

# Ox Or Donkey in God's House!

Pastor Vijay Eathakota  
[www.gracetabernaclehyd.org](http://www.gracetabernaclehyd.org)

Shall we look to the Lord in prayer?

*We thank You, Father. O Lord, Yes, only You can rescue us, O Lord; only You can save, O Lord. Did we, in our own strength, confide, our striving would be failing? Were not the right man by our side, man of God's own choosing. Just ask who that may be, Christ Jesus it is He, Lord Sabaoth His name and age to age the same and He must win the battle and Lord, You have won the battle. You have conquered the sin and the grave, You have conquered every power of darkness and therefore, we can sing, O Lord, and though this world with devils filled should threaten to undo us, we will not fear for God has willed His truth to triumph through us. The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him; His rage we can endure; for lo, his doom is sure and one little word will fell him. Thank You, Lord, for the assurance that You have given to us and thank You, Father, for an opportunity once again that we could come to Your house this evening, in the middle of the work week, to be able to sit around Your Word, to sit at Your feet and to learn of You. Speak to us and teach us by Your Spirit. O Father, we pray and cry out with Peter, "Where else can we go, O Lord? You and You alone have the Words of life." Therefore, teach us, teach us the Words of life. Father, quicken us by Your Spirit, write Your law in the deep most parts of our heart and cause us to walk in Your ways. We thank You for this time, we give You glory. Anoint us this evening, afresh, this evening. Anoint us, O Lord, to speak and to hear. Thank You. Thank You, Father. Bring everyone who is on the way safe, remove every tiredness from our bodies, O Lord. I rebuke the spirit of slumber and distraction in the Name of Jesus. Grant us inclining ears, O Lord, willing hearts. Thank You, Lord. We praise You; we worship You. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

In light of what we heard on Sunday, I have titled today's message as 'Ox or Donkey in God's house'. And we've been learning from the life of Peter, right? We learnt from the life of Peter from *Matthew 16* and how Jesus rebuked him. It is recorded twice in the New Testament. Once in *Matthew 16:23*, it says,

## **Matthew 16:23**

**<sup>23</sup> 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."**

Again, in *Mark 8:33*, it is reiterated. When the Holy Spirit records it twice, we need to really pay attention.

## **Mark 8:33**

**<sup>33</sup> But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, "Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."**

He specifically rebuked Peter and of course through Peter He rebuked His disciples and all of us as well. Alright, He says, "Get behind Me Satan for you are not mindful of the things of God but the things of men and we learnt three lessons, the negatives of Peter which I just want to reiterate. It was powerful, it spoke to my heart. It's really profound and it did speak to quite a number of you. I was speaking to some of you after the message on Sunday. What we learnt and what we were admonished and warned as to how Peter drifted. The way Peter drifted was: he disagreed with the Word of God, he became proud and over confident and at last, he followed Jesus from a distance and this is how he drifted. Three steps, he was proud and overconfident. God had to crush that in Peter. I heard Chuck Swindol, if I'm right, Chuck Swindol quoting Alan Redpath. He said, it was a powerful statement he makes. He says, "When God wants to do an impossible task, He takes an impossible man and He crushes him." That is how He accomplishes His work and all of us invariably at different points, at different areas have been crushed, we have been humbled, we have been given opportunities let me put it that way, we have been given opportunities to humble ourselves. God is creating situations in our lives where He is crushing us, where He is exposing us in different areas and He's saying, "Will you humble yourself," because there is one thing that we need to do by the way; God can humble you, that will be really painful and if you really want to be wise, humble yourself. That is the easy way and I just want to specifically look at this particular thing.

## **Amos 3:3**

**<sup>3</sup> Can two walk together except they be agreed?**

And what is the first thing Peter did was, he disagreed with God. You need to understand agreeing with God. Derek Prince has a two-hour teaching on agreeing with God at different levels. It's a powerful teaching. Agreeing with God. You have to agree with God at four levels. You have to agree with His objectives, you have to agree with His priorities, you have to agree with His likes and dislikes and you have to agree with His categories and I don't want to get into the details of it. Agreeing with God has to happen at different levels and I want to just look at few principles, in essence. What does it mean to agree with God? Agreeing with God means to change according to God's ways. God will not change. We heard that from this pulpit several times. We have to change, why?

**Psalm 119:18**

**<sup>18</sup> Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven.**

It is not going to change.

**Malachi 3:6**

**<sup>6</sup> "For I am the Lord, I do not change; therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.**

If you think that is Old Covenant, look at what it says in the New Covenant, in *Hebrews 13:8*. It says,

**Hebrews 13:8**

**<sup>8</sup> Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.**

So, God cannot change? Why cannot God change? Why? Why should He not change? Because any change has to be for the better and God is perfect. How can you better perfect? It is not more perfect and most perfect. Those superlatives don't exist. God has to change for the better and He is like nobody else. He is holy, He is cut above the rest. He is absolutely perfect. His ways are beyond our ways and what we need to do therefore is to find out what His ways are and what His thoughts are and we have to change accordingly and how high are His ways and how unreachable are His path and *Isaiah 55* will say very interesting verse in verse 8 onwards.

**Isaiah 55:8**

**<sup>8</sup> "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. <sup>9</sup> "For as the heavens (It is not just one heaven. Heavens) are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.**

So, how do we change if it is so high that we cannot reach, then, how do we change? The only way we can change is when they come down from heaven to us. And how does God bring His ways and His thoughts to us. *Isaiah 55:10* onwards, He specifically tells us as to how God brings His ways and His thoughts to us. It says in verse 10 onwards,

**Isaiah 55:10**

**<sup>10</sup> "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, (Two metaphors being used, rain and snow from heaven, they have to come down and do not return back but) and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater,**

It satisfies. God gives us His Word like rain and snow which is easier, rain or snow? We all people from Hyderabad. We have never seen snow. I'll tell you something about snow. If you go to North America, one of the countries closer to the temperate zone and the arctic zone, you will find six months of the year, it's winter, almost close to six months of the year and when it begins to snow, snow falls like snowflakes and it looks very beautiful. The first snow and then, it settles down and the temperature is still zero degrees and negative, actually less than zero. So, the snow does not melt and then, again, it snows and then, again it snows and again, it snows and it keeps on snowing through the year. You have a fine hard crust which is formed over the surface of the ground. I'm sure, you were in Bhutan for several years, you know what I'm talking about. Absolutely crust, solid. Has the earth absorbed it? No, it is still not melted, on the surface of the earth and it becomes a very hard crust and let me tell you something – sometimes, the Word of God is like a hard crust. It takes time for it to sink and when does it sink? When the grace of God shines over your life and melts the water, the snow and then, you

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know what? The snow water is much more better for the ground than the rain water. That is how it is. It says both rain and snow. So, if you find the Word of God hard, it is not sinking, it is become a hard crust on the surface, wait, don't quit because sometimes, it might be very tough on you, for many of us for sure. But what happens over a period of time if you are patient, allow time, let the seasons change, look forward to spring and for summer. In Canada, I use to hate snow, it is not as beautiful as you think it is. It's good for the pictures but not to live around. And it says, "So shall My Word that comes forth from My mouth." So, God sends His Word like snow and like rain. Some easy to grasp and absorb, some difficult to grasp and absorb but ultimately, we know who was this Word who came from heaven in the New Testament, right? We know Him. It is in *John 6:51, 58*,

### **John 6:51, 58**

***<sup>51</sup> I am the living bread which came down from heaven...***

God had to come down. The Word had to become flesh and He had to dwell among us and He had to dwell among us and we had to behold the glory. Unless God showed us how that Word could have been lived out among us, we would never have known the ways and the thoughts of God and finally continuously change your mind and change your heart according to God's ways and God's thoughts, Paul will say, I have the what of Christ? The mind of Christ. He doesn't say, "I have the mind of Christ." He says, "We have the mind of Christ."

***...If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." <sup>58</sup> This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.***

You see, that is how we change and that is the reason why we are here every week, we come and listen to the Word of God so that we can align our thoughts and change. So, I just want to look at how we agree therefore, what are the principles or the characteristics of the person who agrees with God and how can we inculcate and develop those characteristics in our heart, step by step every day in our lives?

And by the way, there is a donkey in each one of us, we know it for sure. One of the famous Telugu admonitions that parent uses, "Orrey, gadida (hey, donkey!)." What is he trying to say? Gaadida means. Actually, the Bible uses another interesting word – kanchare gaadida. That is even more interesting. We will try to understand what it is. How do we, from donkeys, become oxen? We'll try and understand what it means. First of all, we want to agree with God, first thing, there is a principle in the Bible, it is found in *Deuteronomy 22:10*.

### **Deuteronomy 22:10**

***<sup>10</sup> "You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together.***

I found a very interesting animation on the internet. Look at what it says. A donkey and an ox. "This plough is not big enough for the two of us," says the donkey. Do you know what the ox says? "Just shut up and pull." You see, everybody has an opinion, that is the donkey. Ox, on the other hand, says, "Shut up and pull." Now tell me, which is more powerful – the donkey or the ox? Isn't it interesting? By the way, this principle of ox and donkey is expounded in the New Testament and do you know which verse that is? Anybody knows that? *2 Corinthians 6:14*. This is the expounding of what it means not to put an ox and a donkey together. This is what Paul has to say to the Corinthians.

### **2 Corinthians 6:14**

***<sup>14</sup> Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?***

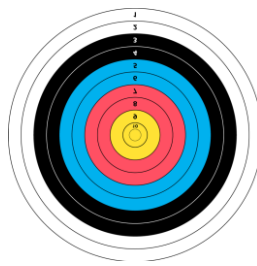
Look at the rich tapestry of thought that he's trying to put across when he's trying to unpack what it means to be yoked.

***...For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? <sup>15</sup> And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup> And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God.***

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So, what does it mean to be unequally yoked? I just want to look at some interesting characteristics of an ox. Ox, strength under control. Understand that? Incredible strength under absolute control. A willingness to submit and take correction; give it two shots. That is the reason why in Telugu, there is a very interesting saying. For a good man one word is enough, for a good ox, one shot is enough. That's what it means! When you speak, some people are really sensitive to correction. It's a very interesting saying. Chuck Swindol preached a series on the *Book of James* and one of the Series had an interesting title. It is found in the exposition of James 3 on wisdom. The title of the message was, 'The wise, the unwise and the otherwise'. A very interesting person. Look at what he says; I mean I found it very interesting. Follow it carefully. "A wise person is the one who is willing to change to alter his life in keeping with the truth." He is obedient. It is not how high is your IQ, it is not how keen is your sense of humor etc., which we like a lot. Intelligent people are very attractive, it is not that at all. That is not wisdom, intelligent is not wisdom but then, do you know what he says? Fantastic, powerful statement. He says, "It is how much change regularly takes place so that his life patterns with the truth." That is a wise person. Change regularly taking place.

How many of us are regularly changing? You know, how many of you watch cricket? For those of you who watch cricket and if you really want to win a match, and you know if you are the bowling team and you have very few runs on the board, the commentator used a very interesting phraseology. What do they say? "We have to take wickets at regular intervals." If you really want to win the match, we have to consistently regularly keep on taking wickets and I'm telling you honestly, if you really are a wise person, there is a constant regular change in your life that is happening every day and it is tangible; some tangible, some not very obvious. It is internal. What does it mean? I just put this. He is continuously willing to take, what? Feedback. I'm going to do a small experiment which I learnt yesterday. Some of them were there. You've seen this bull's eye, right? How many of you saw this before? How many of you saw it before?



When was it shown in the Church? On the 31<sup>st</sup> night. Right? The idea is to hit the bull's eye. So, yesterday, this guy who came from Russia, he's an ex-KGP guy. Smart fellow. He demonstrated a small experiment. He called three volunteers. He said, "Please come." And he said, "Please look at the bull's eye." And he gave us a pointer like this. "Look at the bull's eye." One volunteer came. And he said, "Just keep looking at it. Aim at it now. Now, close both your eyes and try to hit it." So, I'm going to aim at the bull's eye. It's there. I'm closing both of my eyes. I'm going. I hit it. Where is the bull's eye? It's here and I hit here. He said, "Fantastic!" Another fantastic came. He said, "Aim at the bull's eye and go till that line over there with your eyes open." Aim at the bull's eye. Go till that point there with your eyes open. Then he says, "Close your eyes and hit the target." So, I close my eyes. Go further and ay! Look at that. Closer to the bull's eye. Now, he called the third person. He said, "Aim at the bull's eye. Okay? Open both your eyes and hit it." Esther ma'am was there. She was the third volunteer. She took it like that and she did that. It's a fantastic experiment but, he used some technical terms. And he asked the question, "Why was the third guy able to hit the target?" Because, he said, "That there was continuous feedback." He was looking at it. Taking correction. Looking at it. Taking correction. Looking at it. Taking correction. And after a while, he can just jump like this and boom! Why? I'll tell you something: the freest people in the world, are those who take regular correction and feedback. That's what I learnt yesterday. You see, Jesus said to the disciples who believed, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." What freedom are you talking about? We are Abraham's children and we're not in bondage to any man. He said, "If you are a sinner, then you are a slave to sin. And that slave will not abide in the house forever, but a son. And *if the Son sets you free, you are free indeed.*" I'll tell you something. I learnt an incredible lesson yesterday. I said, "If I really want to hit the bull's eye like pastor was talking to us about on the 31<sup>st</sup>, one thing I have to subject myself to is constant regular feedback." Negative. Not positive. Got that? Everybody? Because only when you have negative feedback, you take what? You take correction. Exactly, you see. Otherwise, you will never take correction. That is where the ox is. The ox is the one who's constantly strong. It's powerful. It can literally maul and kill the guy who's trying to control it. But you know what? It learns one thing. If I really want to be effective, I better submit myself to my master. How many of us really want to hit the bull's eye this year? Don't have to show your hands. That's the reason why Paul says, "I

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don't box like one beating the air. I'm not aimless. This is something which I do. You know what I do, I beat my body and bring it to subjection. So that after having preached to others, I myself should not be disqualified. I come under strict, constant, regular correction." You see, this is very important for us all, for us all. Therefore, a donkey is the one guy who will never take correction. And who was called a donkey in the Bible? How many of you know it? His name is... Okay, let's see.

### **Genesis 16:11-12**

<sup>11</sup> ***And the angel of the Lord said to (Hagar)her, "Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael(The word 'Ishmael', means 'God will hear'. That's what it means ironically. It means, God will hear him. But he will never hear God), because the Lord has listened to your affliction. (And then, He says)<sup>12</sup> He shall be a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen."***

And in each one of us there is one wild donkey of a man. Jeremiah kind of expounds what is this attitude of a wild donkey of a man mean.

### **Jeremiah 2:24**

<sup>24</sup> ***a wild donkey used to the wilderness, in her heat sniffing the wind! Who can restrain her lust? None who seek her need weary themselves; in her month they will find her...***

You know what this word 'used to' means? The word 'used' comes from the Hebrew word 'limud', which means discipline. It's a wild donkey disciplined to the wilderness. In other words, it is so disciplined in its indiscipline that if it has to commit a sin, it doesn't have to plan. It automatically happens. That's exactly our flesh. Isn't it? Ishmael stands for our flesh. You don't get up in the morning and plan to lie. How many get up in the morning and say, "Today, I should lie." You never say that. It automatically happens, because your old man which stands for flesh, the flesh is disciplined to sin. How many of you get up in the morning saying, "I should get angry"? How many of you do that? No. No. It automatically happens; by default.

***...Who can restrain her lust? None who seek her need weary themselves; in her month they will find her.***

Therefore, God says, "Don't be unequally yoked with a donkey." And who's that donkey? In each one of us there's a donkey. Galatians 4:28-30 will talk about this Ishmael.

### **Galatians 4:28-30**

<sup>28</sup> ***Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.<sup>29</sup> But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh(that is Ishmael.) persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now. <sup>30</sup> But what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman."***

Kill flesh every day, in other words. How do we do it? How do we constantly do it? He goes on to say,

### **Galatians 4:31**

<sup>31</sup> ***So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman.***

In other words, we are Isaac. And Isaac is one guy he never gave any problems to his father. When he was young, he was close to thirty years old. Father took him to the mountain. He said, "Father, wood is there. The fire is there. But where is the sacrifice?" Abraham said, "God will provide." No question asked. Shut up and plow. Goes up the mountain. And then, he puts him on the altar. The altar is made and he possibly again asks his father, "Where is the sacrifice?" Abraham says, "You are the sacrifice." Does he argue with his father? No. No fight nothing. No struggle at all. Absolute obedience until he's forty years old. His father gets him a bride. He doesn't even argue. So how do we do that? We'll talk about five characteristics. Out of five, we'll look at three today.

### **2 Corinthians 6:14-15**

<sup>14</sup> ***Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? <sup>15</sup> And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup> And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God.***

We'll look at one aspect today. The first aspect: righteousness with lawlessness.

What does it mean? What fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? Question: am I increasing in lawlessness or am I increasing in righteousness every day of my life? These two terms righteousness and lawlessness come together explicitly in one passage in the Bible. It's found in *Romans 6:19*

**Romans 6:19-20**

***<sup>19</sup> I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. 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 is the motive? How do you present your members as slaves to righteousness and not lawlessness? Look at what it says.

***<sup>20</sup> For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. <sup>21</sup> What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.***

One of the things to know that you are increasing in righteousness and not in lawlessness is, you are aware of the things which you did in your past and are now ashamed of it. I know a story. Not a story. This is Augustine in his book called 'Reflections'. This man Augustine was a perpetual repentor. He repented all the days of his life. In one of his chapters on reflections, he says, he asked God to forgive him. He says, "Lord, what a wretched sinner I am." He's speaking about his past. What happened? Question: When I was a boy, I was going by my neighbor's field and I saw some fruits on the tree of my neighbor's vineyard. I actually didn't like the fruit. I stole the fruit and my neighbor did not know it. I actually did not eat the fruit. I threw it. I just drew pleasure from the fact that I stole from my neighbor. And he says, "Lord, I'm such a sinner. Please forgive me. I'm ashamed." You see, one of the reasons why we don't progress in our walk with the Lord is, we are not ashamed of our past. We are not. We're sufficiently ashamed. Somebody comes and asks your testimony. "Share your testimony, brother. What were you in the past?" "Not worth mentioning, brother. Nothing good. So many things, if I tell, you'll be ashamed. I will be ashamed. I will be embarrassed. I don't even want to say." And he says, "Those things, you are now ashamed. For the end of those things is death." We need to have a proper relationship with our past like the way apostle Paul had. Look at what it says in *1 Corinthians 15:9-10*. He says,

**1 Corinthians 15:9-10**

***<sup>9</sup> For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, (Why?) because I persecuted the Church of God.***

Every time he knows he was a blasphemer. He was a persecutor. He was an insolent man. He remembers his past and therefore, he's forever grateful. And you what happens? He doesn't allow the failure of the past to determine his present. You know what he says?

***<sup>10</sup> But by the grace of God...***

That's the song that we heard, the last song. Who can take away my shame? You alone can rescue. You alone can save. You alone can pick me up from the grave.

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

He had a proper relationship with his past. He was ashamed of the things of his past, but he never allowed it stop him. He had a positive relationship. He said, "Lord, I was like that. But from now on, I will praise You." How was he able to get rid of that? How was he able to get rid of that guilt and be positively ashamed of his past? You see, it is only possible when you are a believer. Otherwise, it is not possible. That's the reason why it says, "Godly sorrow leaves no regret. It leads to repentance, not regret." When I was growing up, I read a story in my prose lesson in English. the title of that prose lesson

was "Stench of kerosene." How many of you know that story? This sister knows. Fantastic! So, that means we are all contemporaries. I don't know. This is a story about this Sikh. Not sick, Sikh. Sardarji. It's a story in Punjab written in English. This Sardar falls in love with this rich Punjabi girl. And he wants to marry her. He's a very nice, eligible bachelor. He takes the proposal to his mother and those days, they have to give the *hej*; not the other way – the bridegroom has to give the bride's family and get the bride to themselves. So, the mother says, "Can we afford the dowry?" And the father of the bride says, "I'm a rich guy. I don't need it. I know you, son. He's an eligible bachelor. My daughter cannot get a better husband than him. And they get married. And they are fabulously in love with each other. Every year, this girl, she goes back to her village for particular festival. She goes to her village, spends some time there and comes back home. Her husband doesn't accompany her during that time. He longs for her to come back. And seven years pass by and they don't have children. And the husband's mother says, "Seven years, I'm going to wait. If she doesn't conceive, the next year, I'm going to get my son married to another girl." And this guy is his mother's pet and he cannot argue with his mother. So, the seventh year comes and she has not conceived and she has to go to *mikay* (parent's home). He knows his mother is already plotting but he cannot stop his mother. So, he begs his wife, "Please don't go. Please, don't go! Please, don't go! Please, don't go!" And she says, "Why are you saying that I should not go? I'm just going to go and come back." And he walks with her. Goes half way and he leaves her and he's weeping and crying. And she says, "Why are you crying?" But he doesn't tell her that his mother is planning and plotting behind her back. So anyway, she goes and he goes back home. The mother argues with the son. And he says, "In our culture, it is like this." And she pays 500 rupees to another girl. Gets him married to her. And she says, "Have a child." And the news of the second marriage reaches his first wife. And she's heartbroken. You know what she does? In her desperation, she puts kerosene on herself and she burns herself to death. In the meantime, this guy gets married. His second wife conceives. The news of the death of the second wife comes to him and he's completely overwhelmed with guilt and shame. And he's weeping and weeping. And he's absolutely depressed. And his second wife is so mad at him. She goes and complains to the mother, "Who is this guy? Whom did I get married to? He doesn't even look at me. What has happened?" And the mother says, "Don't worry! Once the baby comes, everything will be all right." Nine months go by and a baby boy is born. And this guy is still depressed. She goes and says, "Why is my husband still depressed?" And the mother says, "Bathe the baby. Put on some nice clothes. Give it a nice wash and put in front of him and he will melt." So, she bathes the baby. They put some fresh clothes. They bring it and put it in front of this guy who is weeping and mourning and he looks at his son and says, "Take him away! Take him away! He stinks of kerosene!" And the story ends there.

I was in sixth or seventh grade. I'm not sure in which grade the story was written. It had a profound impact in my life. I never forgot that story. Many of us in our walk with the Lord, we have made a mess of our past. And our past stinks. But thank God! Where the hope for that guilty man ends, in Christ, there is hope! He's able to wash away your guilt. He's able to give you a fresh start if you really repent of your sin. I thought it was fantastic story of a guy who actually has some convictions. His conscience is bothering him. But he can never reconcile his conscience, because he has done something for which there is no remedy. He's ashamed of it. But you know what? For us, Paul says, "I was guilty of the death of Stephen." But you know, what a transformation! Look at this man! That his conscience is completely taken away. And now, he's absolutely on fire for God. You know why? Because he had a proper relationship with shame. That shame can only be taken away in Christ. You know what he is able to give himself more and more to righteousness and not lawlessness. That is the reason why it says in *Romans 6:22*.

### **Romans 6:22**

***<sup>22</sup> But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.***

Isn't it interesting? David was the reason for the death of his son. He makes a very powerful statement. You know what he says, "He cannot come to me now, but I will go to him."

Remember the story of Job. At the end of the story, Job has multiplied possessions – twice the number of oxen, twice the number of sheep, twice the number of property, twice everything except what? children. Only seven. Why? Already seven are there in Heaven. Only we have hope. And only we can have a proper relationship with our past. Yes, we have regrets and we say, "Lord, I wish I didn't do it." Do you think Paul did not think, "Arre! I wish I was not there when Stephen was being stoned." He would have thought several times – "Lord, it's because of me. Because of me, Lord." But thank God, in Christ, you can have a proper relationship with your past. Amen? So, now let's go to the second point.

*2 Corinthians 6:14* – Righteousness and lawlessness. I'll tell you something – if you're increasing in righteousness, it means you have a real positive relationship with your past. And therefore, you are saying, "No longer, Lord. You gave me a second chance." God is not a God of second chances, He is the God of nth chance; n = infinity. Okay. Right? Hepsibah. See, she understands math now. God is a God of chances. He gives us more and more chances. You know why? The more He gives us those chances, He's giving us opportunities to love Him. Then, what communion has light with darkness. What is this characteristic all about?

#### **Romans 13:11-14**

<sup>11</sup> *And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.* (And this is Paul writing in AD 40 or 50. If the salvation was very near, then how much more you and I?) <sup>12</sup> *The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.* <sup>13</sup> *Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.* <sup>14</sup> *But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.*

What does it mean? Knowing the time that this is high time. What is the principle he is talking about here? *1 Peter 4* will explain this in more detail.

#### **1 Peter 4:1-3**

<sup>1</sup>*Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,* <sup>2</sup>*that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.* <sup>3</sup>*For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry.*

John Piper in his commentary on *1 Peter 4*. He says, "The time that is past suffices in doing what the gentiles wanted to do." He made a very interesting statement. He said, "Let's say a guy who has lived for sixty years, gets saved when he's forty. Forty years was sufficient for him to spend in sensuality, passions, etc. etc." So, a forty year man would say, "Yeah! Yeah! Forty years, I messed up my life. At least, let me live the next twenty years for God." And he reduces it. Assume a guy got saved when he's twenty. Twenty years of his life was sufficient for him to live in drunkenness, sensuality, in passions, in orgies, in drinking parties, etc. Let us say a guy gets saved at ten years. How many of you are ten years old here? Less than told. Okay. Abigail. Some children are there. Let's say you get saved when you eleven. How many of you are between eleven and fifteen? Show me your hands. Quite a number of children. Twelve years, Ajay has lived. And at the age of twelve, he gets saved. At the age of eleven, she gets saved. You know what John Piper says? "Eleven years was sufficient for her to live in sensuality, passions, drinking parties, orgies, etc. etc." And now he reduces it. He says, "When a guy gets saved when he is five years old, five years was sufficient for him to live in sensuality, passions, drinking parties, orgies, etc." And a five year old doesn't even know these things. My daughter is looking at me like this. A five year old doesn't even know what is drinking parties. She doesn't even have a clue. But God sees the end from the beginning. He says, "If I don't save this fellow at five, gone! If I don't save this fellow at ten, he's gone!" do you have this kind of attitude?

I was listening to Art Kats some time back. He has a sermon preached on *psalm 51*. The title of the sermon is *Psalm 51*. And he reads the psalm. The first heading is, when David committed adultery with Bathsheba, he wrote this psalm and sang this psalm and he prayed. And he says, "How many of you pray this psalm regularly?" He asks this question: Why don't you pray? Are you waiting to commit adultery? So that you can pray. Or do you think you have spent sufficient time in your flesh in living in drunkenness, in parties and orgies, etc, that you want to give the rest of your time for God? So, what is the principle that God is trying to say here? It's found actually in *John 9:4*.

#### **John 9:4-5**

<sup>4</sup>*I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.* <sup>5</sup>*As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."*

Meaning? There's a time for you to come out of darkness and into light and there is what we call as a sense of urgency. The more you are in the light, the more there is a sense of urgency in each one of us to get out.



**2 Thessalonians 2:5-7**

***<sup>5</sup> Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? <sup>6</sup> And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. <sup>7</sup> For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way***

And slowly, the Holy Spirit is going to be lifted and after that there is no more time to repent. There is no more time to come out of darkness in to light. And if you are really walking in the light, there is a sense of urgency in each and every one of us. Do you have the sense of urgency? or do you take the chances that God gives us for granted? Look at what it says in 2 Corinthians 6:1 onwards.

**2 Corinthians 6:1-2**

***<sup>1</sup>We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. <sup>2</sup> For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.***

**Psalms 32:5-6**

***<sup>5</sup> I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden (Look at this! I've not hid. I've exposed it. Why?). I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah (Why?)<sup>6</sup> For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You In a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him.***

There is a time, a set time. And everyone who is really walking in the light there is a sense of urgency. That's what Pastor was talking to us on Sunday. There's not enough time for you to grow. He told Joanna and Pastor Eric. "You have to grow fast. You can't say, 'Let me relax and take it easy. Let me wait'." "Vijay uncle enjoyed for 25 years of his life. Now, he is asking me to repent when I'm only eleven years old. What nonsense! Let me enjoy! Don't do that. "Oh, you accepted the Lord when you were thirty years old, right? So, you're asking me to do it right now? You came into full-time ministry when you were thirty-three years old, right? You're asking me to do right now? Let me also..." There are no guarantees in the Kingdom of God. I remember when Pastor told me. I was fighting this – should I come to full-time ministry or not? And I said, "Lord, four months." What did I say? "Four months. Lord, give me just four months." And I was reading *John's Gospel chapter 4* that day in my daily reading. I came to verse 34 and it says, "Don't say it is four months and then, the harvest." And when I read that, I closed the Bible and I came to Pastor and I said, "Pastor, I asked God for four months and this is the verse that I read. What does it mean?" As if I knew it; no-brainer. I was hoping that he will give me another interpretation. He looked at me and he said, "Vijay, if you don't accept the call of God now, God will bypass you and find somebody else. Do you want that?" Now is the time. Today, if you hear His voice.

You see, one of the things that we know that we are children of light is when we have an attitude of urgency, to get rid of remaining sin in each one of our lives. By saying, "Lord, there is no procrastination. Today, Lord. Today, I want to change." Why?

**Acts 17:30-32**

***<sup>30</sup> Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, <sup>31</sup> because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained...***

This is one appointment, as we heard, that we will never miss. One appointment which is guarantee in each one of our lives.

***He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.*** (What happens when he preaches this?) ***<sup>32</sup> And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, ("Time hain (there is time). Chillax.") while others said, "We will hear you again on this matter."*** (And that time may never come again.)

I remember Derek Prince in one of his deliverance sessions, he called this young man who came into the deliverance meeting and his family brought him. He was really being tormented and oppressed by demons. He came and there was an incredible prayer going on – everybody praising and worshiping. There was a lot of noise. The guy got a little irritated and

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he told Derek Prince, "I'm leaving. I can't tolerate this noise." Derek Prince told him, "Son, if you go out this time, you will take all the demons along with you and again, you may not have the time in your life to get rid of this. Stay." He stayed, got delivered. Just think about it if he had gone. You think he can take God for granted and do you think he will get another chance? Question: is there a sense of urgency in each one of our lives? I'm not saying that we should hurry things up. No, but when it comes to obedience, is it quick? That's the question.

Next;

### **2 Corinthians 6:14-15**

**<sup>14</sup> Do not be unequally yoked...**

And the third thing that I want to look at is –

### **<sup>15</sup> And what accord has Christ with Belial?**

The word 'accord' comes from the Greek word – symphonio, from which we get the word 'symphony'. When you have some people doing the offertory or doing a song in parts. Different parts they do – some alto, some sopranos. And you have some highly trained musicians sitting in the audience. These people are sitting in parts and some people are almost there. One guy is almost singing at alto, one guy is almost singing at tenor and the soprano is going at normal. And then, you see the face of this well-trained musician – he will be like this – and he is wincing in his seat. He is trying to pull that fellow who is singing at a different pitch, hoping that somehow, by him doing this, that fellow will start singing in symphony. So, I caught this equation – almost a sense of symphony = cacophony. So, either you can be harmonix or you can be cacophonix. If you have read Asterix, you know what I'm talking about. The cacophonix, the bard. He is used to irigipothunde (break things).

So, this is what he is talking about. That is accord; that is agreeing in the Bible. And he says, "What agreement does Christ have with Belial?" What is Belial? What does the word 'Belial' mean? The word 'Belial' means a worthless fellow. And if you read through the Old Testament, you will get an understanding out of what this 'Belial' actually means. Look at *Proverbs 6* and the Belial is very interestingly and very vividly explained. This is found in *Proverbs 6:12* onwards.

### **Proverbs 6:12-15**

**<sup>12</sup> A worthless person (Belial), a wicked man, Walks with a perverse mouth; <sup>13</sup> He winks with his eyes, He shuffles his feet, He points with his fingers; <sup>14</sup> Perversity is in his heart, He devises evil continually, (what did he do?) He sows discord.**

No harmony. There is no accord but there is, what? Discord. He sows discord among brothers. He comes and sows discord. He tries to make two brothers against each other and tries to come and sow discord in the family.

**...He sows discord. <sup>15</sup> Therefore his calamity shall come suddenly; Suddenly he shall be broken without remedy.**

What does it mean? A guy who is absolutely deceptive in his ways. Very deceptive. Very subtle.

Another place. Again, Belial.

### **Proverbs 16:27**

**<sup>27</sup> An ungodly man (or a Belial) digs up evil, And it is on his lips like a burning fire.**

That means he cannot just keep it to himself. He has to keep on digging somebody else's life. Another translation, this is the ESV.

**<sup>27</sup> A worthless man (Belial) plots evil, and his speech is like a scorching fire.**

In the NLT,

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<sup>27</sup> *Scoundrels* (Belial) *create trouble; their words are a destructive blaze.*

Another place; Proverbs explains the spirit of Belial.

**Proverbs 19:28**

<sup>28</sup> *A disreputable witness* (or a son of Belial) *scorns justice, And the mouth of the wicked devours iniquity.*

<sup>28</sup> *A worthless witness* (Belial) *mocks at justice, and the mouth of the wicked devours iniquity*

<sup>28</sup> *A corrupt witness* (Belial) *makes a mockery of justice; the mouth of the wicked gulps down evil.*

That's exactly what happens. When Ahab wants the vineyard of Naboth, what does Jezebel do? Get a few sons of Belial. Sows discord.

And he says,

**2 Corinthians 6:15**

<sup>15</sup> *And what accord has Christ with Belial?*

Have you ever seen Christ speaking like that, sowing discord?

Hebrews 1. This is about Christ. This is what he says,

**Hebrews 1:8-9**

<sup>8</sup> *But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom."* <sup>9</sup> *You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions."*

He always had a discipline. He loved righteousness, hated lawlessness and God always gave Him a tongue which is disciplined, always speaks good about others, positive about others. And he says, "How can a guy who is in Christ have anything to do with Belial, who sows discord?" There is power in agreement, especially in families where husband and wife are believers. In accord, in symphony, in agreement – the same word.

**Matthew 18:18-19**

<sup>18</sup> *"Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."* <sup>19</sup> *"Again I say to you that if two of you*

He doesn't say, "Two or three," you see that? He says, how many? Two. Husband and wife, if two agree, symphonize,

**Matthew 18:19**

<sup>19</sup> *"Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven."*

Think about two guys who symphonize like that – Paul and Silas in the prison in one accord, worshipping. And what happened? Resonance took place in the Heavenly realms. That's what happens – agree.

**Matthew 18:20**

<sup>20</sup> *For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.*

That is the reason why Paul will say,

**1 Corinthians 1:10**

**<sup>10</sup> Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.**

Judgment which is based absolutely upon truth. Agree. Unite. Strive together in your families and in the Church. That is exactly the reason why we continuously constantly keep speaking the Word of God from the pulpit to admonish you and to bring you back into the unity of truth, in essentials. In every essential doctrine, there should be unity. It does not mean that we will always agree on everything. There is a principle. This is Chuck Missler who quoted this; he says, "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty. In all things, charity." That is the principle. In essentials, in fundamentals, absolutely no compromise, no negotiations at all. In non-essentials, liberty. What is the non-essentials? Should the offering be taken before the Sermon or after the Sermon? Non-essential. In GTC Jamshedpur, by the way, they take the offering at the end of the Sermon. In GTC Hyderabad, they take the offering in the beginning of the Sermon and Pastor will not Eric and say, "Eric, in GTC, it is like this. Always take the offering before the Sermon. Otherwise, people will leave." He never said that, right? He said, "That is a non-essential." Liberty. But when it comes to the pulpit, he says, "Eric, watch your life. Watch your doctrine. By that way, you will save yourself and also those who hear. Rightly divide the Word of truth. Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed." That's what he will tell every Pastor. But in non-essentials, okay, fine. Not a problem. Should we have the mid-week service on Wednesday or on Tuesday? It depends upon your congregation. Just because we are from GTC Hyderabad, "Because we have a midweek Service on Wednesday, you should also have it on Wednesday." No, you decide. That is a non-essential. But in essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty but in all things, charity. Otherwise, you see, when you compromise on the non-essentials and you agree, there is danger. That is exactly what happens in Acts 5,

#### **Acts 5:9**

**<sup>9</sup> Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? (Who is this? Ananias and Sapphira. They also agreed. Symphonized in a lie) Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out."**

There is an incredible power in agreement, my dear brothers and sisters. And that is what we are looking in our Church, over a period of time, so that you will constantly come to agreeing.

We've look at three things – what fellowship has – righteousness with lawless, light with darkness, Christ with Belial. Three things. I will stop here. I'm just asking you; this is what we know – a guy who is increasing in righteousness, who is increasing in light, who is increasing in Christ. That is an ox. The other side is the donkey. How many of us have the ox at least to this level? At different levels, we are all progressing but one thing – is our attitude, our inclination toward that? It is there or not. It is something which we need to ask ourselves. We are not perfect. We will never become perfect in this life. Perfection is only on the other side but we are pressing on toward it. Just one thing we need – forget that which is in the past but we press on and keep pressing on. Let's pray and we will continue, Lord willing, on this.

#### **Closing Prayer:**

*Father, we thank You, Father. I pray, Father, what we have learnt here and what is being taught by Your Spirit what is of You, Lord, will remain and what is of man will fall to the ground. But let it bear fruit in our lives, O Lord. Let it cause us, O Lord Father, to desire You more and more in the days to come; that Lord, we will have the spirit of an ox. You said, Lord, "My burden is light. My yoke is easy. Come, take My yoke upon yourself and learn." And give us a spirit to learn just as Your Son learnt. He learnt obedience. He learnt discipline through the things that He suffered, through the things that He experienced but He never rebelled. He had incredible power but that power, O Lord, was completely under the control of His Heavenly Father. And You said, Lord, "Tarry until you receive power, that you will be My witnesses." Father, You are looking for vessels so that You can endow each one of them with power. But You are also looking for vessels who will be under control, who will be like an ox, who will use that power and be absolutely under the submission of the Spirit of God and of Christ in their lives. Teach us, we pray, to be more and more in the days to come, like an ox and not like a donkey. We thank You, Father; we praise You. We give You all the glory, honor and praise for this time. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*