

Become Scopic Not Myopic!

Pastor Vijay Eathakota
www.gracetabernaclehyd.org

Father, this evening, yes Lord; build Your throne in our praises. And build Your throne in our hearts, that's our prayer. We sang, O Lord, You are above all, let it be true in our lives. Father, even as we mediate upon Your Word this evening, speak to our hearts. We humble ourselves and we just acknowledge, O Lord; without You, we can do nothing. Without the power of Your Word, without the anointing of the Holy Spirit, Father, we are just nothing. This evening, therefore, I would pray You would quicken us by Your Spirit. Wash us by the water of Your Word. Lord, even as the Word comes forth, whatever is of God, let it stand and let it bear fruit, let it find soil which is and ground which is soft. Good and honest hearts as Your Scripture says so that it will bear fruit even and hundred-fold, O Lord. To that end, You'll bless and anoint, O Lord, the speaking and the hearing of the Word. We thank You and we praise You, Amen.

So, just continue to study the Word and one of the verses I've been looking at 'faithfulness and faith' and we've been looking at that series over and over again in our Church. And we're going to look at one particular verse from the Bible and I'll read that and then we'll go into the meat of today's message.

2 Corinthians 4:16

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart...

Anybody losing heart this evening in the house of God? You know, very important, you see, we heard that, "God sent His Son, we call Him Jesus, He came to love, heal and forgive. Because He lives, we can face tomorrow." Do you believe that? "Because He lives, all fear is gone. And He holds your future, life is worth the living." Okay, do you believe that? We'll see. You know, sometimes, when we sing those songs, we need to really ask ourselves this question: "Lord, do I believe that?" Life is worth; therefore, we do not lose heart. I am sure many of us are going through difficulties and trials and some of us are going through the trial of our lives; we cannot even speak to the others; outwardly, everything might be looking good, we know the struggle we are facing.

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment,

Of course, it's momentary, right? What is man? It's just like a breath like a vapor. 80 years, we can possibly live, if God wills in our lives; it's in the light of eternity; it's a moment. And the test and trials you go through during that lifetime is also, I mean, if your life itself is a moment and the test and trials that you are going through is less than a moment for me. It's working for us, those light afflictions are working for us far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, how can we have that assurance, right? Do you believe that the light afflictions that you are going through are working out for you an eternal weight of glory? Do you believe that? How can we have that assurance? And Paul doesn't stop here, and he goes on and writes several chapters after this as well. How do we have the assurance?

¹⁸ while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Look! So, what is the whole idea of this particular verse 18? He says, "What should we look at?" We should look at things we cannot see. How do we do that? And when we look at the things we cannot see our eyes focused not on the temporal but on the eternal, you see that? Look, see the eternal. And of course, Paul doesn't not stop here.

2 Corinthians 5:7

⁷ For we walk by faith, not by sight.

Just look at this previous slide. Look what is that word 'look'? Very interesting word. The word 'look' comes from the Greek word 'Skopeo' from which we get the word 'scopic', from which we get the word 'telescopic'. You say have a telescopic

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vision, 'skopoe'. And of course, the root word is 'skopos' and which occurs only once in the entire new testament. And it's actually called 'mark' and look at the very interesting passage from which this word 'skopos' comes from.

Philippians 3:14

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

You see that? What we as believer's need is 'scopic' vision, telescopic, that we can see. We have the eyes and the sharpness to see in the distance. Mark, prize; prize, that is there, high calling. You know, I cannot help but think when you see the Bible, I help but think movies, okay. I mean, because my database is full of movies. And especially some of the interesting dialogues, okay? So, we have this dialogue between two guys in a movie. I don't want to mention the name of the movie, because I don't want you to judge me based upon what I saw. But of course, some of you will definitely because your database is equally good as mine. There is an interesting dialogue between two characters in the movie. Then, there is one guy; he wants to take up this business proposal and the other guy says, "You know, exercise caution." And it's a very interesting dialogue in Hindi okay, it says, "Silvermani, kitne baar khaha tujhe, nazdiki fayda dekhne se pehle, door ka nuksaan ke baaremein sochna chahiye!" You know the movie? You don't know? Thank God. 'Nazdiki fayda dekhne se pehle, door ka nuksaan ke baaremein sochcocho' Before you consider the temporal gains, looks at the eternal losses that your decisions could cause. If you're not able to do that, then you're not 'scopic'; you're 'myopic', from which we get the word 'myopia'. Some of you suffer from it, especially my wife; she's got 'soda buddi'. Bery powerful lenses. What does it mean? You only can see this far. You can't see things beyond a particular distance, see? And Peter actually tells the characteristics of those people who are actually myopic and this is actually the word he uses, 'Myopathso' which we get the word 'myopic' in the Greek and it's found in,

2 Peter 1:5-9

⁵ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶ to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷ to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

My God, you think Christian life is straight forward? No way! And he says

⁸ For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For he who lacks these things is (What? 'Myopathso', 'myopic') shortsighted, even to blindness, (My God, it can lead you to blindness as well) and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

That is the reason why I titled today's message 'Become Scopic; not Myopic', Grace Tabernacle Church on the 1st of August, 2018, Hyderabad, becomes 'scopic' and not 'myopic' and this is essentially what it means to walk by faith and not by sight. Remember that song? "It is well with my soul and Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight, the clouds be rolled back as a scroll; the trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend, even so, it is well with my soul," He says, "Let my faith become my sight, O Lord." That is the prayer of every saint who has gone before us – "Lord, let my faith become the instrument through which I am looking and not immediate circumstances or situation that I am going through." So, this faith, if you want to really sharpen your 'scope', it can become like a Hubble that you can see far. I mean, that's the beauty of Hubble, right? You can see galaxies far beyond that is in terms of distance. Of course, we don't know when Christ is going to come. Can God show us? I mean, very interesting, right? It says,

Amos 3:7

⁷ Surely the Lord God does nothing, before He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.

And He tells Abraham; He says, "Can I hide from Abraham? What am I going to do to Sodom and Gomorrah knowing that Abraham is going to become a mighty nation that is he going to command His children after'. So, God is willing to show us only if he walk a certain way and allow God to sharpen our scope, this title could be easily, "The choices of faith verses choices of sight." That could be a subtitle because faith has choices, my dear brothers and sister. So, let us look at that, know, how do we sharpen this, vision, scope in my life?

Hebrews chapter 11 is the passage which we looked on the Sunday, second message on this passage.

Hebrews 11:24

²⁴By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,

For a season, of course, and the verse goes on. By faith, Moses chose. So, faith has choosing. Got that everybody? Faith asks you to make certain choices. Suppose you have famous line from 'Forrest Gump – "Life is like a bunch of chocolates, you do not know what you will get." Well God says, "chose your chocolates carefully." For example, when you have bunch of chocolates given to you, chose the ones which are sugar free, okay? So, it's like this; when you are, for example, let's say, you have a bunch of chocolates given to you or may be a few red balls given to you, bunch of balls, and they ask you make a choice, "Pick four or a fifteen," or let's say, "20." So, you pick four; one of the ways of choosing four is to look those things, 1,2,3,4, that's a choice. Another way of choosing the four, 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10 up to 16, reject and choose the four. You can choose by the process of elimination or the process of choice. Therefore, faith has choices and also, faith has something which you refuse. We have this famous, formula in combinatorics, $nCr=nC(n-r)$, oh my dad says, 'Aha!' I hope Vilas says, "Aha!" Okay, the way you chose 'r' things out of 'n' things, is a the same as choosing (n-r) or rejecting (n-r), okay.

See, you have mathematical statements in the Bible. So, I get excited when I see mathematical statements. By faith, you make choices and when you make choices, you are also by faith refusing some choices, and both are a part of faith. But how do you make these choices?

Romans 10:17

¹⁷So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

So, in other words, I make my choices, making choices based on God's Word so that our vision not myopic but scopic; that is what I want to do, I want to make choices based upon God's Word, okay, so that my vision becomes sharp. I will be able to see into future. See, sometimes, when I see certain people, and the choices they're making, I am not a prophet, but I have data points. Like James Stuart says, "I have sufficient data points. I can easily extrapolate where they are going." You make certain choices in your past and your current interested abased upon your past choices and your current interests I can easily predict without any problems without being a prophet having vision like Samuel the Seer. I can see because I have patterns in the Bible. So, what should we do in order to make choices? I need to know the Word of God, of course, "Faith comes by hearing, hearing the Word of God." So, what in the Word of God should I read, is also important. I am going to use one specific principle, in order for me to have a scopic vision. Several things that you can do, but one thing, one principal which God was speaking to my heart through the week, even as I was studying and listening to several sermons online, particularly one interview, I was listening to, phenomenal, and this is what I was studying, as Pastor says, "If you steal another man's idea, it's plagiarism but if you steal several ideas, it is research." So, I did my research." I mean, when I read that, I could not stop laughing; it's so true. We researchers take pride, we have novelty, nonsense! So, there is nothing new under the sun.

Hebrews chapter 13 verse 7; look at what it says in the Bible. I am using one particular principal in order to ensure my vision becomes Scopic.

Hebrews 13:7

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

Look at that carefully, another translation,

⁷Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. (ESV)

You got that? There is faith here, both here, doesn't have 'Myo-Scopic' vision. So, faith is here, and faith is here, but what are we supposed to consider? The outcome ,their conduct. KJV uses the word 'conversation', consider the outcome of their way of life. What is this word 'consider'? It's very interesting. Consider the outcome 'anatheoreo' which means theorize;

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study what they are doing, make an analysis of the choices they made, and the what they have started lives and result of their lives, and therefore, end results of their choices, consider! So, I am using one principle here, the principle I am using is this, 'I am using the principle of conducting or considering the outcome of conduct whether people are of faith or no faith'. That is what I am looking at, I am just using one principle. Why am I using this principle? Fools never learn from their mistakes, normal people learn from their mistakes, wise learn from other's mistakes. How many of you want to be fools? How many of you want to be normal? None? You want to be wise? Sure. How much life can you live? 80? You know what God says? I was actually listening to interview and this man of God is saying, "Read biographies, because you can only live one life. But when you read biographies you can live 70 years in 15 days.' You don't have to wait till you get your mid-life crisis, you don't have to go till the age that you are 50. You don't have to wait till you are teenagers, some of you less than 12. I like that, I am teaching one song to my children in the school, "*Years I spent in vanity and pride, caring not my Lord was crucified, knowing not it was for me He died on Calvary. Mercy there was great, and grace was free; pardon there was multiplied to me; now my burdened soul found liberty at Calvary.*" And I was looking at them I am teaching Joann; I am teaching Aman; and I am teaching Abigail, "Years, (they are singing), years I spent in vanity and pride." My God, is this relevant to them? Years I spent in vanity and pride, they are singing, and I looked at that and I said, one verse came to my mind – *1 Peter 4:3-6* – "*The time that you spend is sufficient for you to live in all kinds of sensual pleasures... But spend the rest of the time not for pleasure but for the will of God.*" I was looking at them and said, "They actually spent sufficient time. They don't have to." I can tell my experiences, from my life and the choices that I have made and share with them and these are the stupid decisions, "Don't make those stupid decisions. Otherwise, you will lose life. You can live my life in the short span you have." Don't become like Ram Gopal Varma (RGV). Somebody said, "Sir, did you ever learn from the mistakes from your movies?" He said, "You can never learn from mistakes, because you'll always make new mistakes." I said, "Nonsense." See, this is what we call fools. See, you don't have to wait till you make mistakes; learn from others. Consider the choices that they have made, the outcome of their conduct and be wise. That is what Paul tells Timothy,

2 Timothy 3:14-17

¹⁴But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them,

From who did you learn? From your mother who married a Greek. So, you also don't go and marry a Greek. Don't say, "I'll also make the same mistakes of my mom." Nonsense. She taught you. And then, he says,

¹⁵and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

So, boys and girls, ladies and gentlemen, brothers and sisters; it's like friends, countrymen, you need to make some choices, based upon decisions. So, what we'll do is, we don't have to read biographies; the Bible is full of biographies, right from the beginning. We'll look at people who made choices. From the beginning, we'll look at people who made choices; when they made choices, what did they reject; that also, we'll see. And because of what they chose and what they rejected, what is the outcome of their conduct and the way of life of where they are heading. And where they're causing others to lead too, that is also important. Because your life is not going to stop here, because the choices you make will also affect your future and your children and the people in your home, Church. So, we'll look at the first choice made. Who made the first choice? Interesting; it was not Adam but madam Eve.

Genesis 3:6

⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

So, both made choices. One deceived into making a choice; one making a choice knowing very well what he was getting himself into. So, both made choices. So, what did they choose and what did they reject? They chose the tree of knowledge, and they refused the tree of life. Understand that. So, you can't have both ways; you can't have choosing from knowledge and then, also, choosing from life; we can't have both. That's exactly Jesus; You know what God said? The moment they made a choice to eat from the tree of good and evil, God said, "You cannot eat from the tree of life. Finished. Over. Cherubim, stop it." You cannot. You see, you cannot serve God and mammon. So, let us try to look at even more deeply as

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to what were the choices they were making, and what were the characteristics of those choices? And that is amplified for us in,

2 Corinthians 11:3-4

³But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. ⁴For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!

Another Christ, a different spirit, a different gospel. So, when Eve was making a choice all these things are there in that. So, first lesson I learnt from the choice that she made is this – every decision however simple or innocent it might seem to the nature, is a spiritual decision. You need to understand that. Every decision however simple or innocent it might seem is it a spiritual decision because when she chose from the tree of knowledge, she rejected the Spirit of God and she accepted the spirit of the world. So, you cannot have it both ways, as children of God, it's a spiritual decision. Actually, your spiritual condition is a sum total of all the decisions which are actually spiritual. So, you will exactly know where you are in your walk with the Lord based upon all the decisions that you have made in the past and you gauge whether they were spiritual decisions. Yes, they were, and didn't you choose spirit of the world or did you choose spirit of Christ?

1 Corinthians 10:20-22

²⁰Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, (You see that?) and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. ²¹You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons...

It's like without faith, it is impossible to please God, those who live according to the flesh cannot please God.

...you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. ²²Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?

First thing that we learn, every decision is a spiritual decision.

Second – every decision, however simple or innocent it might seem to the natural, is a decision over Lordship another spirit, another Jesus.

Romans 6:16-19

¹⁶Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

And of course, we know that the just or the righteous shall live by what? By faith. And therefore, it says, it goes on and says,

¹⁷But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. (you see that?) ¹⁸And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. (You are either slave of sin and then what happens.) ¹⁹I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. (he is saying don't get upset when I am using this master's analogy) **For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.**

What does it tell me? We are slaves either of sin or of the Jesus Christ. Either sin is our master or Jesus is our Master. That's the lesson I have learnt.

The third lesson – every decision or choice has to be Biblical and need not be logical. You need to understand; your logic and your reasoning might say, "This is the perfect decision to make." Look, for example, I am just using the example of marriage because everybody's favourite topic and everybody's eyes lights up when we talk about marriage and you know, based upon reasoning and logic, don't say, "Oh, this guy is a good guy, this girl is a good girl. Look at the manners she's got," whatever it is.

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Proverbs 3:5-6

⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Every decision has to be Biblical and it does not have to be logical. There is reasoning, by the way. Paul says that he reasoned from the Scripture that Jesus is the Christ. There is reasoning; it doesn't mean that you accept anything without reason, no. Faith is not unreasonable in that sense. So, let us consider the outcome. So, what is the outcome of one choice?

Romans 5:12

¹² Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, (how many men?) and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned

One decision and the entire world is suffering. Can you imagine if Adam and Eve had that scopic vision? My one decision and the entire human race is going to be destroyed because of that one decision. One decision will change your life. So, be very careful. One choice, we are all making choices every day and we are goofing up considerably. The first choice that was made was made in the Garden of Eden. Of course, I am looking at it chronologically and I am looking at different places in the Bible for this word called 'choice' and the second time when I see the word 'choice', it occurs specifically in *Genesis*.

Genesis 6:1-2

¹ Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, ² that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, (How did it happen? They saw, they were all looking) *that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.*

They made a choice. This saying is mine; it is original, okay? "Marriages are made in heaven but choices are made on earth." That's exactly what we do when we are exchanging vows. What are you saying? Forsaking all others, I have chosen you to be my wife till death do us apart. You had made a choice rejecting all the three and a half billion other gender. I remember one of my mathematics teachers when we were doing the pledge. I pledge not to the Christian flag but to the Indian flag saying, "All Indians are my brothers and sisters," he would say, "All Indians are brothers and sisters except one." One choice only; everybody else, I have rejected and have made one choice. So, you have made a choice made in heaven. Marriages are actually made in heaven but we break down on earth. This is one of the most significant thing and important and I tell you why because you see, when you take a glass of pure water and you take a drop of dirty water; I just want to tell you that; before coming to Church, I just took a shower in the Church office and I took a towel and started cleaning myself and a cockroach was sitting on the towel and I didn't see it. I started cleaning myself and suddenly, the cockroach went like that. It was yuck! And one of the things that I hate is cockroaches! My goodness! I just took a bath and cleansed myself, my cleansing will not make the cockroach clean but the cockroach is going to make me unclean. You take a glass of pure water and you drop one drop of garbage water, the garbage water is not going to be cleansed because of the pure water. The pure water is going to be terrible because of the garbage water. This is the principle you need to apply when you really make a choice like this and this is one of the most important choices and I will show you in the Bible.

Judges 3:5-6

⁵ So the people of Israel lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁶ And their daughters they took to themselves for wives, and their own daughters they gave to their sons, and they served their gods.

Whom did they serve? Their gods. Is it interesting? Israel married Jebusites, Canaanites and all; did all of them say, "Halleluiah, praise the Lord?" No. They were saying, "Ashdod, Baal praise you." They were falling flat on their faces before all their idols. One of the most interesting happening in the times of Nehemiah.

Nehemiah 13:22-25

²³ In those days also I saw the Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. ²⁴ And half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and they could not speak the language of Judah, but only the language of each people. (It's not that their people were singing our songs but our people were singing their songs.) ²⁵ And I confronted them and cursed them and beat some of them and pulled out their hair.

This is what Nehemiah did. You know what Ezra did? When he heard that somebody intermarried, you know what he did? He broke down, he put sack cloth on his head, he pulled his hair and his pulled beard whereas Nehemiah, he slapped them and pulled their hair. What it tells me is that we need two kinds of people in the Church; both have to be there. One who pulls your hair and one who pulls his hair? That is what we called 'grace' and 'truth'. Nehemiah was all truth and says, "Nonsense, you fellows." Ezra, on the other hand was like, "Lord, what are these people doing?" He puts sackcloth on his hair and pulls his hair. You know what happens? Everybody who intermarried stands and comes alongside him and they also begin to mourn. What it tells me is this – grace actually draws people to repentance not truth; I'm just assuming. Grace, not just truth; that's beside the point. We are just looking at something which is very interesting over here. You shall not give your daughters to their sons, or take their daughters for your sons or for yourselves. And why did he make a statement? Does he have the precedence? Does he have the Bible? Did he study the Bible or some kind of biography which gave him a kind of precedence? Absolutely.

Nehemiah 13:26-28

²⁶ Did not Solomon king of Israel sin on account of such women? Among the many nations there was no king like him, and he was beloved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless, foreign women made even him to sin. ²⁷ Shall we then listen to you and do all this great evil and act treacherously against our God by marrying foreign women?"

He says, "Do you see what happened? Solomon didn't make them Israelites but they made Solomon into a Baal worshiper and Ashdod or Ammon worshiper," whatever it is. Nehemiah does something interesting. Even more than that. He just won't confront the situation but he confronts a much deeper problem. And he looks at somebody else.

²⁸ And one of the sons of Jehoiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was the son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite. Therefore I chased him from me.

This is Nehemiah. He got on his donkey and the son of the high priest is there. Eliashib was high priest and the son of the high priest has married a heathen and Nehemiah said, "You fellows are making a bad precedence here. I'm going to chase you out of Israel," and that fellow ran for his life. It's interesting and you need to understand. Scripture says, "Carefully, choose your leaders and consider the outcome of their conduct and imitate their faith." They have leaders absolutely compromised and Nehemiah says, "I will chase them. Especially, this is the high priest's son. And if high priest's son is marrying from other religion and what do you say?" "Arey, who kar raha hai, mujhey kyu karney nahi dhera hai?" (Ah! He is doing but why is he not letting me do?)

Nehemiah 13:28-31

²⁸ Therefore I chased him from me. ²⁹ Remember them, O my God, because they have desecrated the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites. ³⁰ Thus I cleansed them from everything foreign, and I established the duties of the priests and Levites, each in his work; ³¹ and I provided for the wood offering at appointed times, and for the firstfruits. Remember me, O my God, for good.

Why is this such an important thing? Consider the outcome of the choice made in heaven. The sons of God were spiritual beings; they made a choice and what happened to them? Jude will talk about this.

Jude 1:6-7

⁶ And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day— ⁷ just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

I've seen today's article. You see that? Somebody already knows what I am talking about and I don't even want to mention it. Everybody saying, "Yuck," and one psychiatrist will come and give justification for that act, unbelievable. What are you risking? You are risking eternal fire.

Jude 1:7

⁷just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

What are you risking? You're risking eternal fire. I mean, it's very interesting! Scripture is absolutely silent on Solomon's eternal destiny. Manasseh repented of all the things that he has done. But Solomon, we don't know.

2 Peter 1:8-9

⁸For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

So how do we gain long-sightedness or scopic vision?

I want to look at another story in the Bible, very familiar to all of us and choices being made and destinies being determined. *Genesis 13:7* onwards.

Genesis 13:7-9

⁷And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land. ⁸So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. ⁹Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left."

So, there was strife. Okay and then, choices are being made. So, what is the first lesson that I learn here? Don't make any decisions when tempers and temperatures are high. Okay? You fight. The things that come of couples' mouths— "I'll give you divorce!" "The worse decision I made in..." Ah! Careful! Strife! Temper! There's a movie called 'temper'. We have all kinds of movies on our database these days. You name a negative character, we have a movie and to make it positive. Don't make any decision when tempers and temperatures are high. The wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God and proverbs will put it very fantastically. What does it say?

Proverbs 22:24-25

²⁴Make no friendship with an angry man, And with a furious man do not go, ²⁵Lest you learn his ways And set a snare for your soul.

You see that? I mean, he's not going to become shanta-murthy (peaceful man); you will also become angry. I've seen that in marriages also. One of the parties is a very angry person. Over a period of time, both become angry people. It's very difficult. Don't make decisions when you're angry. That's one of the counselling points that we get often as married couples. Pastor says, "Vijay! Never make a decision when you're angry!" Never ever discipline in anger! I learnt that and that same day, I was so angry with one of the children and I said, "I'm very angry! I'm going to punish you later." So, later, I went to her and I said, "I'm not punishing you! I'm disciplining you!" Otherwise, in anger, it becomes punishment; not discipline. Very angry! Don't discipline in anger. Don't make decisions when tempers are hot. You know what happens? You will regret it for a lifetime. That's the first thing I learnt.

Second lesson; Look at this.

Genesis 13:9

⁹Is not the whole land before you? (This is what Abraham is telling Lot.) Please separate from me.

Lesson two – whenever a godly man says, "Please separate from me," check your heart! "I can't work with you." I mean, think about it. Just not a godly man, let us say, you have professor in a university and you are a Ph.D. student. It happened to me. So, I can only give you examples. He calls me and he says, "I cannot work with you." Whenever somebody says that, asks yourself this question" why did he say that? I mean, just extrapolate it to the context of our Church. If Pastor James were to call me and say, "Vijay! Please separate from me," finished! Heart-attack! Think about those scenarios. "Please

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don't come to my Church." When you come to that place where in, people have to say those things to you. When a godly man says, "Please separate from me," Check your heart! What's going on over here? What's going on? I learnt this lesson. A very tough lesson. Because you know why we don't want to stay around godly men? Because they put boundaries and they always keep asking you for accountability and many of us don't like it. That is the reason why we have this problem in many places – in homes, in Churches, in offices, and everywhere, we have problems, because we have to operate within boundaries like we heard during Srikar's wedding – parameters which God has instituted within those things we need to function. I found this in *Jude 1:19*. Look at this. The word separate comes here.

Jude 1:19-21

¹⁹ These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.

One thing you need to understand – every decision is a spiritual decision. When a godly man says, "Please separate from me," or in other words, he's asking you to make a choice, ask yourself this question: am I more anointed than him? Do I have the Holy Spirit more than him? Consider! Be very careful. These are the people who are sensual. Ask yourself: is this a sensual decision? Do you know this is a prompting of the Holy Spirit? Look at what happens.

²⁰ But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

You see that? Every choice ultimately leads you to eternal life. Now, what does it mean to keep yourself in the love of God.? I was listening to Corrie Ten Boom the other day. And she was reading from the JB Philips and as well as 'The Living Bible'. And the living Bible puts it beautifully. Look at what the living Bible says,

Jude 1:19-21

¹⁹ They stir up arguments; they love the evil things of the world; they do not have the Holy Spirit living in them. ²⁰ But you, dear friends, must build up your lives ever more strongly upon the foundation of our holy faith, learning to pray in the power and strength of the Holy Spirit. (And this is the killer. What does it mean to keep yourself in the love of God?)²¹ Stay always within the boundaries where God's love can reach and bless you. (That's amazing!) Wait patiently for the eternal life that our Lord Jesus Christ in his mercy is going to give you.

²¹ Stay always within the boundaries where God's love can reach you.

I'm telling you; you make a choice, you will forfeit the love of God. That's exactly what happened to Judas. He made a choice. Even at the last minute, he had to make a choice. And it says, the moment he made a choice and took communion, who entered into him? Satan entered into him. Afterwards, there was no turning back. He could not! He came out of the boundaries where God's love could reach him. See! Choices have eternal consequences Be careful of the choices that you're going to make, my dear brothers and sisters. And we know this very famous verse in the Bible from Jonah, right? *Jonah 2:8*. I've looked at different translations to get a much richer picture.

Jonah 2:8

⁸ Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God's love for them. (NIV)

Another translation.

⁸ Those who worship false gods have turned their backs on (How many of God's mercies?) all the mercies waiting for them from the Lord! (TLB)

⁸ Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love. (ESV)

If hope is gone, everything is gone. Another translation.

⁸ They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. (KJV)

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⁸Those who cling to worthless idols forsake His loving devotion. (BSB)

He's actually devoted to you.

⁸Those who regard vain idols Forsake their faithfulness. (NASB)

⁸Those who cling to vain idols leave behind the gracious love that could have been theirs. (ISV)

O my goodness! You see, when Lot was making a choice, he was actually doing all these things. May the Lord give us vision. Are there boundaries that your parents have set for you? Are there boundaries and you're fretting about them? Are there boundaries in your school that you're constantly asking, "Why are there so many boundaries?" I've no idea the number of blessings which are hidden, which you can't see, which you're actually taking part of. You need to understand that. The countless number of blessings. Countless and innumerable blessings, because of the boundaries, because of accountability. So, whenever a man of God says, "Please separate yourself from me," my God! I saw this even in our own Church. I don't want to name names. It happened over a period of time, right from ten years back. O my God! Right from the time our Church started, the Church started based upon the decisions of people. They were making choices. So, please separate from me.

Then, he says, "If you take the left, I'll go to the right." What does it mean? Let me tell you another principle. Lesson 3 – take counsel from godly anointed men and join yourself to them. Counsel from godly, anointed men. In other words, ask God to give you the discernment to recognize anointing over leaders. You see, there were prophets during Elijah and Elisha's time. Everybody knew that Elijah was a prophet and they knew that he's going to be taken away, but only a few were actually after his anointing. Actually, only one was after his anointing. Elisha would have said, "I'm not going to leave you. I'm going to cling to you." Clinging to Elijah is not an easy thing. You know it, right? One of the moodiest prophets in the entire Old Testament. Clinging to that man and just submitting to his leadership and authority, O my God! Not for one year, some theologians say for eighteen years, he followed Elijah. When do you join yourself to people and how do you recognize their anointing? Often, whenever you are joining yourself to a leader, I've seen that in my own life, what happens is that they don't have much to show for themselves. It's like Jesus; "I will follow you wherever you go." "Foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head." The scribe came. Nothing to show. And then, another guy comes and says, "Please let me go and say, 'Bye!' to mama and papa." Nothing to show. And most of the time, an anointed man will have nothing to show. Nothing to give you a guarantee. No guarantees. I'm honestly telling you, when I joined this Church, I was not after anything that, I can get from the Church. I did not join because I was getting something. Nothing to show. There's a very interesting passage in *1 Chronicles*. This is David. He's running for his life from Saul. Remember that story? And many people joined themselves with David. Remember? All the people who had problems and debts and everything, you know like-minded, not like-minded, like-problematic people, came together and they became a band of soldiers. But there is one set of people who were supposed to be enemies of David, they express their interest to join David and what did they see in David and who are these people? Let me show you. This is found in,

1 Chronicles 12:16-18

¹⁶And some of the men of (which tribe? And Saul belongs to which tribe?) Benjamin and Judah came to the stronghold to David. ¹⁷David went out to meet them and said to them, "If you have come to me in friendship to help me, my heart will be joined to you; but if to betray me to my adversaries, although there is no wrong in my hands, then may the God of our fathers see and rebuke you." (And then what happens? There's one man from the tribe of Benjamin, who raises up and the spirit of the Lord comes upon him and he makes a very interesting statement.) **¹⁸Then the Spirit clothed (I like that word – clothed.) Amasai, chief of the thirty, and he said, "We are yours, O David, and with you, O son of Jesse! Peace, peace to you, and peace to your helpers! For your God helps you." Then David received them and made them officers of his troops.**

Does David have anything to show? He was only a fugitive. But did he join himself with them? Absolutely. It is very easy to join a Church when everything is going so well. Very difficult to join a Church when they have nothing to show. Our Church doesn't even have a baptism tank of our own. Honestly speaking, what have we to show for ourselves except the Word and the anointing? That is the reason why, when Jesus was looking at all the disciples, when the teaching became tough, many disciples knew they were not getting anything out of this. You know what they said? "This is a hard teaching. Who can bear it?" And they were leaving. And He looked at the other disciples and He said, "Do you also want to leave?" Peter said,

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“Where shall we go, Lord? You and You alone have the words of life.” Did Jesus have anything to show? Nothing! Ask yourself this question: do you really join yourself when they have nothing to show? You know for a while people will come and they will say, “Nothing is happening over here!” Slowly, they are satak sita-ram (they withdraw themselves). And you know what happened? Then, David received them and made them officers of his troops. So, join yourself with godly people and come under their authority and leadership.

The next one,

Genesis 13:10

¹⁰ Lot looked around and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan toward Zoar was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.)

Isn't it interesting? Lot looked around and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan that it was well watered everywhere. New Living Translation says, “Lot took a good look at the Jordan river.” He took a telescope and he just looked at the garden like that and he said, “Okay!” The parenthesis is very interesting, right? *Before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah*. That means God is going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah and he is looking at a place where God is going to destroy. And what does he say? “Oh! It is like the garden of the Lord!” That is how he sees it. How is it? It is like the garden of the Lord and immediately, the Bible corrects it! It is like the land of Egypt. Not all Egypt, a specific place in Egypt. What is that specific place? As you go towards Zoar. What does the word ‘Zoar’ mean? Insignificant! Isn't it interesting? It's about Zoar. That's exactly what he is doing. What is he doing? He took out his telescope and he looked at the entire valley like that and he said, “Baba! This is like Eden!” God says, “It is like Egypt! Not exactly like Egypt, there is a specific place in Egypt called Zoar, it is like that.” Insignificant place! So, what is the lesson that I learn? Every worthless thing will look like the will of God, and the garden of God. It's amazing! Every worthless thing will look like the will of God and exactly what happens? When you make a choice, exactly what happens, even to Abraham, Sarah is not having children. Plan B – Hagar. Immediate conception. Will of God! Every worthless thing will look like the will of God, but as I said, every decision is what kind of a decision? A spiritual decision. Look at what happens now. He's going to make a choice. He saw. He took a good look at the entire landscape. It is looking like the garden of Eden, but God says, “It looks like Egypt and a specific place in Egypt, an insignificant place in Egypt.” And this is what He does, very graphic; these are the choices are being made now.

Genesis 13:11

¹¹ Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east:

That is very significant, right? When the Israelites were supposed to enter into the Tabernacle what they were supposed to do? The door of the Tabernacle was facing the East; they were supposed to turn their backs on the gods on the East and they were supposed to enter into the tabernacle to worship God. Significantly telling – I have made a spiritual choice, I have rejected all the gods of this world and I have chosen the God of the Israel alone. This man is making the choice and instead of turning to his back towards east, he is going towards into the east. This is significant; amazing! Every decision, I tell you is a spiritual decision and therefore, any man who goes away from the boundaries where God's love can reach you, you know what he is going? He is actually forsaking his own mercy. You do not choose God; you choose the world and not only you are also choosing the god of the world, you are choosing the ways of the world. That is why it says in *Isaiah (2:6)*; it says, you know, “My people are like the Philistines of the east; they are soothsayers (the diviners); they have learned the ways of the east.” Instead of the turning their backs towards the gods of the east; and you know that is exactly what happened to Lot. You know, I am looking at, Oh boy! He didn't even realise that he is turning his back towards to that and most of us, when we do that, when we go outside the boundaries where our God's love can reach us, you know what we were doing? They are saying, “Lord, we have had enough of You; we are turning back; I am turning my back.”

How do we come back, therefore? There is no guarantee that you can come back. See, it says, “Lead me not into temptation but deliver me from the evil one.” Meaning? Let me tell you something – do not give yourself the opportunities to sin. Okay, don't choose for yourself places where you have to compromise in your convictions. I remember some time back, long time back, you know what? One elderly officer, they were asking a guy, “Where do you want your posting?” That guy looked at the officer, “Sir, do we have the choice?” Sir said, “Yeah.” “Sir, I want that place (he named the specific place).” And the officer looked at him and he give him a smile, “I know why are you going there. I know why are you going there!” You see the choices that you make are revealing the depth of our covetousness of our own heart. And the officer

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said, “Okay, fine. I will give you.” Let me tell you something; this choice that you going to make right now is determine your future and you have no idea what you are getting yourself and let me tell you something – over a period of time, that fellow caught into mess and destroyed his life. You see, very careful. Make choices. Either you are turning towards God or you are turning your back to God. You see, that’s exactly we learned from Lot and I want to continue but I will stop here today.

See, most of us are making choices and you don’t realise that it is our choice that is making us. What happened to Lot? Could he see his children? Could he see his wife? Could he see the end result of his wife? Could he see the end results of his children of his daughters? Could he see the end result of Amon and Moab, what they will become? They will become a thorn in the flesh of Israel. What happened? Short-sighted! Turning his back towards God and choosing the god of this world. But he is called a ‘righteous man’. That’s interesting! You see, how can you be a righteous man? Let me tell you something – every called man is a righteous man. Many are called, few are chosen but few remain faithful until the end. Many of us are making choices and this new beginning, 1st of August, 1st day of the eighth month, all of you have made a choice to be in the house of the Lord, and most of you, symbolically and spiritually, you know what you did? You turned your back towards the god of that world and you chose the God of this Universe. Whenever you entered into the sanctuary, you said, you made a decision which was God, that’s the first step. Follow it up with several other steps; I am telling you one of the most important thing in our lives is ‘accountability’. You see, coming under those boundaries, the parameters that are set so that we can grow and trust. We should never have success before our time. Never! That’s exactly Lot was after – success before his time. Never have success before your time. Whenever you make a decision to go out somewhere else, some young people used to come and say, “I want to go abroad and study and now, I want to go USA,” or whatever; I will ask them this question, “Do you have the spiritual strength to withstand the temptations that you will be faced with? When you go to those places, do you have the tenacity in your spirit? Do you know how it is going to be? Is it going to be easy when you have no overseers or ruler over you that you make choices based upon the will of God?” Be very sure that you have that kind of spiritual strength and character so that when you are making those decisions, it will not affect your spiritual destiny. Because, I know so many people who have gone, when they went to success before their time and messed up their lives. You know it. When you go abroad, the kind of temptations that you will be faced with. I was in Canada. I will tell you something, when I saw Canada and the USA; I found US is conservative than Canada; and I cannot walk in the streets of Montreal and I am looking at the decision that I made, okay? I cannot walk in the streets of the Montreal downtown with my two children. I cannot. I cannot do that. It’s impossible not to fall in your sight, in the way you think, in the things that you will see. It’s impossible. Imagine. Now, it’s 2020 hindsight. I’ve got Abigail and I am walking her down, downtown Montreal, and she asks, “Papa, what is that?” I don’t want to be embarrassed. So, sometimes, you don’t know, when God shuts some several doors and puts you in place where you have to, everything looks so strict and all pabandis are there over you, arey! Why this pabandis? You don’t realise what is happening. You are within the boundaries where God’s love can reach you. Are you able to see that? This evening, pray such a prayer and ask God to have such a grace to have scopic-vision and not myopic vision. Shall we pray?

Closing Prayer:

Father, thank You. We thank You, Father. We praise You for this time that You blessed us with. So many of us made choices; some of us have made some; all of us, Lord, we made some idiotic choices, Lord; stupid choices and because of that, we have consequences of our actions even in our own lives. Father, enable us not to make those same mistakes. Enable us to learn from Your Word, from the lives of all the men and women in Bible; both the choices that let to life and the choices that let to death, and give us the wisdom and the humility to learn from them and to apply it in our lives. Father, we know Father, we make the choices and ultimately, the choices will make us. Father, I pray that You will grant us the grace to make the right choice. Choices based upon the faith and not on sight. Help us through this month and the rest of the year, seven months are already over. Father, five more months are left and You said, Lord, this year, for our Church, will be the year of destiny; and Lord, let us not begin to think that it is going to be automatic. You are going to ask us make choices and some of them; some of the choices will be tough, some of the choices will be painful choices, choices wherein we have to compromise between our career or our family; spiritual destinies will be set on, based upon those choices. And I pray that every one of us here; and all of us who will hear this Word will have the grace and the humility to make the choice according to Your will and to stay ourselves and keep ourselves in the boundaries where God’s love can reach us; grant us grace to that we pray. We commit ourselves and the rest of the month into Your hands, O Lord. Lord, even as Your children go about the rest of the week, I pray, Lord, that we will not lose this Word, O Lord Father. You will not allow the birds of the air to steal the Word that is in our hearts but, Lord, that we are conscious whenever we make choices, O Father. Thank You, Father. We praise You. We worship You. We give You glory. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.