faith in the living God.

#### **John 14:1**

***<sup>1</sup> "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.***

In other words, "Trust Me. I rose from the dead. Trust me." Don't trust in any other relationship. No other relationship is worthy.

#### **Luke 9:59-60**

***<sup>59</sup> He said to another man, "Follow me." But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." <sup>60</sup> Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." <sup>61</sup> Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family." <sup>62</sup> Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."***

What does it mean? Every other relationship is going to...

How many of you know Alfred Hitchcock? He wrote a series of crime thrillers. One of the thrillers were made into a television series, I think the title of the television series was "Final Escape". In this story, this woman is caught in a particular crime and she is desperate to get out of jail. So, what does she do? In that prison, there is another prisoner who is the prison doctor. He is also a prisoner because of his good behavior they entrust him with the patients in the prison. So, she befriends him, she becomes nice to him and over the period of time that began to develop a relationship and this guy trusts in her. This prison doctor is also in charge burying the dead prisoners in the prison. So, what does he do? Whenever a prisoner is dead, there is a chapel within the prison campus which goes off indicating that somebody died so this doctor goes and puts the dead body into the coffin and he has the permission to go outside the prison and go to the graveyard and to bury the dead body and come back. That's his job. So, over a period of time, this lady and this doctor they develop a relationship and then one day she has a fantastic idea and she says, "Doc, I know you need money to get out of prison. You help me to get out of prison and I will get you the money." The Doc says, "Okay, what shall I do?" "Do one thing, the next time somebody dies give me a signal or rather give me a way that I can go and sleep in the coffin, take me outside, bury me and after everything is done, come back in a secluded moment and release me and I promise you that I will reward you." Then the doctor said, "Fantastic idea! So, wait till next you hear the church bell ringing. Take that as the signal and I will get you the master key go into the coffin area and you sleep in the coffin. Don't worry about it."

So, he gets her the copy of the master key and she is waiting for a few weeks and months and then, she hears the Church bell ringing and she realizes that somebody died. So, that night, she opens the prison and she goes slowly, she sneaks out and goes into the place where the coffins are laid and it's absolutely pitch dark and she takes the master key opens it, get into the coffin and sleeps next to the dead body. It's absolutely pitch dark and then, she sleeps off and the next day morning, they take the coffin, they go to the graveyard and the burying is done and now, she is getting excited that, "This

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guy is going to come and he is going to release me.” Minutes to hours to several hours and this guy is not coming and she is feeling suffocated and she is almost going to die. And she is like hoping and coping and she finds a match box in the dead body's pocket and she takes the match box and she lights the match and the whole coffin lights up and she sees somebody dead next to her and you know who is that is? “The doctor!” The moral of the story – Whom would you rather trust? The guy is risen from the dead or a guy who is going to die next to you in the coffin? What is God trying to tell us? He is saying that every relationship you trust, a part from me is going to be death to you and it's never going to resurrect you. Never. Every relation, you want to trust in your husband, he is going to die. People have sentiments to be buried next to husband. “Forever and ever, we will be together.” He is not going to resurrect you. Your wife cannot resurrect you. Every other person, he is going to die and if you put your hope in that person let me tell you something; that's exactly what he is saying – if Jesus Christ does not rise from the dead, our faith is futile. We are absolutely in our sins. And Jesus is saying, “Leave the dead to bury their dead. Come and follow Me.” And let me tell you something, for some young people over here. You are in relationship and that is the relationship you have exalted above the relationship of God and that is what is going to bring death in your life. He is going to lie next to your coffin, he promised you a lot – deliver nothing because the dead people can't help you. Can they? That is the reason why we need faith in a Living God. So, what happens?

Three responses, what are they? Some people mock; some people procrastinate; some people believe. Look at what it says in *2 Timothy 2:13*,

#### **2 Timothy 2: 13**

***<sup>13</sup> If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.***

I put these two together. Why? All the disciples are absolutely faithful; they have absolutely died, dead in their trespasses. That's exactly *Ephesians* will say, “*And you were dead in the trespasses and sins,*” God raised you out of that, how? By the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and He not only raised you from the dead; He made you to sit together with Jesus in heavenly places of Christ. Even though they were absolutely faithless, He still comes and stands by that. You know why? I didn't have to open that door, I mean the tombs. I can pass through. For all those people who love science fiction movie, I don't know how He did that. Maybe, He created a wormhole. I don't know. Remember *Star Trek*? He had a fabric and space and time. He went across. I don't know. Resurrected body. He has the ability to go to anywhere, even the death can't stop Him. He says, “Even if you are faithless, He will still remain faithful.” So, what do we do? Don't put God to the test. That's how people mock.

#### **1 Corinthians 10:9**

***<sup>9</sup> We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents...***

What did they do? “Okay, Christ, You rose from the dead, right? Okay fine, I have a problem in my finances. Can You meet?” That's not the reason – okay, I take a loan. This is what many people do – “God told me that I will have a car.” So, how did you get it? Take a loan, buy a car. God told you to take a loan and buy a car? Unbelievable! How can God, who said, “Don't owe any man anything, except for the debt of love,” ask you to take a debt and buy a car? “God told me.” They take the loan, they buy a car and one day, what happens? The bankers come home, you see. So, what happens to the Israelites? That's how people mock God. There are many Christians that mock God. Otherwise, they will put Christ to the test. That is what Jesus is talking about,

#### **Numbers 21:4**

***<sup>4</sup> And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food.”***

Can you imagine, they call Manna worthless bread? The NIV translation – they mock. “*Man shall live by bread alone, but every Word that proceed from the mouth of God.*” Do you believe that? They put God to the test. Some people, what do they say? “Give me some time.” This is what they say, “(Jesus) Lord, I will follow You but let me get settled. Let me earn some sufficient money. Let me have a bank balance to back me up; just in case if all this fails, something to back myself

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with." Jesus says, "Whoever puts his hands on the plough and looks back is unfit for the Kingdom of God." No one. Don't procrastinate.

But some believe, right? So, what do you do? Give it all and go to God. Why?

#### **John 14:18-19**

***<sup>18</sup> I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. <sup>19</sup> "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also.***

"Don't worry, I will be there with you." Don't trust in any other relationships.

One of the things, I need to keep on telling to about our generation, it doesn't matter; you know like pastor was talking; three kinds of marriages – we have the love marriage (romantic marriage), where you are a slave to the other person. You see, in other words, that other person's approval is all the time, it matters to you. I remember, Tim Keller was telling about this, in one of his sermons, he says, "After I preach the sermon, this is what I want, I don't care how the congregation feels about my sermon, but I want to know, how my wife felt about my sermon. If she says, 'it is good', I know it was good. If she says, 'it was bad or okay', then... the approval of my wife is absolutely important and one day, my wife came to me and said, 'Tim, don't put so much of pressure on me. Please don't put pressure on me like that.'" See, a lot of us, we put lot of pressure on our children, why? Because we fail and we want our children to live our life through them, but they have a completely different purpose. God might have called them for completely different thing. Are you ready to release them? See, we just hold on. *Isaiah 2:22* will say; 66:6 and 2:22

#### **Isaiah 2:22**

***<sup>22</sup> Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?***

You see, many people are just holding on to relationships. That's exactly what happened to Jacob, holding on to Rachel; he can do anything for Rachel. What is that he can do 'anything'? Bear the weight of three extra weddings and marriages for Rachel. Absolutely broken at the end of it, because his hope was in Rachel, but that lady didn't even love his God. Okay, *Cease ye from man* this day, saints. Believe God, "It's only You, You and You alone can satisfy my relationship." No cravings in my relationships, nobody else can satisfy; only God. Not your husband, not your wife, not your children; it is only God who can satisfy the deep most cravings in your hearts. That's what Jesus tells the Samaritan woman, "If you ask Me for that water, I will give you that Living Water and it will become a well springing out; and you will thirst no more and you will be hungry no more." Every other relationship is short-circuited. That is the reason why He rose from the dead so that we can have a trustworthy person, a person whom you can have a relationship for all of us and who will always be there for us; who will never leave us nor forsake us.

We sing that song, '*What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear, And what a privilege to carry, Everything to God in prayer; do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Who will all our sorrows share? Jesus knows our every weakness. You will find solace there', only there, nowhere else. Okay, that is the second thing about the Resurrection.*

And, the third;

#### **1 Corinthians 15:19-20**

***<sup>19</sup> If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.***

Another translation, this is *KJV*,

***<sup>19</sup> If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.***

You know something very interesting; Christians have only two categories – either they are the most envied people or what is the other option? Or the most miserable people. Nothing in between. And therefore, you want to find the most envied people? Look among Christians. Okay, you will find the most envied people; you want to find the most miserable people, where should you look? Among Christians! You see, the most pitied and the most envied are among Christians. When I look



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at the life of Apostle Paul, I said, "This guy, don't we envy that life? What kind of a man is this, Lord? How can he think so straight under pressure? Under pressure, he can think and his thoughts are so cogent. He doesn't fear at all. How can he think like that, Lord? How can he be so honest? How can he be so absolutely connected to You all the time? I don't see any time he is depressed. How can he?" You see, the most envied, did you see the most envied? And you will also find among Christians, the most miserable; that is the why, because God has done us, why have done that, if you don't find satisfaction in God, you will be among the most miserable people.

<sup>20</sup> ***But now Christ rose from the dead...***

Not to make us the most miserable, but to make us the most (what?) envied. But, why do we become most miserable, he says, he gives out the clue; it's only there, where?

<sup>19</sup>***If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.***

Let me tell you what it means; *Luke's Gospel 24*, this is the story, one of my favorited stories in the Bible, about the Resurrection. *Luke 24*, everybody knows this story – on the road to Emmaus; *verse 13* onwards.

#### **Luke 24:13-16, 19-21**

<sup>13</sup> ***Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> And they talked together of all these things which had happened. <sup>15</sup> So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. <sup>16</sup> But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.***

Why were their eyes restrained? Jesus is walking next to you. Isn't it interesting? "When two or three are gather in My Name," where is He? He is there in the midst of us. Two people, Cleopas and the other guy. What does Scripture say? When two people walking together, the resurrected Christ will always will be there. That is the meaning, He is there. But could they see Him? Question: We are more than three, according to Scripture, Jesus is here, can you see Him? Can you see Him? If I were to ask this question to any of us or each one of us, do I sense the presence of God in the sanctuary, this morning? Or did I just come because it's a habit, and especially on Easter Sunday, I have to go, because Special Service-special lunch. Do you sense the presence of God, here? You know that exactly what happened to them,

***...their eyes were restrained, they did not know Him...***

And the need to ask every time, you look at this passage, "Lord, You said, 'when two or three gather in My name', you will be there in their midst. And we can sense Your presence; how is it their eyes were restrained?" I will tell you why their eyes were restrained; this is my perception and understanding. Let's read on,

<sup>19</sup> ***And he said to them, what (are these) things (you are talking among yourselves?) So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup> and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him (and, the clue is here) <sup>21</sup> But we were hoping that it was He who was going to (restore and) redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today (now).***

You see, He is going to restore and redeem Israel. We are hoping and what happened? Discussing, Ah! What hope we have! It's gone! No hope. Let me tell you why. You are 'hoping' that He is going to redeem you now with your entire problem, you see. You want a marriage? I will find a husband. No problem. Need a job? I will find you a job; no problem. Financial problems? I will solve your financial problems; no problem; you know, it's a really incredible thing, we must have looked at this verse several times, in our Church, we are well taught Church; you go outside and talk to a random Christian, sample, okay just take a sample of one or two Christians and you tell them, you know what, ***"If in this life only we have hope in Christ Jesus of all,"*** the Scripture says, "we are most pitied of all man and we are most miserable of all man." They have never see a verse like that. "Really?" Because everybody wants prosperity! Success! I had a Bible study in my university some time back. Several years back, I used to have Bible study in the university and we had all these Christian brothers from different Churches. And the first Bible study, the very first Bible study, this is the verse I had taken and I said,

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#### **1 Corinthians 15:19**

<sup>19</sup> *If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.*

#### **1 Corinthians 15:19**

<sup>19</sup> *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*

"Where is this verse?" You know why? Their eyes were restrained. Closed and Jesus tells, I will tell you; He gives them a principle as to why their eyes are closed.

#### **Luke 24:25-27**

<sup>25</sup> *Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" <sup>27</sup> And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*

Let me tell you something. You know what is the very first witness of the resurrection of Jesus? Tell me; is it the eye witness or some other witness? Let tell me what is the first witness of the resurrection. Any ideas? You know the first witness of the resurrection is the witness of the Scriptures. It is not even the resurrection. That is what exactly happened. This guy that is there is hell; he looks at this guy in Abraham's bosom and he looks at him and tells, "Father Abraham, send Lazarus to my brothers. If you send Lazarus to my brothers, they will believe and they will not come here." And you know what Abraham says? "They have the law and the prophets." "Oh no, father Abraham. Father Abraham, if somebody raises from the dead and tells them the Gospel, they will believe." You know what he says? "If they don't believe the law and the prophets, they will not even believe if somebody raises from the dead." The first, the first witness of the resurrection is the witness of the Scriptures. It is the witness of the Scriptures. That is the reason why Paul tells in,

#### **1 Corinthians 15:3-4**

<sup>3</sup> *For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.*

Christ died for us according to Scriptures, Christ was buried according to Scriptures. Christ rose from the dead according to Scriptures. It is the Spirit of Christ through the prophets which was prophesying about the sufferings of Christ and His subsequent resurrection. The witness of the resurrection is the witness of the Scriptures. That is the reason why when these guys come and say, "This lady was married several times in the resurrection, whose wife will she be?" Jesus says, "You err because you don't know the," what? No, no, "You don't know the Scriptures nor the power of God." You don't know the Scripture. You err because you don't know the Scriptures. The first witness is the witness of the Scriptures.

You know this. Very interesting, right? How do we go to the Bible? Think about it. It talks about; it's actually an examination of our own heart – how do I go and read my Bible? Do I read my Bible to find a solution to my problem or do I read my Bible because I want to find Him? Or let me put the question in other way: do you read your Bible at all? Some people ask me, "Brother how do you read your Bible?" I will tell you how I read my Bible. I read my Bible out of desperation. You see, witness of the Scripture was the first witness of the resurrection. Do you know the Scripture? Do you know the power of God? So, what is the principle that Jesus is trying to illustrate through this entire episode, the principle is found in *Matthew 16*. Pastor talked about it just a few days back. What is the title of the message? "Deny, pick up, follow." Very simple. Found in *Matthew 16*, the principle,

#### **Matthew 16:24-25**

<sup>24</sup> *Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. why <sup>25</sup> For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake (and the Gospels will what) will find it.*

If you want to truly experience the resurrection power, give your life to God and nowhere else and let Him raise you from the dead. Give Him your life, give Him. In other words, pay now and play later, pay now, play later. I mean, this is the trick that parents use with their children my dad and my mother used to say, "Vijay, kastapadi chaduvu, oka roju king, happy ga

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(Vijay study hard and one day, you will be a king and live happily),” and I am still waiting. You know, this is a joke in Telugu, “Avandi, 40 years varaku meku kastalu thapavu, dani tharuvatha alavatu ayepothaye (dear, till 40 years, problems will be there and after that, you will get used to it.)” I am approaching 40, by the way. So, I am concerned about it.

You see when Jesus said to His disciples, “This is the principle here.” If you really, really want to gain your life, this is the principle that our parents teach, right? “Nee jeevitham nedi kadhu anuko. kastapadi give it everything (think that this life is not yours and work hard. Give it everything).” That is what I did in parts; not completely. I lived my life also and I am paying also for that. You see, that is what Jesus is saying, “Pay now.” You know what many Christians want? What they want is happiness now, holiness after. You know what God says, “Holiness now, happiness later.” This is the principle here, I am just trying to get the principle. Principle is – how do we deny ourselves? By putting duty about any other thing. Anything else duty comes first. In *Luke 17:8-10*, this is what he says to the servant right after he serves his master

#### **Luke 17:8-10**

***<sup>8</sup>But will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink?’ <sup>9</sup>Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. <sup>10</sup>So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’”***

Don't expect a 'thank you' and what a God in this, He is not going to give me any return now. I don't want to serve this God. You know, let me tell you something – this is the principle. He is no man's debtor. You know what He is going to do if you do that? If you do this, this is my promise for myself, you can appropriate to yourself and believe

#### **Luke 12:37**

***<sup>37</sup>Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them.***

Look, I am going to think about this, saints. I don't know how I serve in puny little ways, in stupid idiotic ways, I serve God. “You know, Vijay, you serve Me, and one day, in My resurrected body I will put aside everything and I will gird Myself and I will come serve you.” I don't know what that means! I can't even imagine that. You think God is asking for duty? Because He say, “You don't know My heart. You know what you are going to get? Nobody has left father, mother, wife, children have not received hundred fold in this life and in persecutions in life eternally much more, much more.” Do you believe this? Always three options – some mock, some say, “Hold on. Give me some time”; some leave.

This is what Peter has to say,

#### **1 Peter 4:10-11**

***<sup>10</sup>As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. <sup>11</sup>If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. (I read this you know I get fired up. You read Scripture meaningfully now. What he says you know if anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God) *If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.****

If you continue to do that you know what God says in,

#### **Hebrews 6:10**

***<sup>10</sup>For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.***

You know, it is not one day; it is a consistent, constant walk with God. You know, do you believe this brothers and sisters? I am telling you this that consistent, continuously how you walked with God, you won't ever change your giving, you are faithful with your tithes every month and you are saying, “Lord, when is my breakthrough coming?” Let me tell you something – even if He doesn't give you the breakthrough this time, He will give you and He will serve you. He will serve you and that will be a sight when the Creator of the whole universe will come and serve His servants. I believe that will the

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time when he says, "Lord, Lord, forgive me. Lord, don't come to me, Lord. My crown at Your feet, Lord. My crown at Your feet."

This morning, we have become a 'now' generation, saints. Now, everything now. "Abi chahiye, aju chahiye. Otherwise, inquilab zindabad (now, we want. Today, we want, Otherwise, long live the revolution)." ala salam ala salam. Kanhaiya not kishan kanhaiya; KK another KK, one of the police guys asked him when he was in jail; he said, "Bhayya, aa ala salam, ala salam kya hothahey (brother, what is the meaning of ala salam?)" "Ala salam, ala salam mathalub inquilab freedom (ala salam meaning freedom)." And he had a very interesting slogan – "Hamey barath sey azaadi nahi chahiye, Bharath mey azaadi chahiye abi chahiye (we don't want freedom from India, we want freedom in India and we want it now)." He says, "Vijay, these are the people who have this entitlement mentality." We have a generation with full of people with entitlement mentality – "We have to be served." God says, "Serve Me and I promise you I am going to serve you one day. I am going to serve you," and I am pretty sure you will be in company of saints who have been served by God and if you are a believer who just passed through the fire and entered into glory you will find Jesus serving His Bride. That is what husbands do – they serve their wives. Only God, our eternal husband Jesus Christ, will serve His Bride and the entire company of witnesses will be watching Him serving us.

Okay, keep at it saints. Don't lose your heart. Don't lose heart. You have been coming to Church over and over again, attending every Bible study and walking in obedience and saying, "Where, Lord? Problems only seem to be increasing. No breakthrough." I can see. I am telling you honestly. God is telling somebody; I don't know. Maybe all of us need to know that we need to continue to do what you are doing. You know what is going to happen? You are going to see a seamless intrusion of God, a seamless intrusion of the resurrection where you see all doors shut and Jesus standing in your mist. A seamless intrusion of the resurrection power of life and students continue to work hard, continue to work on your integrity, continue to work on your character. Don't compromise. When you see your friends and brothers and your whatever, your colleagues compromising, don't compromise and say, "What is the use, Lord?" Not in this life only but in eternally.

Finally, we'll look through *1 Corinthians 15*, we will end with thi . My favourite song that we sang today before we come to the table,

#### **1 Corinthians 15:50-55**

***<sup>50</sup>Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. <sup>51</sup>Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be...***

Changed. That is what Job said, "I am waiting to be changed." We will say, "What kind of a body will I have?" The kind of seed that goes in determines the kind of tree that comes out. Am I right? Think about it, the kind of seed that goes in is the kind of tree that comes out but the shape of seed that goes in is not the shape of tree that goes out. It is a completely transformed. It's not the same

***–<sup>52</sup>in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible (this is, of course, talking about the people who are dead in Christ but all the people), and we shall be changed. (I don't know what that is. I am going to wait. It's a mystery, right? It's a mystery not yet revealed to us, we have to wait and that is the problem – we don't want to wait. And look what he says, why? Because) <sup>53</sup>For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. <sup>54</sup>So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."<sup>55</sup> "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"***

You know what? That is death that is going to be shallowed up. We die, right? We die. John Piper gives us a fantastic illustration – he says, "We die, we are dead and death is going to be swallowed up in victory." Do we have an illustration in the Old Covenant? And he gives the illustration of the defeated Ai. Joshua gets defeated at Ai and he is on his face before God and says, "What is going on?" And God says, "Get up. There is sin in your camp." And this time, He says, "Go with five thousand people before Ai and fall before them and draw them out." Thirsty thousand or so, people will be waiting and they will swallow them. You see, I get excited. I die. Yes, we all go through pains, right? Those days, I used to run and jump like crazy and now, I get on the stage and my knees start hurting. "Oh my God, already, Lord? I am still not 40, God. Give me a break." It is. These are the signs of decay – squeaky sound sometimes, prrrrrr – something got caught and, "Oh Lord,

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what is this?" That is exactly what Paul is saying, "Outwardly, we are perishing. You know what is going to happen? Because of a nature that is birthed inside of me, because of the work of Christ, the seed that is going to go inside, when it comes out, it is going to be swallowed and be a tree." If Christ is in you, *Romans 8*, one of my favourite verses,

#### **Romans 8:10-11**

***<sup>10</sup>And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup>But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.***

What a promise! Death swallowed up in victory. You know how Jesus did that? The greatest fear, the greatest enemy was the fear of death. We have fears of every kind, but the greatest fear was the fear of death. So, you know what He said? "I am going to tackle the big giant." Bang! Death gone on the Cross, swallowed up in victory on the cross. And the fear of death is no more. You know what is going to happen? All the disciples will go to their martyrdom singing and singing and singing, death being swallowed up in victory.

*Galatians 6*. warning *Some mocked*, some procrastinate, and some believe.

#### **Galatians 6:7-9**

***<sup>7</sup>Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; (He is not going to be mocked) for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap (that as well). <sup>8</sup>For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. <sup>9</sup>And (therefore,) let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.***

This is exactly what Jesus told the disciples.

On the Road to Emmaus, and this is what happens once He finishes speaking to them in *Luke's Gospel in chapter 24*.

#### **Luke 24:28-30, 32**

***<sup>28</sup>Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. <sup>29</sup>But they constrained Him, saying, ("Lord, just don't leave now, Lord. Come on now. I want You to be there with me, I want to sense Your presence every time, even in my deep most moments,) "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." (Let me tell you something – Jesus is always willing but will we constraint Him?) <sup>30</sup>And He went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup>Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, (the first communion service after the resurrection) that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.***

Telling them, "This is what is going to happen to you also. You give me your life, I will do," what? "Bless it, give thanks, break it." Some people at the what stage? Blessing stage. Some people in the thanksgiving stage; some people in the broken stage. And if, you are in the broken stage, my dear brothers and sisters, God is actually making you a blessing to others. You know what happens? The more you are broken, the more your eyes will be opened to the resurrection witness in the Scriptures. And you will tell along with Paul, "I want to know Him in the power of the resurrection. I want to be a partaker of His suffering so that I will also be a partaker of His glory so that I will attain resurrection of life."

***<sup>32</sup>And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn?..."***

As Warren Wiersbe said, "The symbol or the symptom of spiritual growth is not a big head, but a burning heart." And if, I in some measure, have caused your heart to burn today, ask God and, constraint Him and say, "Come, Lord." And you know what He is going to do? He is going to take your life, He is going to give thanks, He is going to bless it. And He is going to break it and He is going to make you a blessing, to many.

As Pastor Vijay was saying, you know, if our first witness is not sure – first witness – then everything about the Kingdom of God falls apart. This is the first witness. If we don't know our Scripture, if we don't understand the Kingdom of God, we will always struggle. Our problem is that, it's not that we don't read Scripture. We don't read Scripture like we will eat during lunchtime; that this is what on which my life depends. That's how we eat. We are very careful about eating three times a

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day, because we know our life, this mortal life, depends on that. That's why we grumble so much about food when we don't like it because we know life is somehow connected, but God says, "This is life." And if the first witness goes wrong, everything else goes wrong – the second witness, the third, the fourth witness, because we don't know the facts because these are the facts of the Kingdom.

As we go to Communion, let me give you an example, like for those who follow the news. You know, there was a shooting in Parkland High school in the U.S. a couple of weeks back, where around 16-17 kids were killed by a young boy who came in with an assault rifle. After that, there was a huge furor and they wanted to take the rifles off. So, last Saturday, almost 500,000 young kids like you, younger than you, 14-year-olds, 15-year-olds boycotted classes. They marched Washington D.C. and they said, "Gun laws should be made strict. Guns should be taken off", which is the Second Amendment Rights. Now, the whole issue is – a lot of people, lot of lobbyist use young children who have emotions to get on the streets marched Washington D.C. to take something which you are constitutionally protected. And a lot of Christians are like that; they get emotionally moved because they don't know facts of Scriptures. Now, let me tell you the facts that is available for 2016 from the FBI – around 309 people were killed by rifles, 1600 were killed with knives, and more than that were killed with fists. So, what do you do? Take the rifles, take the knives and cut your hands also off? So, you didn't have your facts. When you don't know your facts, anybody can come and move your emotions and get you on the wrong track, because you don't know Scripture. False prophets, false teachers, false apostles cannot thrive in a set of people who know their Scriptures. They thrive in the last generation because people do not have the witness, that is the witness of Scripture.

So, the first witness is Scripture. Jesus came, lived among us according to Scriptures. He died according to Scriptures. He was buried according to Scriptures, and He rose again according to Scriptures. If He had risen in some other manner, Scripture is broken. What if He rose on the fourth day? Lazarus is living who came out on the fourth day. Is he greater than Jesus? No. Why? Because the Scriptures says, "The Son of Man will rise on the third day," not on the fourth day, according to Scriptures. That's why we need to know our Scriptures so that we don't get fooled in these last days. This is on which this is on which your and my life stands. One day, we will receive the incorruptible only because we are born again by the incorruptible seed of God, that is the Word of God. That's what *1 Peter 1:23* says, "I and you, if we are born by the incorruptible seed, one day, like the Pastor said, we'll be like a tree; we will receive immortality, incorruptible body because we are born by the incorruptible seed. This is it. This is not an add-on. This is the structure on which our life is built. As we go more and more and more into it, we see – I need to keep on changing according to the Word, and we are willing to change. If we are not willing to change, then there is something terrible that is waiting for people.

Like I said, the Church can be the safest place on the earth or the most dangerous place on earth. Safest because you hear the Word of God, you listen to the Word of God, you understand according to the Word of God and you keep making changes according to the Word of God. But if, the Word of God of is perverted from the pulpit and you do not know the Word of God. You will sit there thinking you are saved, and you go to hell when you die. While the man on the road has an option of finding a pamphlet, hearing somebody and getting saved while, you sit here thinking you are saved, when you are not saved! So, the Church can be the safest place or the most dangerous place. That is why always have the witness of the Scripture. I'm coming from a Sunrise Service. What upsets me when I go to Churches and preach is when I see believers sitting and they don't know their Word. It really upsets me. I'm looking at them, I'm preaching and the other Pastor is translating in Telugu and I look at them and I know they don't know their Scripture. What are you putting your faith on? What is your guarantee that when you die, you will go to the other place, a prepared place? A prepared place is for a set of prepared people. It's the most dangerous thing that you can go through life is discounting This. This is life. This is my life. This Word is life. Scripture says, "When you eat this bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, will be guilty of sinning against the Body and the Blood of the Lord." A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread or drinks of the cup; for anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord, eats and drinks judgment upon himself? Do you know that this table that brings healing can be a table of judgment because you did not judge Christ and His Body, the Church? You go through the Bible, especially the New Testament. Let me tell you, the New Testament, one thing you find about Jesus and the people who are brought to Him – Jesus will forgive people of murder; He will forgive people of adultery; He will forgive people of stealing; He will forgive people of everything. Only one thing God does not forgive. Do you know what it is? He does not forgive unforgiveness. Unforgiveness is an unforgiveable sin. He doesn't forgive unforgiveness. You need forgiveness from God, you need forgiveness first. Unforgiveness is not forgiven. Therefore, He says, "Judge yourself before you come to this table." The first witness of Scripture – "Lord, am I holding something?" You can have issues but you cannot have unforgiveness. Issues are there because fundamentally, we are all wired

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differently. Issues, yes. Issues can be dealt with. Unforgiveness is a different thing and God says, "Deal with that first because many people have gone weak, many people have died; not because somebody shot them on the streets or stabbed them on the streets. Because they partook of this, they have died." That's what Scripture says. So, be very careful. The first witness of Scripture, "Lord, in my heart, if I have something against, I'm holding against somebody, show me, Lord and I'm letting it go." The first witness. Shall we sing?

#### **Communion Song: Savior King**

As we close, *2 Corinthians 5:1-5*, Scripture talks about what Pastor Vijay was preaching today.

#### **2 Corinthians 5:1-5**

***<sup>1</sup> For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, (The body we have now and the body we will receive then.) eternal in the heavens. <sup>2</sup> For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven,***

Honestly, ask – is that what our groaning is for? Our groaning is not for our heavenly body; our groaning is for our earthly body. Most of the groans, our complaints – are connected with the earthly body. God says, "People who belong to God are always longing for the other one because they know – that's reality." Have you ever lived in a tent, at least, a shamiana? Now, we will go downstairs. Does it really keep the heat away? Can it keep the rain away? Can it keep the wind away? Can it keep the dust away? Nothing. It's only exciting in pictures to live in a tent for one night. Scripture says, "This is like a tent." It doesn't matter how well you eat, what vitamins you take and how well you exercise; your teeth will fall off, your joints will creak, your hair will fall, your eyesight will only get worse and worse. There is no redemption for this body. Therefore, we groan. All our miseries are connected with this. God says, "We groan, longing to be clothed in our heavenly dwelling."

***<sup>3</sup> if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. <sup>4</sup> For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.***

That's the real life Christ is giving – the resurrection life. How do we know you have it?

***<sup>5</sup> Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.***

When you buy an apartment in this city, they will say, "It will be finished in 12 months." You pay a deposit and because you have that slip of paper, you know, one day, that apartment is yours. So, you keep on going every week to check out how the work is progressing. Why do you go there boldly? Because you know – that's your home. God says, "If I have put the Spirit in you, that's the deposit of the dwelling you have." That's a deposit. It's called an earnest deposit. Very earnestly, God has put it there. He has sown His Spirit in us and that is the Spirit, Scripture says, "All of creation groans; every human, who is born of God, groans; even the Spirit groans." Because the Spirit, man who is born again and this creation knows – this is not reality; reality is up there. That's what Resurrection did. Resurrection changed everything. Before resurrection, every man, from Abel till John the Baptist, they were conquerors but ultimately, death conquered them. Alexander the great, nation after nation, fell before his army. He conquered India too, whatever was known of India. And finally, he wept saying, "There is no more land for me to conquer." But death conquered him at 33. So, you could conquer the whole world and still have death conquer you until Jesus conquered death. When He conquered, *Ephesians 4* says,

#### **Ephesians 4:8**

***<sup>8</sup> Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men.***

All the saints from Abel downwards, everybody was in the captivity of death. He took them captive and took them as a train to Heaven. Death had no more power over the saints. Therefore, in the New Covenant, Paul says, "To be absent in the body is to be present with God." Death has lost its power over God's people. The final enemy is gone. That's why we are a set of people rejoicing because every problem you are thinking of it, it is not solved, ultimately, you will die. "Because what are you worried about? I have taken care of death." That's why we should be a set of people who sing. I was telling in the morning, Church, you know what? That is one thing that should define a believer – we know we are eternal. Therefore, we

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sing. Joy should be there manifested. The Philippi, my favourite chapter, as Pastor said – Acts 16 – “They heard them sing in the midnight hour,” because resurrection power cannot be stopped. Your neighbour shouldn't hear you fighting. Your neighbour shouldn't hear you gossiping. Your neighbours across the road shouldn't be hearing you playing Hindi music; they should hear you singing. Then, their chains will come off because they will realize, “How are these people able to sing? How come they always sing? How come they always have a song?” The reason is – there is life within us which cannot be stopped. Don't make this into another religion. Faith has to be lived out. Live it out. Genuinely, live it out. That's why Nehemiah says, “*The joy of the Lord is my strength.*” They couldn't sing in Babylon but when they came to Jerusalem, Nehemiah said, “Don't mourn. Don't grieve. Rejoice for the joy of the Lord is your strength.” Shall we stand up?

#### **Closing Prayer:**

*Father, this morning, we just come to You as a set of redeemed people; not redeemed by the blood of sheep or goats or bulls. We are redeemed by the Blood of Your only Begotten Son. We are redeemed by the Blood, born by the incorruptible seed, the Word of God and the Spirit, Your own Spirit, You have given it to us as a deposit. O Father, we just thank You, Lord. You ask that woman, “Why do you seek the living among the dead?” I pray, Father, You would receive that same Word into our hearts, that we are living people. When we go out tomorrow into the world, we will know that we are among the dead and we don't seek anything of the dead. We are only trying to give them this life You have given us. We don't find our joy in the dead world; we don't find our joy, our thrill, our happiness in the things of this world because we are living people. We find our joy in Your Word because Your Word is life. We find our joy in our prayer closet because we can speak to our Living God. We find our joy when we come together as two people because You said, “When two or three gather in My Name, I, the Living God, will be in your midst.” We will not search for the living among the dead; we will be found among the living, O God because You have given us life, not ordinary life; You have given us life from above, Your own life. Help us to value that life. Help us to protect that life. Help us, like fire is fed, feed that life that You will have a generation in these last days who will walk like the apostles walked on earth. And everywhere they went, they asked, “What kind of manner of men are these?” Help us to go through this day, through this week, through this month, manifesting the resurrection life of Christ Jesus. Nothing should dampen our spirits. Nothing should steal that joy. Nothing, Lord. Nothing because the world did not give it. Therefore, the world should not take it. Put a hedge of protection around Your children. Order their footsteps. Guard their ears. Guard their eyes. When they are young, Lord, now, let them make a covenant with their eyes not to sin against You. Let them make a covenant with their ears not to listen to anything that is contrary to Your Scripture. Let them make a covenant in their heart and let them purpose in their heart that they will not defile themselves so that Your life will grow in each one of us, O Lord. Thank You, Father. Go before us, Lord. As Paul said, “First, I want to know You and Your resurrection power.” Go before us in that power and make those crooked paths straight, the rough roads smooth, fill those valleys, pull down those strongholds so that Your children can walk on level ground with God and not alone; never alone, Lord. Because You rose again, we will never ever be alone again, O Lord. Thank You, Father. Thank You, Lord. There are no orphans here. There are no widows here. Nobody, because we have a Father in Heaven who is with us and we have a Husband in Heaven and I pray, Your children will go in that strength. Thank You, Lord. Now, by faith, we lift up holy hands. We bless Your Holy Name. For Thine in the Kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever, Amen.*

#### **Benediction:**

*May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the Father and fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest and abide with each one of us until He comes to take us home. Amen.*