

The Cross Or The Curse!

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Father, this morning, we come into the Throne room of Grace. I commit this Word into Your hands. Anoint us. You take control. Whatever is of God, let it bear fruit in our lives. Let it find, Father, fertile soil let it be germinated, let it be watered and let it bear fruits in our lives and whatever is of the flesh and whatever is of man and whatever is of this world, let it fall to the ground and let Your Name and Your Name alone be exalted, O Lord, through the ministration of the Word. To that end, I pray that You would anoint each one of us. I humble myself, Father, and every one of us, we humble ourselves. Who is sufficient for these things, O Lord? But, Lord, in You, by Your grace, You made us able ministers of the Word, O Father. Grant us grace that we'll be faithful to what we speak, what You have laid in our hearts and we'll be faithful to obey what You have spoken over into our lives. Grant us grace to that end we pray. Anoint us afresh this morning – the speaking and the hearing of His Word. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Yeah, we will continue to study on the Cross of Jesus Christ. One of the things that you'll understand, right, even as we study today; just want us to pay careful attention, because today is going to be more of a study; it's going to be teaching. It's not going to be more of preaching but more of teaching. So, ask God, even as Peter was praying for the Spirit of attention and not of distraction. We studied about the Cross on Sunday as well, in some measure. And we only know in little measures, we don't know completely; we will never know completely, we will only know in the ages to come what this surpassing riches of His grace towards us is.

And therefore, this morning, we'll meditate upon a few things about the Cross and what has done for us and how we apply it in our own lives – the Cross of Jesus Christ. I want to look at few quotations from a book that I was reading by A.W. Tozer, a series of essays compiled edited essays, but Tozer called 'the radical Cross' and one of the quotations I shared it with Pastor James as well and I want to share it you as well. Even I was reading through, I was touched – 'The changed attitude towards the Cross that we see, and modern orthodoxy proves that not that God has changed not that Christ eased up on the demanded we carry the Cross.' It means rather that current Christianity has moved away from the standards of the New Testament. It goes on to say, 'So far, we have moved indeed that may take nothing short of a new reformation to restore the Cross to its right place in the theology and the life of the Church.' We'll be celebrating reformation 501 years of reformation in Oct 31st 2018. Last year, 2017 we celebrated 500 years of reformation, 501st year of reformation – we'll continue to remember. We'll continue to study on what the Cross is all about.

Yesterday, I was listening to one preacher. I was preparing for my first funeral, and, in my life, I have done, it's a different experience to conduct a funeral. And I was going through, "How do I do it?" I was looking at some YouTube videos, and I was; I came across this man of God, his name is Woody Beckham; I am not sure if you have heard of his name. Woody Beckham, he was talking about a funeral service that was attended by a Pastor some time back in someplace in United States where this teenager met with an accident and he died. And in his funeral, there were so many of his friends who were crying and weeping because they were heartbroken because this young guy just passed away and in the Church service they played his favorite song; it was a heavy metal song. Heavy metal music, they played it. And then, his one of friends got up he said how great his friend is and what a fantastic man he was. When they heard the testimony of his best friend, they cried even more. And then, his girlfriend got up, and she wrote a poem for him. After she read the poem, everybody started crying and then, again, after that, they showed a video all this guy right from the childhood waving at the camera and all his moments in his life, and everybody started crying even more. His father finally came, and he started giving his eulogy and everybody started crying and weeping and crying and weeping and after the end of the service, everybody was saying, "What a wonderful funeral it was."

And then, this Pastor went to another Church, another place, where another young girl passed away. And the Pastor said nothing about her life, only these things he said, "This is the time she got baptized; this is the time when she committed herself to the Lord, this is what she did to the Kingdom of Go". And during that time, they were speaking and singing hymns of the Cross, they were singing, and Pastor gave a fantastic sermon which encouraged people, about, not about the girl primarily, but about Jesus. They exalted Jesus during that funeral service. At the end of the service, people were grieving, but you know what they said? They were strengthened at the end of the service. You see, you understand; there are two kinds of people in this world – they are sentimental people and I'll tell you honestly the people who get offended at

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the Cross are not people who want to put Jesus on the Cross because the Pharisees were so angry and so envious of Him and there was a crowd over there who said, “Crucify Him.” And they went to certain extent; they said, “Let His Blood be upon us and our children.” You know something? They are not actually the enemies of the Cross; those are not the people who get offended by the Cross. People who get offended at the Cross are sentimental people, who think that the Cross is a tragedy. One man of God was asked, on a Good Friday service, “Why do you call it ‘Good Friday’? It is nothing good about Good Friday. Jesus died. How can it be good? Poor Man died. A good Man died, and you are calling it ‘good’? You should mourn. You should call it ‘bad Friday’!” You know sentimental people. You know, one of the guys who was the most sentimental about the Cross was close to Jesus. I’ll tell you something – it is good people who are most difficult to save. Good, righteous who are the most difficult to save, because they get offended at the Cross the most.

So, this morning, I want to look at few examples, look at this guy, very close to Jesus and you know him as? Anybody any guesses? Very close to Jesus and who was offended at the Cross, any guesses? Somebody said Judas. How many of you think it’s Judas? Good, you have somebody. Another guess, let me see who this person is? This is found in *Matthew chapter 16 verse 15 onwards*.

Matthews 16:15-19

¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷ Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock (there is a rock of revelation what is the revelation? That I am the Christ son of the living God) *I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*

He was telling Peter, “I am going to build my Church upon this foundation that I am the Son of the living God, the Christ, Jesus is the Christ and upon this revelation *I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.*” And He goes on to give another blessing. He says.

¹⁹ And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you lose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

You need to understand this what He is saying to Peter, “I am going to give you the power to overcome the powers of darkness. The authority and the power to overcome the powers of darkness and you, like Elijah, can shut the keys and the heavens *and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you lose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*” And Peter was like, “Boy, this is amazing! But how was Jesus going to accomplish this?” Any ideas? How is Jesus going to accomplish a total decisive victory over the powers of darkness? The next verse, verse 21.

Matthews 16:21-23

²¹ From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

How was He going to accomplish it? Through the Cross. He’s going to accomplish a total defeat over the powers of darkness. Think about it! He’s going to spoil the powers of darkness through weakness, not through strength; not through displaying His powers. He is going to do it through weakness, and He killed, and Peter got very sentimental. So, I was reading this part to my children, said, “Peter got very sentimental and emotional.” And they don’t know the vocabulary. “What is sentimental?” I told them whenever you cry without a reason you are sentimental. “Oh!” They got it. How do I explain to the children, especially to the girls?

²² Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord...”

You see? It’s good Peter who has offended the Cross. He does not understand that the powers of darkness will be given a decisive blow only through the Cross, there is no other way. And what does he do? He begins to rebuke, “*Far be it from You, Lord.*” Oh, Sentimental. He’s rebuking. Can you imagine rebuking? Jesus understood the voice behind and He said,

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²³ But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”

Let me tell you something, my dear brothers and sisters – it is a mind-set of the Cross. The way of the Cross is a state of mind. That is the reason why *1 Peter 4* says, “Arm yourselves with this way of thinking. Arm yourselves.” And therefore, He says, why did He come? Why did the Son of Man come? For this purpose, remember?

1 John 3:8

⁸ He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested, that He might (What?) destroy the works of the devil.

You see, and how is He going to destroy the works of the devil? Through the Cross. And how did He do it?

Colossians 2:13-15

¹³ And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, ¹⁴ having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, (And what did He do?) having nailed it to the Cross. ¹⁵ Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Through the Cross. You see, this is the wisdom of God. We don't even understand. That is the reason why it is offensive. Especially, it is offensive to good people. And I don't want to see another set of good people, you know, good people who are very sentimental. That's a lot of sentimental. You see, in the modern day's music and songs, how many of our songs have the message of the Cross behind them? it's all sentimental. “Hold me close, let Your love surround me. Bring me near.” How can God hold you close, when you are His enemy? Unless something happened, there are lot of sentimental people. Look at another set of sentimental people and unfortunately, this time, it's not a man; it's a set of women.

Luke 23:26-31

²⁶ And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the Cross, to carry it behind Jesus. ²⁷ And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him.

“Oh, aiyo, Jesus! Emandi neeku? Aiyo! If I were You, Jesus, I would not have allowed this to happen to You.” They don't even know what's happening over here. Think about it – if they would have somehow stopped Him, what would have happened to you and me? It's sentimental people. “Oh! Aiyo, Jesus! Aiyo.” You know what Jesus says?

²⁸ But turning to them Jesus said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ For behold, the days are coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ ³⁰ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us,’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ ³¹ For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

In other words, they are saying, “I am a righteous man; I am absolutely holy; I am absolutely sinless. If this is what is happening to me, what will happen to You?” You know remember that verse?

1 Peter 4:17-18

¹⁷ For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ And “If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”

You see, and He is saying, “Don't get too sentimental here. It's a parable. I know that, I also believe that I am absolutely righteous, I am absolutely sinless, it is not because I didn't have the power; I am just allowing Myself to do it. If they did this to a green tree, what will happen to you? So, don't get sentimental.” So, therefore, you need to understand what is the purpose of the Cross in our lives!

John 12:27-28

²⁷ "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose, I have come to this hour. ²⁸ Father glorify your name. "Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."

John 12:30-32

³⁰ Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not mine. ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world (What is happened to him? He's going to) **be cast out.** ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."

You see that? "I am lifted up." See? What has happened over period of time? You know, sometimes, we have very hazy things about the Cross. Moses lifted up the bronze serpent and if you look at the bronze serpent, every one of you will be healed. "Just like the way you, Moses, lifted up the bronze serpent, I also will be lifted and if you see Me and believe Me, your sins will be forgiven you and you will be healed." That is the message of the Cross. What happened over a period of time? You know, Cross has become like a kind of an ornament, which is worn around necks, Cross, dangling; it's kind of a fetish. I used to watch those horror movies those days when I was a kid. You know, in horror movies, there will be a priest and this thing which demon possessed will come to him and he take a Cross and put like this and she'll scream and run away. You know, that is how we have sentimentalized the Cross and I am telling you, honestly, many non-believers think that way. And you know what happened? Even in the Church, something like that happened; to the children of Israel, happened. To the Church also. You know what they did to the bronze serpent? This is what they did to the bronze serpent.

2 Kings 18:3-4

³ And he (This is Hezekiah) **did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done.** ⁴ He removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah. And he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it (what?) (it was called Nehushtan).

What does Nehushtan mean? It is a thing of bronze; it has got power. "It has got supernatural, magical powers." That's what they thought. Cross does not have supernatural magical powers. Neither does your book has any supernatural powers. The Bible does not have; the Bible in itself does not have any supernatural powers. So, if you keep it under the pillow or you keep the Cross next to your pillow, it will not ward off evil. No! That is what many people think. That is what they bring down the Cross too, and it is possible with every one of us. Some kind of a fetish. That's what they thought, they thought the Ark of the Covenant, if they bring the Ark of the Covenant, they will win the battle and everybody. Who brought the Ark of the Covenant? Hophni and Phinehas, they bring Ark of the Covenant and then, everybody in the army of the Israelite are excited and make a huge sound and the earth is trembling, the powers of darkness. You know what they said? What has happened? The Philistines said, "Let us fight even more harder." what happens? They defeat them, not only defeat them, they steal the Ark and take it to their temple and not only they kill Hophni and Phinehas and let me tell what happens when Phinehas' wife, when she is at labor and she is at labor and about to deliver a boy, you know what she says? "Ichabod." What does it mean? The glory of God has departed. 'Chabod' means glory; 'Ichabod' means the glory of God has departed from Israel. And it does not matter if the glory of God has departed, you can use it, and it will only be a fetish and nothing more than that. Because Cross has lost its power, not because in on itself Cross is wrong, no. Your heart has not appropriated the Cross in your life. You see? So, therefore, we need to understand, you see, the enemy knows it very well. You know, one of the most difficult sermons to preach is the sermon on the Cross. To reiterate it over and over, honestly speaking, how many of you heard big preachers, small preachers speaking about the Cross in every of their sermons?

You know, when Pastor was talking about, few weeks back, he was talking about deliverance, one of the things he was mentioning coming back to the message of the Cross and you know what I did? I just put everything aside, I started taking all notes of different men of God and started to understand for myself what Cross means and you know, honestly, for such a long time, I've neglected the Cross and I am looking at it and saying, "Lord, where did I miss this?" The enemy hates the Cross. That is what it says,

Galatians 3:1-3

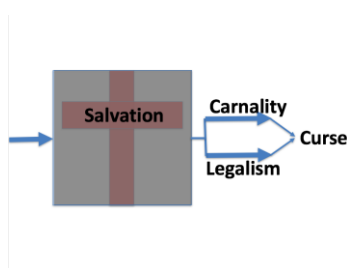
¹ O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? (And he says) ² This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by

the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? ³ Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

Galatians 3:10

¹⁰ *For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.”*

Let me tell you – this part, so many of it I learned from men of God – Derek Prince, Martyn Lloyd Jones. This is something which I have learnt. So, pay careful attention, every slide I am going to show you now, I want to ask you pray to the Lord you will have undivided attention because this is so important because if you miss this particular slide, you will particularly miss the message. So, careful attention. the list I will put a graphic because most of you have swallowed a lie. A picture is worth, a thousand? And in the beginning, was a picture? No, in the beginning was the Word. A word is worth a thousand pictures; not a picture a worth thousand words. But nevertheless, I will still give you a picture a slide to show you what this means what is happening over here. What has happened to the Galatian Church precisely? So, concentrate. Give me your undivided attention. Don't fall asleep. First, when we get saved. How do we get saved?



At the Cross, where I first saw the light, all the burdens of my heart were rolled away. It was there by I received my sight and now, I am happy the day.” First thing when we become Born Again, it says in,

1 John 5:1

¹ *“Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God...”*

So, what happened? What did Jesus do? Jesus didn't come to live; He came to die on the Cross, and if you believe that He is the Messiah, then you are saved. So, what happens? The very first time you encounter the Cross of Jesus Christ and you are saved and have the salvation experience. Now, by the way, when we say 'salvation experience', salvation is just not from the penalty from sins; salvation is to the uttermost. It is mind, body, soul and spirit. Salvation has got various stages. It is just not from the penalty of sins; you experienced freedom from your guilt, but you still haven't experienced the work of Cross inside of you. So, what happens is that over a period of time, even as you walk with the Lord, there's something that is bound to happen to every believer is the obscuring of the work of the Cross in their lives. And how do I know that the work of the Cross has become obscured in my life? And in *Galatians*, if you read the flow of the argument through essential symptoms of losing focus of the Cross is mentioned, first is carnality. And the other dangerous thing somebody put a prayer request; what is that? 'Legalism.'

First is carnality. That is what he says – if you live according to the flesh, if you sow in flesh, you will reap corruption but if you sow in the Spirit, you will reap eternal life. That means what has happened to the people who missed, or the work of the Cross has become Blood in their lives? Either they become carnal or they become legalists and the legalistic people are most difficult people to handle; you know that, right? You know what happens to the Pharisee and the tax collector, when they go to the temple, you know it says, this is what He said to those who trust in their own righteousness, Jesus says, “This Pharisee goes to the temple.” You know how he starts his prayer? He doesn't say, “I am not,” you know how he starts? “I thank You, God, that I am not like others.” In other words, “Yes, Lord, with Your help.” That is a lot of people, know? Even unbelievers will say that, “Arrey, your movie was very successful by the grace of God.” I mean, you ask any actor who's got a hit, interview I watch a lot of interview, “By the grace of God, the people accepted my work.” They also quote the grace of God. So, even a legalist will quote the grace, “Oh, I thank You, God, that I do this and I do this and not like this.” You know

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what he is doing? He is actually even praying within himself; he is not even looking at the others, he's despising in his heart, "Lord, I am so good." He looked at the tax collector, and thought, "I am so good." That is what legalism is. So, either you become a legalist or a guy who is carnal or you become legal. I know who's difficult to handle legalists. Carnal people, at least, they will say, "Oh, yeah. I have sinned." They will be like the tax collectors, "Lord, I can't even look up have mercy on me. I am a sinner." But the legalistic people, they will always try to justify themselves. But the problem is, he says, if you are a legalist, you have a set of rules and if you do not obey the set of rules, you are under a curse. Because "*Cursed is the man who does not obey everything that the law has said.*" So, what happens is, you end up with the curse of God over your life. See, you started with the work of Cross in your life and the Cross has become obscure.

Two things have happened – either you have become a carnal or become a legalist and invite the curse of the Lord over your life because it says, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue on everything." In other words, if you broke the law in one area, you are guilty of breaking the whole law. I told you, right? I was caught in the traffic on the highway and that guy was given a charge sheet. You know what the charge sheet says? "The state of New York verses you. You have sinned against the whole state by just breaking one law." One law. And what happens automatically? You are under a curse. Now, the thing is – it's not very ostensible; you can't see it outside. You think everything is normal in your life. So, the point, therefore, is – how do I know that after having begun with the blessing that I have entered myself into a curse? How do I know it? I want to understand that. You see what did Jesus say?

Deuteronomy 30:19

¹⁹ Behold, I have set before you life and death, blessing and curses; therefore choose life...

So now tell me in the New Covenant God said sets before us, same God he has not changed, He sets before us life and death blessing and curses He also asks us to choose life, but how do we choose life? You see, it's going to require attention for you. How do I choose life? And I'll tell you something – God will never force Himself upon us; He is a gentleman. He is going to ask us to choose. Let's go back to *Matthew 16* to see the answer to this question.

Matthew 16:24-25

²⁴ 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. ²⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

So, how do you choose life in the New Covenant? By choosing the way of the Cross and if you haven't chosen life through the way of the Cross, what are you? You are either under the blessing or under a curse; you are choosing life or you are choosing death. And the way of the Cross is the only way of the blessing and nothing else. So, you will say, what is this? How do I know that I have gone away from the way of the Cross? You want to know? Let us do something. Let us do Bible Study. We look at the Scripture and we look at the heart. Scripture is the mirror. Scripture -> Heart; Scripture -> Not my neighbor's heart my heart; Scripture -> Not my husband's heart my heart (for those who are married). Scripture, not my wife's heart my heart; Scripture -> not my parent's heart, my heart. Okay, now I have said that and I have awoken you, let us see how do I know that I have departed from the way of the Cross? When you walk with the Lord, you don't see the tangible results. They are very slow and over the period of time, it will happen and you will say, "How did I end up over here?" It is like in mathematics problem. You have, let's say, a 200-step problem and in step number 15, you made a 0.1 calculation error. By the time you come to step number 100, gone. The answer is away from the reality and you know what happens? Whenever the Professor is correcting the answer, he has no time to look at your steps. He will look at the answer, he will look at the key and cut-cut. Then, the student will come, "Sir, my steps are right." "Sorry. Step number 15, 0.1 error." You see what happens? These things happened slowly. So, if you want to rebuild our lives, what we have to is to go back to the place where we had made the error and then, do the correction. You know, that is the reason why almost the spiritual life is like the way of the doctor. They do what is called as root cause analysis. What's going on here? So, how do we symptomatically treat the disease of moving away from the Cross? How do we know? How can we know? How can we take the steps to avoid that? The first thing you will know, I will show you the first verse that is in *Galatians 1:6*

Galatians 1:6 (NKJV)

⁶ I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,

Another translation;

Galatians 1:6 (NASB)

⁶ I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel;

You know what happens? You need to understand that when you have moved away from the Cross, you have not moved away from the Cross per se, you have moved away from a person. You have deserted Him, turning away. You don't have a relationship with Jesus. Honestly, it is so important. Relationship with Jesus is a living relationship where you commune with Him one on one. You read the Word; He speaks to you. You pray, you get an answer or you don't get an answer, something. There is a communion going on. You have a relationship with Him. And what happens when you lose the focus of the Cross? The first thing happens to you is you fall away or turn away from a person. Look at what it says. And it happens very quickly. You know, climbing up a mountain – Oh trekking! You should see! One brother in our Church goes for trekking every three or four months and he climbs and climbs but you know what? Coming down? Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of water and Jack fell down and broke his crown and Jill came tumbling after. It is so fast. Gravity works. Have you seen the movie 'Red Riding hood?' The girl falls away from those things, she falls down and guess what? Gravity is working. Gravity is working in so many people's lives. And they fall very quickly at 9.8 m². Its very fast. And do you know something that it is so true about the carnal mind, think about it. Let me ask you a question, if you borrow some money from somebody, it is very easy to forget. "How much do I owe you?" "Ah! I don't know." If somebody borrowed money from you, we are all Marwadis there. The spirit of the marwadi comes. You should see those guys, they maintain notes to the decimal. There are only two decimal points. If there are more decimal points, they will put that also. I remember some time back, I had to return some money to my friend, I forgot. So, I called him in the middle of the night. His name is Aneesh Khurani, a Sindhi. "Aneesh, how much do I owe you?" "\$259.50" precisely, in the sleep. This is how we are. We are very easy to forget the good people has done to us but the bad people had done to us, we remember. "I know what you did last time, that time," You become historical and therefore, become hysterical. We so easily forget the things that God has done for our lives and how it happens? 24 hours is enough.

Psalms 106:13-15

¹³ They soon forgot His works; They did not wait for His counsel, ¹⁴ But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, And tested God in the desert. ¹⁵ And He gave them their request, But sent leanness into their soul.

You see, this how we forget God and this is exactly what happens to so many of us, we fall away from a person and it is so easy to happen. So, drifting is gradual but falling is very fast. What we call is the threshold point, critical mass and after that, there is no turning back. Don't ever think that we are immune to this you check if you love Jesus today in your heart. Do you love Jesus? Do you have this burning passion for Him? It is so important that it is subjective for every one of us. We can't ask somebody else to judge us. "No, we have to judge ourselves." That's what I said, "We look at the Word and we look at our heart." Look at what it says in,

Jeremiah 17:5-6

⁵ Thus says the LORD: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man And makes flesh his strength, Whose heart departs from the LORD. ⁶ For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, And shall not see when good comes, But shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, In a salt land which is not inhabited.

This is the graphic description of the guy who is under the curse. That is the reason why Jesus said, "Abide in Me and let your words abide in Me and if you abide in Me, you will bear fruit. Otherwise, you will be barren. You are under a curse." Look at this graphic description.

⁶ For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, And shall not see when good comes, But shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, In a salt land which is not inhabited.

Let me tell you something, if you lose fellowship with God, you will also lose fellowship with other people. You know what happens? You will be at a place that nobody is inhabited. Check your heart; check your fellowship with God. Check how much you love to be with God's people. Ask yourself today. Do you long for fellowship? Do you long to be with your brothers? Do you rather be with God's people rather than with your own friends. Ask yourself this question. That's how I know.

Second – have I drifted from the Cross?

Galatians 1:3-5

³Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

The second thing the Cross does – it delivers us from this present evil age. Age, it's not world; it is just not evil world; it is bad time. It's a connotation over there. So, what does Jesus do from the Cross? He breaks away from the trappings of time and he places us in eternity. So many people trapped in time, they are trapped in this life. They want the best life now and will get the best seller also out of it, New York best seller. Best life now. I'm going to show you a verse. When I have showed it to my believing friends in University some time back, they were stunned that it was there in the Bible. Look at what it says in *1 Corinthians*.

1 Corinthians 15:19

¹⁹If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable.

You know that the word most 'miserable' appears only two times in the entire New Covenant? Where else it occurs, you want to know? Any guesses? I'll show you this verse. It is very interesting.

Revelation 3:14-17

¹⁴"And to the¹ angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things say the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: ¹⁵"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. ¹⁷Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.

Now, let me tell you something – this is the absolute symptom of guys who have one leg in the world and one leg in the Kingdom of God and they are the most miserable, they cannot enjoy the world. He is like Lot, in the midst of the ungodly company, it says his righteous soul was vexed, he was not enjoying the world and neither does he wants to come to the place where Abraham is. We neither enjoy in the world nor enjoy in the Word. Our hands and feet are in both places. Have you seen that in your own life? Do you enjoy the Word? As Pastor said, if you really want to know if you enjoy the word, listen to Derek Prince. At least, our cad's are a little charismatic. He will startle you with the language but Derek prince, he is like one dry monotone. No animation, never. He raises his voice, one step, two steps, third step, fourth step and repeat. And I challenge you that many of you will fall asleep because you need gymnastics, drama, ecstasy, agony and everything you need. Somebody is going to preach the Word, line upon line, precept upon precept here a little and there a little. How much I have to exercise my mind, my brain. You go to your company and you write complex algorithms and you go to your University and write complex non-linear differential equations, you solve all the equations and try at least and then, you come to Church and say, "Please give me something where I don't have to think much." First thing has which has happened in the reformation was, people began to think and I will tell you honestly that people's lives are changed.

The other day, I was in our school and we had a very interesting character trait for the week. Every week, we have a character trait and we need to meditate on that. The character trait is 'long-suffering'. What is it? Long-suffering. It is from the *Book of Numbers 14*, which says.

Numbers 14:18

¹⁸'The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.'

So, I was telling the children; I said this is a very interesting verse and start thinking. They are all looking at me and I asked them, "What does long-suffering mean?" They answered, "Jesus is very patient." Okay! "So, if Jesus is long-suffering, then is He merciful?" "Yes, He is absolutely merciful." "Second, if He is long-suffering, will He forgive iniquity?" "Yes, He should

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forgive iniquity.” “Third, if He is long-suffering, He does not acquit the guilty.” First, they stopped and asked, “What does it mean guilty?” They are all first, second and third-graders. What is guilty? Guilty means – God does not acquit the guilty and if you make any mistake, He will punish you. That is not acquitting the guilty means. Immediately, one of them said, “That means He is not long-suffering.” Did you see that and have you ever read that verse like that? And again, I said, “*He visits the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.*” Meaning, I told those people, “If I sin, then my children will suffer and their children will suffer and their children’s children will suffer.” And then, they said, “How can He be long-suffering?” Did you see that? What has happened is they began to think and something I see in children, they are so open to thinking and I don’t find that in adults at all. How many of you stopped at that verse? *Numbers 14:18*? That is a contradiction.

The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression. Then, all of a sudden, He says, “He will punish the guilty and He will punish the iniquity,” and then, immediately, one of them said that He is not long-suffering. I said something – “Think about how can God do this then? On the Cross. Where He does not acquit the guilty but by putting our guilt on to Jesus and He punishes Him for our iniquity. Is He still long-suffering?” “Yes, He is still long-suffering.” We need to begin to think, my dear brothers and sisters. We are trapped in time and our minds are only about this age, in this life only and therefore. so many believers because they are not able to think, it is liberation of the mind. They are trapped in their mind and therefore, they are miserable and therefore, they are not able to enjoy the world and not able to enjoy the Word. And they have their legs on both boats. What’s going to happen? They are miserable. Why? Because they forgot the Cross and the next verse says.

Revelation 3:18

⁸I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

What is gold? You need to ask yourselves this, what is gold?

Proverbs 16:16

¹⁶How much better to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.

How many of us put premier on wisdom? Wisdom or world, wisdom or gold? And you may ask what kind of wisdom?

2 Timothy 3:15

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.

This means, wisdom is true only when it leads you to salvation. Otherwise, it is not wisdom at all.

...which are able to make you wise for salvation

Think about it – making cold, attaining wisdom – what is your choice? Can I make the gold? I saw the last dialogue in a movie because a lot of you are movie-goers. This is a guy who has applied for a political party. He wants to get into politics and he has applied to different political parties and the last dialogue is; he is going away with his girlfriend and he says, “I got an offer from two political parties.” And he says, “Cycle thokamantava, jaathakam chudamantava?” I mean, “Should I take cycle or should I be a fortune teller?” Cycle stands for, anybody? TDP. Jathakam stands for Congress. “What should I do? Should I ride the cycle or should I be a fortune teller for the girl?” You know what the girl says? “Cycle toh kuntam, Jathakam chudu; in other words, keep cycling and also become a fortune teller.” It’s not possible, either you are a Congressmen or BJP. You can’t be both. You can either seek for wisdom which makes you wise unto salvation or you want to search for gold. You know what does Solomon ask? Amazing, right? I wished he had that heart; he said, “Lord, I am a child. I don’t know anything. These are Your people. Give me wisdom.” So, I asked the children again, “If God were to ask you in a dream, ask anything.” To all the children, “If, today, God were to appear to you in a dream and ask you for this, “Ask anything, Abigail, I’ll give it to you.” What you would ask?” All the children. They’re all trapped in time. “I want to get good marks in my exam.” – That is the senior most. “I want to be good in Mathematics.” Another one, “I want to get good marks in my exam.” Come to the little ones, “I want to get chocolates.” “I want to get biscuits.” And I tell you something –

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yesterday, I saw them, they are all children; that's okay but many believers are like that. "What do you want?" If God were to ask you, "What do you want?" This night, He will come to you in a dream and ask you, "What do you want?" Would you want riches and honor? Or wisdom? But wisdom is the way of the cross. Look at what it says in, *1 Corinthians 1:30*

1 Corinthians 1:30

³⁰ And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us (what?) wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

You see that? The wisdom of God is the wisdom of the Cross. There is no other way to get wisdom other than Cross. So, many of us are trapped in time because all we can see is this life. Therefore, He says,

Revelation 3:18-20

¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. ¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. ²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

Where is Jesus? He is outside. Unbelievable, that you have a Church where Jesus is not there, and everything is going well. Why? Because you lost sight of the Cross, and they have been trapped in time.

Next, *Luke 20*.

Luke 20:27-35

²⁷ Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came to Him (Jesus, they said about this man or a women) and asked Him, ²⁸ saying: "Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. ²⁹ Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and died without children. ³⁰ And the second took her as wife, and he died childless. ³¹ Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children, and died. ³² Last of all the woman died also. ³³ Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife." ³⁴ Jesus answered and said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. ³⁵ But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, (You know what they do?) neither marry nor are given in marriage;

Derek Prince gave a very interesting example; it could be relevant to some of us. There was this girl in his congregation, where he was pasturing. Very nice godly girl, zealous for the Lord and one day, she goes to office. And there is this guy in the office, who takes interest in her. And he is courting her and he is being very nice to her. He comes to Church. He doesn't come to Church because of God; he comes to Church for her. Very nice gentleman. "Challa Manchialo this Abbai (Very good gentlemen)." So, he comes to Church and she goes to the Pastor and says, "What should I do? Should I marry him?" You look at that person and if you are trapped in time; Pastor said, "You have two options over here – deny this relationship. What will happen? You will experience pain. But, let me promise you, in 6 or 7 months' time, you will get over this. Second option, marry this person, for fifteen years, your marriage will be okay, but one day, your man will walk out of your life. He will just leave your children with you, and you will have pain for the rest of your life. What are the options that you have? Two. What will you choose?" What will happen to you, if you are trapped in time? So many people, they come to Church because they want to get a partner. After Srikar's wedding was over, people were after me and Pastor. And some Pastors saw in Pastors' conference also, they will send me a SMS. "Brother, please pray for marriage partner." One lady, she is after us, "Find a guy. We'll come to your Church." Why do you want to come to our Church? Because you want to find a partner. Why? Because you are trapped in this age. Francis Chan made a fantastic statement; he said, "If you are desperate for marriage, then you are not ready for marriage." And, "If you are desperate not to be married, then you are ready for marriage." Think.

Mark 12:25

²⁵ When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.

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They are not trapped in time. They know their purpose. They have their priorities fixed. Think about it. One of the things that I have seen, over and over again, if you look at the entire movie industry, the maximum number of movies which have hits, are love stories. Do you know that? And most of the love story end with happily ever after, after the marriage. It's over. Let me ask you something, it's a parable in some sense. Honestly, right? What they expect is this, "This guy finds the girl that he loves the most and that girl finds the man of her life and when they get married, it's going to be awesome." You know what? It's a parable for all of us. One day, we are going to get married to our heavenly Husband and we get exactly what is going to happen. It is going to come through, it is going to be happily ever after. But until we have that heavenly Spouse, every other marriage is going to be frustrated. That is the reason why you need to read the book by John Piper, he wrote a book called, "This light and momentary marriage." It's a parable. If you think you are going to find your satisfaction in your husband or in your wife, you know what going to happen? That guy is going to disappoint you and that woman is going to disappoint you. "I want to find a guy who will love me." Let me tell you something – find a guy who will love God.

I remember, our Pastor's nephew, when he came, he was praying during fasting and praying and he made a very powerful prayer, very powerful, you know what he said? It stuck to my mind, "Lord, as young men and young women, enable us to find partner who will partner with us in our ministry. Let us not find partners who will be burden to carry." Those who have ears to hear, let them hear, my dear brothers and sisters. Not a burden to carry, but they will be partners with them in the ministry, who will be on fire for God. I was listening to John Piper the other day, 6 things I would do if I was 22 again. It's very interesting message, 6 things I would do when I was 22 again. The first thing he said, "I will marry a girl who is absolutely on fire for God." That means, "I'll marry my wife Noel." That's what he said, "Because I know her. Right from the time when I had a call of God in my life, I told her, if I become a Missionary in Africa, will you come with me? You know what she did? She started packing the bags first." You need to find a wife, you need to find a partner like that who love God. Otherwise, you are trapped in time and you are trapped in this age. You think that you can get satisfaction in this age? Boy! You are heading towards a disaster; your marriage is going to head towards a disaster. Why? Because both of you are looking for completion in the other person and that fellow has got no resources to satisfy you; only God can.

I'll tell you something. Only when you become a believer, will you have genuine love for those who are of your flesh. Let me ask you this question. There's verse in *Romans chapter 9*. Paul says,

Romans 9:1-3

¹I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit— ²that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen (Does he stop there? Can he stop there?) My brothers, my kinsmen,) according to the flesh.

He doesn't say, "They're my brothers." No. "They are my brothers according to the flesh, because now, I have a different family altogether. My family is not this family even though they are not blood relation is not going to define." And you know what he's saying? He's saying he has genuine love for them because he has become genuinely associated with Christ. That's exactly what happened to Jesus, right? "Your mother and Your brothers are outside. "Who is My mother? Who is My brother? Who is My sister? These are the people who listen to My word and do the will of My Father. They are My mothers. They are My brothers. They are My sisters." How many of you sisters over here want to become the mothers of Jesus? You know? You have the capacity and the standing to become the mothers of Jesus. Can you imagine that you can be called the mother of Jesus? Otherwise, you will never have genuine love for your loved ones unless you have a genuine love for the people in the Kingdom. That's the first thing. The second thing I want to talk about.

Matthew 13:22

²²Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

Let me ask you this question. Is the desire for the Word of God only increasing in your life or is it reducing? Pastor was telling, right? He asked those people where he went for the mission trip, "Tell me – do I have more zeal today than I had the last year?" "Yes, you have more zeal today," they said. Think about it. Do you love God's Word today more than you loved Him yesterday? Do you read the Bible? Do you read the Bible with desperation? Do you have specific times where you dwell on the Word and study the Scriptures? Study? Or the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches, you see? Comforts

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are so dangerous, my dear brothers and sisters. Remember Jesus telling John the Baptist? Those who are nicely eating and dressed in good apparel, where are they? They're in king's table. What did you see in the wilderness? You saw a man clothed in camel hair and a belt around his waist. Why? Because he was fasting often and he was eating kosher food—locusts and honey. Locusts by the way is kosher. I don't know why God made locusts kosher. Have you seen locusts? Locusts means grasshoppers almost. When you see a grasshopper will you say, ah i want to eat it? No. You don't say that right? But I believe, in the entire law, locusts was made kosher for John the Baptist, because he was going to eat that. You will never find in the entire Scripture people eating locusts, you will find only John the Baptist only eating the locusts and God made provision for John the Baptist and He said, "Locusts is kosher." Interesting. Cares of this age and the comforts, what will happen? The appetite for God's word will keep decreasing over and over and over and over again, because you have forgotten the message of the cross and you have been trapped in this age. God has delivered you from this age.

Finally,

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

³And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Let me tell you something – if you have been delivered from this age, you will have a heart for missions. That's what I told you. We have only two options—either you send people into the mission field or you go into the mission field. The third option, you are disobedient. You know that? Do you have a heart for missions? I'll tell you something, when you go into the mission field, my brothers and sisters, it is not romantic at all! It is not. I remember Pastor talking to us sometime back. I don't know if you guys were there. It was incredible! I could never forget this. He was going to a place in north India and he was in a bus and it was hot and humid. The bus was packed to the capacity and he was hanging in the bus like that and he was sweating and sweating. He was going to some place where he had to preach and he was asking, "Lord, what is this, Lord? Is this worth it?" At that moment, he told me something. He said, "You know, Vijay? When I said that, I closed my eyes for a moment and God gave me a vision of the Cross." He showed me Jesus hanging on the Cross and He said, "The place where you are going, are they worthy of Me?" And after that, you know what he said, "Vijay, after that, no complaints, Vijay. No complaints." He was telling there in the other Church, "I don't want to go to places where it is comfortable, but where it is difficult. I don't want to go to places where there is an airport. And people will come and pick me up from the airport. And I will be put up in a five-star accommodation. No. no. I want to go to places where I should walk." And he's reaching the most unreached people groups in our land and extended territories as well. Think about it. Are you mission-conscious? Is your heart for missions? Is there a heart for missions? One of the outreaches we do in our Church, as a Church, do you know what is one of the outreaches we do in our Church? Anybody can say that? what conference? Pastors' conference. That's one of the outreaches that we do in our Church, every second Saturday without fail except one second Saturday of the year, that is in May, because it is hot. According to statistics, we have reached 700 pastors in this state and in the extended states. Can you imagine 700 pastors x 30 people per congregation, how many people we have reached. Do you have a heart for missions? Do you have a heart for people? Do you constantly keep asking, Lord let me come into contact with people who have a heart for you, who love the truth, who want to grow in the Lord? Do you have a heart for that? Do you go to your workplace like that? Are you going into a mission field when you go into your workplace? Are you sent? Do you have a heart for souls? Do you have a heart for your own family, for your flesh and blood, who are going to die and are going to hell? Where the god of this age has captured their minds and he has made them captive. They can't think beyond time. They can't think beyond time.

Romans 10:13-15

¹³For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." ¹⁴How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"

Do you believe that this is the highest calling? Think about it; if God were to give you two careers— a choice. Ministry or being a professor? Those days anytime, professor. It says, right? Egyptians despised the shepherds. Pastoral ministry is despised by the world, because they don't see what a high calling it is. Do you have a heart for missions? Honestly, if you do

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not have a heart for souls, you should check your heart as to whether you are really saved and whether you have been apprehended by the message of the cross or not. Do you have a heart for your own people? Do you weep for them? How many of you when you send your prayer requests, how many of you weep and intercede for your people? Ask yourself, when was the last time you fell on your face before God and you said, "Lord, unless You give me an answer, I will not come out of this closet?" And interceded for them. Do you have heart for missions? It's one thing to put a prayer request. I am very careful in putting my prayer request and in fact, I can honestly tell you and I can count on the fingers of my both hands how many time I have put a prayer request because I want to say, "Lord, when I'm putting a prayer request, it better be something which is according to Your will. Not for my own self heart permissions." Do you have a heart for missions? A heart for the people who are lost? Do you see that the God of this age has blinded their eyes? They can't see the light of the Glory of the Gospel or if that is the case and you yourself have been the prisoner of the God of this age; do you know why? If you are a prisoner of time, your Lord and your God is not Jesus but your god is satan because he is the god of this age and he has blinded the minds of the people. How many of you can watch movie after movie and when it comes to prayer, oh boy! It's such a dreadful exercise. Intercession? Ask yourself – do you have a heart for missions? Otherwise you have not apprehended the Cross my dear brothers and sisters. Do you know what Paul says in Romans?

Romans 1:14-15

¹⁴I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. ¹⁵So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.

Boy! He says, "I'm under an obligation." And you will ask this question, my dear brothers and sisters and I know most of you are in academies and you have carriers and you say – where to I draw the line? How do I go to my work place with this mind-set? Some of you got a job recently – how do I go to work place with the mind-set of the Cross? How do I go? Lot of people say, "Oh, you need to say that we should not concentrate?" No, that's not what I'm talking about. If you've been called to be a scientist, boy! You be a scientist like James Steward. If you have been called to be a doctor, be a doctor like a Noble Laurent. How many of you heard the name of the person who discovered the vaccine for the malaria parasite? Don't have to name it; this guy was a believer and Noble Laurent done his medicine in 1902. Look at what he says; he a poet also and this is the poem which he wrote and I got it from one of the James Stewart stocks. I'm sharing with you and when I read this, I was so convicted. Look at what he says, this is his poem and he is Ronald Ross. He wrote this after he discovered the vaccine for malaria parasite. Those day people use to die of malaria and yellow fever, left right and center and you know what he is saying?

*"This day relenting God
Hath placed within my hand
A wondrous thing; and God
Be praised. At His command,
Seeking His secret deeds
With tears and toiling breath,
I find thy cunning seeds,
O million-murdering Death."*

At his command with tears and toiling I found out the secret of this fellow, million murdering deaths and he knows what he says. Look at this what he says and this is the killer.

*"I know this little thing
A myriad men will save.
O Death, where is thy sting? (A mosquito)
Thy victory, O Grave?"*

I will tell you something – I came across this journal of African medical science and it was quoted by Derek Prince in one of his sermons and he is talking about this secular journal. He talks about the parallel kingdom to man and you know what it is called? The kingdom of flies or the kingdom of insects. Tell me who is the Lord of the insects? Beelzebub. He says there is a parallel kingdom called the kingdom of the insects and I was so shocked. Just yesterday, I think in the US, there is a bug which is spreading parasite, spreading dengue, malaria and yellow fever what have you and you know what that journal

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said? It says that, "The kingdom of man is always one step ahead of the kingdom of the insect and whenever the kingdom of insect went one step ahead of the kingdom of man, death took place." That's why we have malaria, filarial and the elephantiasis and we have yellow fever and dengue what have you, because it was a sting; it was a demonic disease. Do you know the doctor Ross is saying? "Even in my research, I'm fighting the powers of darkness." That is Dr. Ronald Ross, Noble Prize in Medical science in 1902. We have doctors here and ones who are going to be doctors. Several researchers, programmers several people aspire to become IITians, what have you. Did you ever ask God for this grace, that, "Lord, "When I do my research, let me fight the powers of darkness; let me take the Cross in my mind and in my work." When I work in my lab and in my organization as a programmer whatever I do, Lord, let me be a man who fights the powers of darkness through my mind. Do you go with that?" I was stunned when I was look at this; I was listening to the sermon by James Steward and I was so convicted and I said, "God, I spent seven to eight years or nearly ten years in the lab and I never went with this mind-set," that when I will do the research, I will fight the powers of darkness. All of you guys who are studying, doing Math, did you ask God the grace to study so that one day whatever skills that I gained will help me to fight the powers of darkness? These are the scientists who are captivated by the God and that is the reason why Leopold Kronecker, delta function; this is a guy who started numerical mathematics, integers and he made a powerful statement. "God made integers and all else is a work of man." He who has ears, let them hear what the Lord says. Do we have this mind-set when we go to the offices?

You see, disease is not normal and this fell into place when I was talking to Pastor other day and he said, "Every disease has a demonic origin because death is in the hands of satan. It is a spirit and I'm not saying you should not get cancer or any sickness." Even Elisha fell sick; I'm not talking about that. God allowed the sickness and if it is not in the will of God that you should be sick, you should fight it left right and center and say, "Lord, I am not going to give in to this." The danger, if you do not come out this age by appropriating the work of the Cross in your life and do you know what is going to happen to you? The danger, *Hebrews Chapter 6:4* onwards

Hebrews 6:4-6

⁴For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, ⁵and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

Everybody said that, "It is impossible." I didn't say that, the writer of *Hebrews*, who nobody knows. God, in His wisdom; otherwise, you would say, "Paul is heretic." God is very wise. He says, "I will not let anybody know who the Author is." That fellow will be known only there. So, if you have problem, if you reach onto the other side and you can fight with him, okay? Not with me and I'm just reading Scripture.

They have forgotten the work of Jesus on the Cross and don't ever think it is not going to happen to me; it won't come to me, and everybody take heed. Why? Look at this. As I said, you forget the work of the Cross, you either become carnal and ultimately, it leads you to a curse. Look at the analysis of *Hebrew chapter 6*. It is a fantastic analysis. Look at the analysis. This is verse 7.

Hebrews 6:7-8

⁷For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; ⁸but if it bears thorns and briers, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned.

In the other words, you come to Church Sunday after Sunday and Wednesday after Wednesday and the Word of God, the rain is falling on your lives and what is it bearing? If it bears thorns and briers. What are thorns? A symbol of curse. What is happening, even though the Word is falling on a set of carnal legalistic people and it will only bring thorns because they have forgotten the work of the Cross and they been trapped in this age. Don't ever think that this is not going to happen to you.

Hebrews 6:9

⁹But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation,

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You know they are there examples in the New Testament examples of a guy who was a close co-worker of Paul. You think about that; you work with Apostle Paul and what are the chances to end up on the other side of eternity? Hundred percent, I will say. But there is one guy, look at this analysis and how the wording is done this is 2 *Timothy 4:9-11*,

2 Timothy 4:9-10

⁹ Be diligent to come to me quickly; ¹⁰ for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, (present age) and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia.

Some time back, I was discussing with my relatives on how Demas fell away. He was very disturbed. He said, “It does not mean that he went to hell.” I said, “How can you get to a conclusion like that?” “No, it only means that he has only lost his rewards. Really? How people conveniently read Scriptures because they get offended by the Cross. Don’t ever forget these saints that God, when He saved, you know what He did? He broke the power of this age at dispositional. Know this truth. You came out of the dominion of this darkness into the dominion of light and that’s what exactly it says in *Colossians 1:13-14*,

Colossians 1:13-14

¹³ He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed (or translated) us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

First question: have you fallen away from a person or have you fallen away by becoming trapped in time? Ask yourself these questions. Are you a prisoner of time or are you a prisoner of God and an ambassador of His word?

Second thing, briefly, *Galatians 2:19*,

Galatians 2:19

¹⁹ For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.

What does the Cross do? It kills you to the law; the law has no more effect in your life. What is the maximum sentence that the law can give you tell me? Maximum sentence twenty years of life imprisonment or death by hanging, capital punishment after that, can you do anything to you? Now you know what God did, He gave you the capital punishment already. I’m not saying it; this is found in *Romans 7:4-6*. Those who were in the part of Wednesday baptism service, you will remember this; else, it is in GTC in WhatsApp. You can download that and listen to that brief exhortation by Pastor James.

Romans 7:4

⁴ Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be (what?) married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God

What has happened now? You are no longer under the law where the law is a terrible husband. He will not have fellowship with you. The day you break the law, he will say, “You should die.” Okay? But what does Jesus do? He marries you. And through that relationship, He transforms you slowly so that you bear, what? Fruit, to whom? To God. What does it tell me? It tells me the one thing the Cross does to me instead of making a set of rules, it makes me into a person who loves the Lord and therefore, obeys His command – I become a wife. *Proverbs 31*

Proverbs 31:11-12

¹¹ The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. ¹² She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

What happens? He says, “You know what? You are My wife now.” He is a good Husband; you are a terrible wife actually. Law is good, law is holy; you are a terrible wife. “So, what I’m going to do is, I can’t kill the law; I’ll kill you, but how will I kill you? I will die and you will be inside of Me and when I rise from the dead, you are married to Me. What I’m going to do is, I’m going to clothe you with My righteousness and slowly transform you from inside with My love.” Slowly, one day at a time. So, what does He come and say? “Gideon! Mighty man of valor.” Where is Gideon? In the winepress, threshing wheat.

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Suddenly, the angel of the Lord says, "Mighty man of valor!" And he's looking here and there, "No, you, mighty man of valor."

Remember that story of Thomas Beckett. Thomas Beckett was the archbishop of England some time back. Before he became the archbishop, he was a friend of the king. He was a clergy and also was a friend of the king and both were partners in crime, they indulged in all kinds of nonsense. You name the sin and they enjoyed in it. And one day, the archbishop of England dies. Immediately, the king has a fantastic idea. He says, "You know what? this fellow, this archbishop was always against me. He used to eat my head and he use to make my life miserable. What I will do is, I will appoint my friend as the archbishop and once he becomes the archbishop, I have the state, I have also the Church, I am the king." So, what does he do, archbishop dies; he calls his friend, he says "Beckett, you are the archbishop now." Beckett looks at him and says, "What! Me? Archbishop?" And from that day onwards, he goes back into his quarters and he starts thinking and everybody in the Church especially the priest, they know what kind of a guy this is and they all dislike him because they know that this guy is the king's puppet but do you know what happens? The moment he becomes the archbishop, the chair itself begins to transform him. Slowly, he becomes righteous and he becomes actually a headache to the king and he is going crazy. Why? One of these days, this guy who becomes the archbishop goes into the chamber and he tells God, "Lord, you know what kind of a man I am and You gave me the position of an archbishop. Lord, make me worthy of the office." You know what God does? He doesn't give you something because you are qualified, He didn't choose you because you are qualified. He chooses you first and qualifies you for the office. He calls you what you are first and makes you into that person and from that day onward, this man becomes a pain in his neck literally and this guy is so frustrated that he can't say anything because he knows that he is not his friend now. Every policy this person makes, that fellow opposes it and one day, he gets drunk with wine and in his drunken stupor, he says, "Who is going to get rid of this man for me? This menace." And three of his body guards heard that and they go with their knives and they go and they kill that man. You know what happens? This guy, once he was chosen for that office, the office begins to change him from the inside out. You know what God does? He does the same thing to all of us. He says, "Abram, you are Abraham." "Lord, I am barren." "You are not Sarai; you are Sarah." "I am barren." What I'm going to do is this – I am going to supernaturally change you from deep down inside so that you may bear fruit and that will be a supernatural work because I died on the cross for you." That is what happened.

And then, finally,

Romans 7:6

⁶ But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

Meaning, what? We don't become just normal slaves; we become sons. This is exactly what *Galatians 4:4* will say.

Galatians 4:4-5

⁴ But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born[a] of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

You know what happens? Now, we don't only just look at the letter of the law, we become this people who have the spirit of the law; meaning, what? We become the people of the extra mile. We just don't do the bare minimum, right? If you have a company and your father is your chairman, how will you work in that company? Will you look at the clock, time over, nine to six? Somebody sent me a WhatsApp the other day – "Nine to six only I will work, I have a life of my own. I want to go and enjoy." You know what the son will say? "Employee you want to go, you go. This is my father's business and I'm a son; I'm not a slave." I become conscious of the work that God has entrusted in my hands. Look at what it says in *Luke 2*,

Luke 2:46-49

⁴⁶ Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. (Do you know what Jesus did first? He listened.) ⁴⁷ And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. ⁴⁸ So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, (Sentimental) why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously." ⁴⁹ And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

Are you about your Father's business or do you think this is such a headache? Think about it, how we work in our own setup as a Church. I see that, I see some of the brothers who come regularly, you don't have to tell them anything; God knows them. They don't work as slaves; they work because they are sons. Regularly, they are there on call – 24X7. Sometimes what I feel, what would the Church do without these brothers? Have you seen them? Pastors' conference, they are there. Any meeting, they are there. Do you think they are serving as slaves or as sons? Slaves will look and say, "That is not my responsibility; that's not part of my job profile; that is not my job description." That is a slave mentality. Son will own because he is a man of the extra mile and by logic, you can't go the extra mile unless you have gone the first mile. Look at this *John 4*,

John 4:31-34

³¹ In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." ³² But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." ³³ Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?" ³⁴ Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.

I am a son and I am not going to die until I finish my work; I am going to go the extra mile. It doesn't matter how much; I will finish it and then, I will go."

I want to end with this parable. There is an interesting story found in the Book of 2 *Kings 13*. Look at this, this is fantastic.

2 Kings 13:14-19

¹⁴ Elisha had become sick with the illness of which he would die. (So, Elisha died of sickness. So, you can fall sick if it is the will of God) Then Joash the king of Israel came down to him, and wept over his face, and said, "O my father, my father, (Did he say "My lord, my lord? No he said, "My father, my father,) the chariots of Israel and their horsemen!" ¹⁵ And Elisha said to him, "Take a bow and some arrows." So he took himself a bow and some arrows. ¹⁶ Then he said to the king of Israel, "Put your hand on the bow." So he put his hand on it, and Elisha put his hands on the king's hands. ¹⁷ And he said, "Open the east window"; (What does east signify? The powers of darkness) and he opened it. Then Elisha said, "Shoot"; and he shot. And he said, "The arrow of the Lord's deliverance and the arrow of deliverance from Syria; for you must strike the Syrians at Aphek till you have destroyed them." (And what did he call him? My father, my father. Did he say, "My father, my father?" look at what happens to him now) ¹⁸ Then he said, "Take the arrows"; so he took them. And he said to the king of Israel, "Strike the ground"; so he struck three times...

Enough, finish. First mile over. I've done the bare minimum. That's exactly how people come to my course and say, "What is the minimum that I should do to get a pass mark?" I tell them, "The minimum you should do is, don't take my course because I don't want minimum people." He struck three times, enough

...and stopped. ¹⁹ And the man of God was angry with him, and said, "You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck Syria till you had destroyed it! But now you will strike Syria only three times."

That means you will only be able to overcome them three times. That means, you will not be able to finish your work. You will die without finishing your work. "You can call me father, father but you are a guy who is only interested in the first mile. You are a slave and not a son." How many of us have an attitude like this towards the work that God has given us? Everyone has been given a specific work. For me, preaching and teaching, that is my primary calling. You know what I'm asking the Lord? I'm saying, "Lord, I want to give myself and dedicate myself for study of Scripture – labor day-in and day-out till I finish my work till You say that 'you're done, back your bags and go home'. Till that time, I will study and die, exactly like Paul." Do you know what he said, Paul to Timothy? "When you come, please bring me the parchments and the books because I want to die studying the Scriptures." Do you have that attitude? "Till I finish my work, I will not leave this place. I'm going to be the excellent worker because I'm no longer a slave; I'm not going to put a specific hour for study for this, no. my whole life is consumed with this passion. I will take every opportunity to finish the work that God has called me for." Think about it, if we have a set of people in the Church, young people in the Church with this kind of a mindset, they will say, "You know what? Whatever the Lord is given me, I will do it. You know what? #goforglory." #goforglory is the twitter handle for the Indian Asian game's team and they are messing it up big time. They lost in Kabbadi, to Iran. Unbelievable! #goforglory. Do you go for glory? You know why? Glory is for sons who overcome and sit at the right hand of the Father,

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they deserve the glory. Are you a son or a slave? You know what Jesus did on the Cross, He didn't make you a slave my dear brothers and sister, he has made you a son and he says, you know what? "Strike it till you finish the work that God had called you for and if you don't have this kind of a determination that means, what? The Cross has become obscured in your life." Three times, unbelievable! That's what we call bare minimum. It is amazing if you read the historical narrative, you will weep.

This morning, even as we conclude, I just want us to think on what we said, go back and listen to the sermon. This is one of the sermons that I prepared over and over again because it's the first time I'm preaching a length on the Cross, which I've never done in my life. Don't become sentimental about the Cross; there is something which the Cross has done for us and don't finish your life without appropriating its full benefits in this life because how you appropriate the Cross in your life will determine your eternal destiny, either you are a slave or you are a son. How do you want to enter into glory? And you know what it says in *John 8*? The slave does not live in the house forever, who dwells in the house forever? A Son. In other words, if you have the attitude of a slave, I don't know if you will end up on the other side. I don't know, I can't guarantee. If you are a son and He says that to even girls. I asked, some time back, when I was teaching *Proverbs* to the GSS children. "The Scripture says in *Proverbs* 'My son, my son'. It doesn't say 'my daughter'." It was deliberate because God does not have daughters anymore; He only has sons later, in eternity. They will all be like the sons of God. So, I asked them this question, "How many of you would like to be sons?" Everybody said, "Me." All the girls, without exception. Remember that? You know what I told them? "You go into the other side of eternity, all the privileges of sonship, you will enjoy, more than the sons who didn't enjoy here." How many of you want to become sons this morning? Can we all stand in the house of God this morning? Ask the Lord to make us sons and not slaves. That is the reason why Jesus came and He died on the Cross.

"Father, I want to finish the work that You have entrusted into my hands. I just don't want to loiter aimlessly. There is a specific work that You have given to me and I want to finish it before I end my life, like the way Jesus was absolutely conscious of the work that was entrusted into His hands He said, "I will not die until I have finished the work that God has given into My life. I will not die but live and fulfill and declare the works of the Lord." Let's pray, this morning.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we thank You, Lord. Father, in so many areas in our lives, Lord, we have obscured the work of the Cross. Father, we have a hazy picture about it. Some of us get offended because we do not know what a beauty it is, the wondrous Cross. Father, this morning, we just want to confess, O Lord, our negligence and our apathy, our lack of concern. O Lord, have mercy this morning. Cleanse us, O Lord. Wash us by the water of Your Word. Cleanse us from our sins. Purge us from our iniquity. Clean us, O Lord. Make our priorities straight. Father, so many of us are caught in time when You have delivered us from this time and translated us into eternity through the Cross. Deliver us, I pray, from the trappings of time, that we can't see ahead; we've become short-sighted because we have lost the message of the Cross in our lives. It has become obscure. Father, forgive us, O Lord, for neglected the work of the Cross in our lives. We want to come back to the Cross. Jesus, lead me to the Cross; there, a precious fountain. In the Cross, in the Cross, may my glory ever till my raptured soul shall find rest beyond the river. Finish, O Lord, the work that You have started into our lives. Bring it to its logical conclusion that we will end up as sons and not as slaves. Father, thank You, Father, for this time. I plead the Blood of Jesus over every one of our lives. Father, let Your Word burn in our hearts, Lord, through the week. Let us continue to meditate upon that wondrous Cross, on which the Prince of Glory died. Our richest gain, may we count it loss, and pour contempt on all our pride. Forbid it, Lord, that we should boast, save in the death of Christ our Lord. All the vain things that charm us most, enable us to sacrifice to His Blood. See from His head, His hands, His feet. Sorrow and love flow mingled down. Did e'er such love and sorrow meet or thorns compose so rich a crown? Were the whole realm of nature of mine were an offering far too small? Love, so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all. Let it become a reality in our lives, O Lord. To that end, I pray that You would bless Your children, O Lord. From the smallest to the eldest, O Lord. Whatever they could understand, You make it real in their lives and let this Word grow in their lives every day. Thank You, Father. We praise You, Lord. We worship You, Father. We give You glory. We give You honor. We give You thanks. In Jesus' Mighty Name we pray, Amen.

Benediction:

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