

Father, we are in Your presence because You promised that were two or three are gathered in My name, You will be there and we believe, Father, that even though we are small in number that You are awesome in this presence. You are the mighty God, mighty to save. So, build us up this evening, edify us, strengthen us, rebuild the walls that have been broken, the foundations which have been shaken, so that, Lord, we will be a set of people who are built upon the rock. When every earthly prop gives way, You said You alone are my hope and stay. On Christ, the solid rock we stand, every other ground is sinking sand and therefore, You alone, this evening, are our hope and our prayer. Therefore, come, Lord. Teach us Your Word, anoint us afresh this evening, wash us by the water of Your Word, sanctify us and consecrate us for a use that will glorify Your Name in this life and in all eternity. To that end, I pray that You would anoint the speaking and the hearing of this Word and strengthen us and challenge us to walk the way that You have called us to walk because You said, O Lord, "Strive to enter because many will choose, many will want to enter through that way but only few will be able to do it." O Lord, grant us grace we pray, this evening. We praise You. We worship You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

I titled today's message as 'spiritual violence'. There is a violence which is allowed. So, we will try to look at the text. We will jump right into the text and try to draw a few lessons from them. In *Matthew 11:11-12*, this is what Jesus tells the disciples of John when they come and John is imprisoned. And you know why he's imprisoned because he confronts Herod and tells him it is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife and who takes offense is Herodias. She takes offense and because of her, he puts John in prison and John is wondering why this has happened to him and therefore, he sends a few of his disciples to talk to Jesus and ask Him this question. Should we wait for another or are you really the Messiah. This is what Jesus has to say after they leave. In *Matthew 11:11-12*,

Matthew 11:11-12

¹¹ "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he. ¹² And from the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force."

It's very interesting! Two things, the Kingdom suffers violence and the violent take it by force. There is a violence that happens to those people who are in the Kingdom, violence that happens to those who are inside the Kingdom of Heaven and they in turn are violent and they press toward or into it. That's what *Luke 16* the equivalent passage will say. *Luke 16:16*

Luke 16:16

¹⁶ "The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the Kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it."

And the word actually is 'violencing' into it. That's remarkable! Something is happening here, people, after the Kingdom of God is preached, everyone is violencing into it. Who is this everyone? Obviously, those who have accepted the Gospel of the Kingdom, everyone does not mean everyone who heard, not everyone is violencing but those who have accepted the Gospel of the Kingdom. By the way, the Gospel, the good news as we have been studying this over and over again in different context in our Church, the gospel is the gospel of the what? Of the Kingdom. Is pretty important to understand. People who are born in a democracy have no idea what a kingdom is. If we'll possibly look at a few kingdoms here and there but the actual Kingdom, the Kingdom is a kingdom as a form of government. That's what it means. Democracy as a form of government and kingdom as a form of government. We have never experienced what it means to be under a king. We are Abraham Lincoln's followers. Democracy is government of the people, by the people, for the people. But the Kingdom of God it says in Colossians; *"All things were created for Him, through Him and everything for Him, for His glory they were all created."* Remember that song, we are created for His pleasure. So, we in the democracy, we have no idea what it means to be in a kingdom. Therefore, we need to understand. It's a process especially in this century in which we live, we have no idea. Like I remember Pastor telling us the other day at the men's meeting and he said, "You know, you don't have any idea what it means to be in a kingdom." He was talking about an example of this prince in this kingdom who falls in love with this girl and gets her pregnant but she doesn't belong to the royal line. So, he can't marry her. So, he has a

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subject in the kingdom who is engaged to marry another one and he calls the subject and he tells him, “You marry this lady!” That’s it! Period! And everything else, that guy, all his dreams, aspirations, everything falls to the ground and he has to obey the voice of the king. Period! That is what it means to be sovereign. His will be done. That’s what it means. So, the gospel is the Gospel of the Kingdom and we need to understand that very carefully. Why did the Kingdom of God suffer violence from the time of John the Baptist? Because this is the message that he preached in *Matthew 3:1-2* onwards.

Matthew 3:1-2

¹ In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ² and saying, “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!”

And the moment he proclaimed the Kingdom of Heaven, he suffered violence. The Pharisees came and asked, “Who are you?” He said, “Brood of vipers!” He was not pretty and to Herod, he said, “You cannot marry your brother’s wife.” Put him in prison, experienced violence. Right from the time of John the Baptist, the Kingdom of Heaven was suffering violence because he said, “Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” What happens when John the Baptist is put in prison? This was after Jesus comes out of the wilderness after being tested by satan in the wilderness for forty days. This is what He says when He comes out and hears John was put in prison. This is in *Mark 1:14* onwards

Mark 1:14

¹⁴ Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom[e] of God, ¹⁵ and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

That is the gospel. The Kingdom of God is at hand and the moment you say the Kingdom of God is at hand automatically there is a confrontation between two kingdoms – the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world. The prince of the power of the air. Who is the ruler of those who are of the sons of disobedience? That’s is what *Ephesians 2* will say. He says, “Immediately, a confrontation and Jesus not only preached the Kingdom of God. He demonstrated the Kingdom of God. Look at what happens, in the same gospel according to *Mark 1* after He takes to Himself the twelve disciples this is what happens. He goes to the synagogue and He begins to preaches. *Mark 1:21* onwards.

Mark 1:21-24

²¹ Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. ²² And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. ²³ Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out,

Till that day, the man was bringing the unclean spirit into the synagogue and nothing was happening. Derek Prince says, “These days, if a man has got an unclean spirit, they will put the man out of the Church but Jesus doesn’t do that. He puts the unclean spirit out of the Church.” And this is exactly what happens

²⁴ saying, “Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us?”

And then, you know what happens, right? Immediately, He says, “Come out and he comes out.” You know what? They are all astonished and they say, “What kind of a teaching is this that He commands the evil spirit and they come out?” Immediately, there is a confrontation between the powers of darkness and the Kingdom of God. He demonstrates that. There is a demonstration of the powers of darkness and the Kingdom of God immediately. Let me tell you something. As long as there is no disturbance in our life, we have really not been apprehended by the Gospel of the Kingdom, really, truly not. Right from the time when we entered into the Kingdom, our very entrance into the Kingdom was a product of violence. You need to understand that. You know that when Jesus meets Nicodemus, He says, “Unless you are born again, you cannot see. Unless you are born of the water and the spirit, you cannot even enter.” You know that, very famous but what happens? How are you born again into the Kingdom of God? There is a confrontation between the powers of darkness and the Kingdom of God. Look at what it says in *Colossians 1:12* onwards. Our entrance into the Kingdom.

Colossians 1:12-14

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¹² *giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.* ¹³ *He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,* ¹⁴ *in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.*

That means in other for us to enter into the Kingdom of God, blood was split. You need to understand that. There was some act of violence that took place.

¹⁴ *in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.*

That is exactly what happened in the Old Covenant. If you want to enter and if you have sin in your heart, you had to bring a guilt offering and a lamb has to be slain, blood had to be split only then you would have been reconciled to God.

1 Peter 1:18

¹⁸ *knowing that you were not redeemed* (I like this word redeemed, means purchased) *with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ,*

Something happened. The Blood of the lamb of God was spilt and only then. In the same chapter of 1 Peter 1:3,

1 Peter 1:3

³ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

Not only the blood of Christ was spilt, He was killed on the Cross for our sins. That is how the entrance into the Kingdom was made possible. It was through redemption.

I was listening to one man of God, he gives this fantastic example. He was speaking to the Maoris in New Zealand. Maoris, some of them were excellent carpenters. So, he tells them the story of a carpenter who has a son. So, this carpenter had a son. So, during the course of time, the son grew up and he also started to learn the trade of his father and then, he made a beautiful boat, nice boat, puts a sail on it, beautiful boat. He polished it and varnishes it, everything and then, he went to the river and he puts the boat on the river and he started playing with it and suddenly, the wind changed and the tide changed and the wave took the boat right into the river and he lost it and he started weeping and sobbing. He couldn't get the boat back. So, he left. After a few days, there was this guy who was walking on the banks of the river and the tide changed and brought back the boat into the shore and he looked at the boat and he look at it, it's a beautiful boat. So, what does he do? He takes it to the local toy shop and he gives it to the shopkeeper and the shopkeeper looks at him and he says, "Beautiful boat!" He takes it and varnishes and makes it nice and beautiful and he puts it on the shelf of the shop. After a few days, this boy, he's walking along the road and walking past the shop, he finds this beautiful boat and he recognizes immediately the boat. But now he can't go and tell the shopkeeper, "This is mine!" because he will not believe it. Already there is a price tag on the boat. Let's say, thousand dollars or forty dollars, some amount is there and he goes to the shopkeeper and he says, "You know what? I need that boat. Please don't sell it to anybody. I don't have the money. I need that boat." So, he gives him a deposit of few dollars and he goes works, does a lot of per-time jobs, everything and saves. So, in two, three months later, he comes and he gives the money to the shop keeper and he takes the boat and he comes out of the shop and he hugs the boat like that and he says, "You are mine twice over!" That is redemption! You know what happened? Let me show you?

Genesis 2:7

⁷ *And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground,*

Those days, there was no rain, there was a mist which was going out and that use to come and water the ground and it used to make the ground wet and soft. So, God formed man out of the dust of the ground and what did he do? He put His lips and His nostrils to that dust and He breathed into man and Adam became a living soul and then, what happened? Sin marred Adam and he was sold in a slave market but God wanted to win him back. So, what does He do? He sent his son, He pays the price, redeems us. He is resurrected from the dead, His disciples are all discouraged but then He comes into the upper room, where the disciples where there and He comes and say, what?

John 20:21-22

²¹ ***So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."*** ²² ***And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."***

And the Church was born again. How? Through the redemption that was purchased on the Cross. Why? What happened? You know what, birth is a very messy business by the way. I was telling the Romans Bible study yesterday. It's a messy affair. If you have been to the labour room, you will know. Oh, it's a messy affair. Nine months birth pangs and every born again, it was a messy affair. Sometimes, the person in the womb doesn't give much trouble. Normal delivery through nine months, happy peaceful and comes out and every baby is different. You know that, right? Abigail and Emmanuella, total difference. Some people, they have no issues when they are born again, it's a smooth sailing but some people give you a lot of trouble. You pray, you intercede, you bring him to Church, that guy goes out more nine years, ten years, twenty years and after persistent prayer, one day, born again. You see it's a messy affair. It's not easy. Okay? So, this is exactly what happens. What does God do? He brings us back twice over and it was through violence. Without the shedding of blood, there cannot be remission of sins. And He has to shed His blood, the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb and He had to pay the penalty. You've been redeemed. You have been won twice over. God created you and He recreated you. You were born and you were born again into the Kingdom of God. How is that made possible? Through the redemption in Christ Jesus, by His blood we have forgiveness of sins. That is how we entered into God's kingdom. How did this happen? You know that right? *Isaiah 53:5-6*. Famous verse.

Isaiah 53:5-6

⁵ ***But He was wounded for*** ('our' is very general. Let us say 'my') ***our*** (my) ***transgressions, He was bruised for*** (my) ***our iniquities; The chastisement for*** (my) ***our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes*** (I am) ***we are healed.*** ⁶ (I was like) ***All we like sheep have gone astray; (I) We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him*** (my) ***the iniquity of us all.***

You know what? For iniquity. There is a very interesting word in the Bible. If you were there in our Church, you would know. Sin basically means rebellion. The true words – iniquity means rebellion. And when Cain has an argument with God, he says, "My punishment (is what?) too much to bear." You know, the word 'punishment' is also iniquity. Iniquity is rebellion and also the punishment because of rebellion. And both the rebellion and the punishment of our rebellion was put on Jesus. Remarkable! Isn't it? And that is how the anger and the wrath of God was satisfied by laying our iniquity on the Cross. I'm telling you, saints, we need to have the revisiting of this experience over and over again, because the Blood of Christ might become a very common thing. That's what *Hebrews* will say. Salvation, His grace is free, but it is never cheap. It cost His Son. Infinite price was paid for us. Never ever; don't play that. And what happened? How was He bruised? Look at what it says. How does God look at rebellion? He looks at Israel and He says, "This is how I look at rebellion." *Isaiah 1:5-6*. This is the NIV translation.

Isaiah 1:5-6

⁵ ***Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you*** (what?) ***persist in rebellion? Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted.*** (This is how He sees us.) ⁶ ***From the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness— only wounds and welts*** (bruises) ***and open sores, not cleansed or bandaged or soothed with olive oil.***

Now, what is this picture? It is of Jesus dying on the cross. His head injured. His heart afflicted. His heart was broken from the top of His head to the sole of His foot, wounds, bruises, open sores-- that was rebellion. That is rebellion. Remember that song we were singing yesterday in our Bible study?

"When I survey the wondrous Cross;
See from His head, His hands, His feet
Sorrow and love flow mingled down
Did ever such love or sorrow meet
Nor thorns compose so rich a crown
Were the whole realm of nature mine
were an offering too small
Love so amazing, so divine

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Demands my soul, my life, my all"

You need to understand: in order for us to be born into the Kingdom of God, it took a violent death of the Son of God to purchase our redemption. Never forget that. So, once we are born again into the Kingdom, what happens? Let us read that — Born into the Kingdom at war. You need to understand that. Let me tell you.

Let me give you an example. I was in Canada for several years. There is a process of setting down in Canada. Initially, you have to apply for what we call as permanent residency. And in US, they call it the green card. What do you mean by a green card? Resident Alien. That means, you're still not part of the country. You don't have rights to vote, etc. You can't take government jobs. Nothing. Even in Canada, you can in Canada, you can apply for several jobs, but the government jobs are only for citizens. And if you are an Indian, there is no dual citizenship. The day you become citizen of Canada, you have to forfeit the citizenship of India. You only become a person of Indian origin, what we call as PIO. Think about it. Let's say in 2003, I got my permanent residency in Canada. I have to work four years and pay taxes and through my loyalty as a tax payer, I'm eligible to apply for Citizenship. Let us say — July fourth is your Independence Day, right? — on that day, we have the celebrations of the few people who are made citizens of the US. They all come and on July 4th, let's say, a hypothetical situation, I've become the citizen of Canada. In other words, I'm born again in Canada. Let's say, on that day, Russia declares war on Canada. The government of Russia is opposed to the government of Canada. And now, I am a citizen of the government of Canada, I am an enemy of the government of Russia. What has happened? I've been born into a Kingdom which is at war. Which is exactly what has happened to you the moment you are born into the Kingdom of God. You have been born into a Kingdom which is at war. Unfortunately, many believers don't have a cotton picking idea about this. I'll show you a figure some time later. I don't want to get ahead of myself. So, at ease! They have no idea that they are at war.

And you know that, if you've been coming to our Church, there is a threefold war that we have to fight. Look at what it says in *1 Peter 2:11*.

1 Peter 2:11

¹¹ ***Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war*** (Look at that,) ***against the soul***

What has happened? Your flesh, your old man which was born of Adam, he has declared war against you. You know that? The flesh lusts against the Spirit; the Spirit lusts against the flesh and they are at enmity with each other. You have a resident enemy inside of you. Literally, you're sleeping with an enemy — the old man. He's at war.

Another system is at war with you, that is what we call as the world system. And we studied it in several contexts.

John 15:18

¹⁸ ***"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you."***

In other words, the moment you're born again, there is what we call as the status quo of this world which has declared war against you and they hate you. And then, there's another guy.

1 Peter 5:8

⁸ ***Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary*** (Which is nothing but your enemy) ***the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.***

It's remarkable! I'm telling you, if you've seen National Geographic, for the first time, I never knew that a bunch of lions is called a pride. They're called a pride of lions. And let's say you have this pride. Pride has males and females. And the males are only for protection. They're like the 'hafta vasul' types. They guarantee you safety and they ask the females to go and work. And they will come and have their "lion's share". So, there is a male or a bunch of males and they protect the pride, the so-called and the females doing all the hard work and they have cubs through that. And then, what happens? Over a period of time, you have this male lion growing older and older and older and he has no strength to protect his pride because he has to constantly fight competing tribes. And there are males all around seeking to take over the prides. You know what they do? They come. They fight with this old lion. Chase that fellow out. And you know how they take over the pride? You know how they do it? They kill all the cubs. I had no idea. I said, "What?" Because they want to have a pure

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clean blood line. No competition. This is exactly what is happening over here. I mean, in the movie Lion King, you know what I'm talking about. Of course, we had Sir Elton John singing, who had no idea what circle of life is by the way. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Be sober, be vigilant. Because your adversary the devil is seeking someone to devour. So, you have a pride of the enemy seeking you – threefold attack. We know this. But I want to just look at three aspects of these things. How do we fight? How are we spiritually violent? When it comes to the flesh there will be several strategies. One of the primary things in the Church, how do we fight the flesh? *Matthew 11:6* Let us read it together.

Matthew 11:6

⁶ And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.

One of the best, I mean, the best, let me just show you Scriptures. What happens to people when the Word of God comes? I was telling the other day during the Tuesday Bible study, whenever the Word of God comes, in some people, there is a boxing match going on in the mind. And they're just fighting the Word, fighting the Word. It's like I want to punch this preacher. It's going on. And the person said, "Can you see that?" I said, "Yeah! I can see that." Fighting the Word.

Jeremiah 6:10(NIV)

¹⁰ To whom can I speak and give warning? Who will listen to me? (Flesh right? How do we fight the flesh?) Their ears are (uncircumcised or) closed so they cannot hear. The word of the Lord is (what) offensive to them; they find no pleasure in it.

Because it challenges the fleshly desires. Charles Spurgeon preached a sermon called 'Holy Violence'. And he describes graphically the people who are spiritually violent. Look at what he says. He's talking about the people who are spiritually violent. "Meet them as they go to the house of prayer and ask them why they are going. They know right well what they are going after." Look at what they say. This is what they say. "I am going there to find mercy, and to find peace, there to find rest to my soul. For I am in anguish about sin. And I want to find the Savior. I am in hopes that being in the way the Lord will meet with me. So, I am about to lay myself down by the side of the pool of Bethesda in the hope that the Holy Spirit will stir the pool and enable me to step in."

I went recently to the revival meeting in the Church. Pastor was preaching and he said, "During a sermon, the entire sermon may not be for you. But there will be one specific line in the sermon, when the Holy Spirit comes he stirs up the water and you have to be ready to receive it." And by the way, the ESV has taken that off from your Bibles – the stirring of the pool of Bethesda. Think about it. Do you come with this attitude? Are you in an anguish about sin? Think about it. How many people are really in anguish about their sin? How do they come to the Church of God? "Lord, I'm at Your pool, Lord. I'm waiting for the Holy Spirit, so that I can get in and I can get whole." Do you have that holy desperation? No wonder our lives are shallow. What is that? I'm at hopes that being in the way. I'm hoping. Do you know how many people take Church for granted? I'm hoping the Lord will show me mercy. Do you come with that attitude? or, the Lord has to show me mercy. C'mon! I give Him the tithes and my offerings and my attendance. It says that 60% of the Church do not visit Church on every Sunday. It's only 40% that are absolutely regular to Church. And I'm giving you a very non-conservative estimate. Are you in anguish about your sin? Think about it. How many of you are really struggling with sin? Your hands up in the air, please. Let me see. O, thank God! That is the reason why you are here on Wednesday. Do you come with that attitude? Lord, I'm in anguish because of my sin. And I want to come and meet God so that when the Holy Spirit comes and stirs up the water, I'm waiting for that one word. One word. One word. This is how Paul describes. This is what we call as repentance. Is there offence? Or is there repentance? That is the question.

2 Corinthians 7:8-11

⁸ For even if I made you grieve with my letter...

I'm telling you honestly. Many times, I left the Church grieving. I wish I did not come. The other day, I was getting so restless I wanted to run. I wanted the sermon to get over. It was so convicting.

...I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. (Thank God it grieved you.) ⁹ As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting...

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You didn't get offended. You repented. And one of the things let me tell you, my dear brothers and sisters, repentance is a gift from God. Every day, I go for the prayer in the morning. Sister Ailsa is praying on the phone with Pastor and I and she say, "Lord, grant us the gift of repentance. Grant us the gift of humility. Grant us the gift of repentance. Grant us the gift of humility." Because even repenting you cannot do in your own strength.

...For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. ¹⁰ For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces (what?) death. ¹¹ For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter.

Do you see a man who is spiritually violent expressed in these verses? Spurgeon in the same sermon, he goes on to say. What happens to those people who come to Church expecting to get a touch from the Holy Spirit? This is what happens to them – Mark these violent people, after they have gone home, (The meeting is not ending here) they go to their chambers and they begin to pray. Not the prayer between sleeping and waking that some of you are used to attend to. Not the drowsy supplication that never gets beyond the ceiling of your bedroom. But they fall on their knees and with a holy anxiety, they begin to cry. (Does it describe you? You know what they say?) Lord, save or I perish. O Lord, save me and I'm ready to perish. I beseech thee, stretch out Thy hand and rescue my poor soul from the destruction which now haunts my spirit. And see them after they have prayed (what do they do?) how they turn over to the Word of God. (Do you see spiritual violence saints? Do you see that? Do you have this?)

You know, this describes a man; how many know a man in the Old Testament who was spiritually violent? Let me see. One example. Elijah maybe. I mean, in the context of repenting. Let's see. Who contended with God? Jacob. Thank you! Let me tell you something; you know the story of Jacob fighting with God; not fighting with God; wrestling with God. Fighting is a very crude term. Sorry. What was he doing then? What was he saying? "Bless me!" What was the blessing that he was asking for? It is recorded in *Hosea 12*, by the way. This is Jacob, the spiritual warrior.

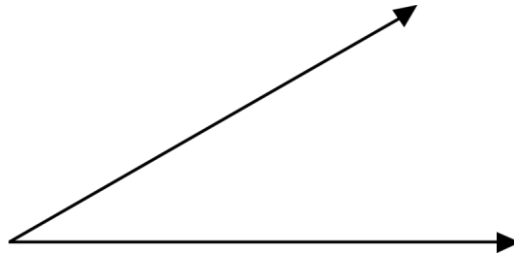
Hosea 12:3-6

³ In the womb he took his brother by the heel (right from birth), and in his manhood he strove with God. ⁴ He strove with the angel and prevailed; he wept and sought his favor...

You know something? I never saw this before and years back, on a third Saturday; what do we have on third Saturday? Fasting and prayer. You know, Pastor was telling us, "You know what did Jacob pray for?" And he showed us *Hosea 12:4* and I was stunned. I was that for the first time.

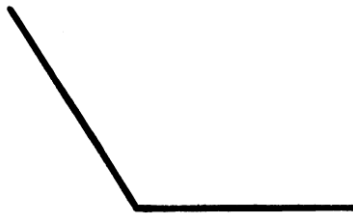
...he wept and sought his favor. He met God at Bethel, and there God spoke with us— ⁵ the Lord, the God of hosts, the Lord is his memorial name: (And what happens? What does he say?) ⁶ "So you, by the help of your God, return, hold fast to love and justice, and wait continually for your God."

That is Jacob, saints. Let me tell you something – I attended every Service in this Church and what you see is the product sigma total of all the meetings that I've attended, including fasting and prayer; all-night prayer. It takes a lot of hearing to preach. Do you know that? And this one, I heard several years back and today, the Holy Spirit reminded me of this. One word – how did Jacob contend? He strove with God, weeping and seeking for His favour. You know what God was telling me? I remember when the first paper work was due, my research paper was due, several rejects. You know it, right, when you have several rejects? I went on my face before God and cried, "Lord, have mercy. Let them accept my paper." You wouldn't believe – for six months, I cried and on the day when my results were coming out, I was before the computer till three o' clock in the morning, four in the morning. I was waiting for the email. And then, when the email comes, "Accepted!" Oh! And you know what the Lord told me? "The way you cried for the paper, did you ever cry for your sin?" Some people cry for their job, "Lord, job!" After they get a job, they are finished; they are gone; they are out. Let me tell you something; there is no passivity in God's Kingdom. There is only earnestness. There are four categories of people. And if you know geometry, plain geometry, it is very nicely described. Let me give you a tutorial on geometry.



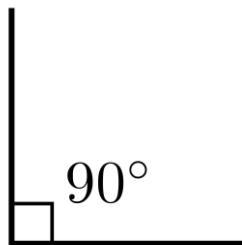
This is what I call as an 'acute angle'. These are the people who are earnest. They are like this; they are waiting for the Holy Spirit to stir up the waters. What are they called as? Acute. You know what the word 'acute' means, right? Sharp, toward the preacher, writing down notes, absorb everything, go back home fighting with the Word, wrestling with the Word.

And there, we also have another set of people called as 'obtuse angle' people.



They are like this and they fall asleep. Obtuse angle. Do you know what 'obtuse' means? How can you be obtuse? Indifferent. That's what it means.

And there is a third category of people; what we call as 'the right-angled people', stoic.



Millions upon millions in the valley of decision. Nothing can move them. You bring them to Church; you drag them to Church. "I am not getting converted. No. I am neither hot nor cold." And it's not going to take long. So, first you are like this; then, you become like this. Then, you become hardened. That's exactly what happens to you spiritually. Geometry teaches a lot of things, by the way. It's good to learn math. In Math Olympiads, there are only two things you have to learn – geometry and numbers theory. Because God wrote numbers theory and He also explained geometry. He wrote numbers, right? If you forgot.

So, you have people who are acute, who are inclined, who are absolutely clear and there is no passivity in their lives. I've seen a lot of people becoming complacent. That is the reason why it says, "The complacency of the fools will destroy them." *Proverbs 1*; the last two verses. Then, the stoic people. What happens ultimately? You know what happens? If you don't bend, this is what you will become;



spiritual dead, asleep and flat. This is what you call as 'straight angle'. This is actually not right angle; this is wrong angle. You see, my dear brothers and sisters? How many of you acute angle people here in the house of God? That's what I tell Vilas; he's not here. I tell him, "Vilas, you are very obtuse." I told somebody. They said they wanted to write the NDA exam. He is there. I told him, "You want NDA exam? Nothing in your life comes easy. You have to be hardworking. You have to fish all night and catch nothing. Then, the Lord will bless you." That's the principle in the Kingdom. No passivity. Passivity is one attitude the Lord hates. That is the reason why He tells the Corinthian Church; He says, "Many of you are weak; many of you are sick; many of you have fallen asleep – dead." So, don't negotiate with Your flesh. Be at war.

It goes on. You have the flesh. I'm just giving you small pointers of what I've learnt in my life. *Romans 12*. How do you fight the world?

Romans 12:2

² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Don't compromise with the world. In other words, don't compromise in your standards. Look at what it says in *1 John 2*.

1 John 2:15-17

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

You know what it means? There is one question which I need to constantly keep asking myself: am I compromised or am I consecrated? Did I cut corners in my life or am I absolutely strong in my convictions? Chuck Swindle in one of his sermons, he is talking about Lot. This is what he says. "Stay alert to subtle hints – hints of depravity secret invasion might include toleration. People have become tolerant (of what?) profanity, vulgarity, lowering personal standards and making light of sacred things. Stand firm in your authority to stop sin's current." And he says, "Has your sword become blunt?" The sword which is the Word of God, has it become blunt or does it still cut? Have you compromised? Very interesting, right? I remember the first time when had satellite television in our country. It was in the 1990s. We used to have Bible Study in one of our relative's home and they had the Star TV for the first time. (I mean, not for the first time; the very first time they had Star TV/cable connection in their home) and we used to gather in their home for Bible Study on Sunday evenings and one day, we sat there. My uncle, who takes the Bible study, still didn't come. So, we switched on the television, flipping through the channels and we used to have Doordarshan those days, right? And suddenly, we had all these options, all our eyes are glued – Star TV, Star Sports; suddenly, we have whatever Star TV which had this Bold & Beautiful. Suddenly, Bold & Beautiful came and suddenly, there was one scene which was there and immediately my aunty, she took the television remote and switched off TV. She couldn't tolerate, she says, "What nonsense it that?" And switched it off. Now, when I go to my uncle's home after several years, item number is going on and what happens? They all are sitting around the table eating food and watching item number (in fifteen years). What you could not tolerate fifteen years earlier, you know what has happened? Slightly, slowly *chalega chalega chalega* (it's okay, it's okay, it's okay) the standards have come down and down and down and you cannot even blush anymore.

Chuck Swindle quotes from the New Living Translation. This is what he says,

Ephesians 5:10-11

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¹⁰ **Carefully determine what pleases the Lord.** ¹¹ **Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them.**

Don't touch it. This happened in the Corinthian Church, by the way. This is what Paul will say. This is an indictment. He is tearing them apart in,

1 Corinthians 5:1-5

¹ **It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as not even mentioned among the gentiles**

"Your standards have become so compromised that it is worse than the Gentiles." Isn't it amazing that the Christian nations which have actually compromised the standards and all the other countries, still conservative in their background, look at it and say, "This is Christianity? What is this?" I remember Nabeel Qureshi, he was searching for God and David Wood invited him to a Church and Nabeel was sitting; he never came to a Church and this is kind of an Evangelical Church and they were having Praise and Worship, and in the worship, the girls were with tight T-shirts praising God, he looked at them and he said, "Boy, in my religion, people are not dressed like this." This was his question as a Muslim.

Sisters, you know I was listening, some time back Hrishi and I was having a discussion and he said, "Anna, when a girl comes to my office and she is really skimpily dressed and if she is not a believer (a Hindu), I can see and have pity on her; but a believer girl comes to the office and she is dressed in a skimpy attire, I can see immediately rebellion in her. I can immediately sense that." You see that! And he says,

² **And you have puffed up** (lot of people think, "This is my liberty, baba." They are puffed up) **they have not mourned that he was done this deed might be taken away from among you for indeed** ³**as absent in body and present in the Spirit and I have already Judged them who have done this deed for** ⁴**In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,** ⁵**To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved** (I don't how many people can survive this in today's Church. And then, he goes on and says) **Your glorying is not good, do you not know that a little leaven** (a little compromise. That's exactly that we were looking at Sunday,) **little leaven** (of worldliness) **leaven the whole lump**

Fight that leaven. Are you compromised? Are you consecrated?

Chuck Swindle; he goes on to say, "Declare and model your standard repeatedly. Post in your home a list of Biblical virtues and standards and review them often." Do we do that? Have we revisited our standards? How are we compromised? You know it, I know it.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

⁶**And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today.** ⁷**Repeat them again and again** (to whom?) **to your children.**

Some time back, Jacinth and I, we went to this James Bond Movie. And this was after we came to the Church, by the way. Let us be honest (candid). He went and saw this movie and then, we know James Bond is a MI6 agent and he got lots of other things also up his sleeve. So, the scene comes and Jacinth is looking me like that (looking towards me) and I am like; I didn't observe her and I just looked at the scene and let it go. After the movie was finished, she said, "Why were you watching that?" I said, "Honey, that was only an implication. Nothing explicit." "Implication?" And she made a very powerful statement; I'll never forget that. She said, "Will you be okay if Abigail watches that?" I was stunned. I mean, I have no answer for that. Look at *Matthew 18*,

Matthew 18:6-8

⁶**but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea** (I am telling you honestly, so many couples and parents should have millstones around their necks) ⁷**Woe to the world because of offenses. For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes.** And offenses, can it comes to the parents? What happened to your

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standards, parents? In this context, look at what it says,) ⁸***And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin*** (be violent against it) ***cut it off...***

You know why? Because your children are worth it. Your children are worth it. That's been my passion for a long time now. I remember Pastor telling me, we use to go in the car, I got frustrated to the traffic, *mathru basha* comes out, but not obscene language, you know '*yentra veedu*'; Pastor looked at me and said, "Vijay, next time you open your mouth like that and Abigail is watching, she will also will say, '*yentra veedu*' and that '*yentra veedu*' will go somewhere else later on." Look at what it says in *John's Gospel 17*,

John 17:17-21

¹⁷***"Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. ¹⁸"As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ¹⁹And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.*** (Why? You want to know the answer for why? Go on reading) ²⁰***"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word*** (that they preach, will be a set of people, who been observing not only word that you preach but the lifestyle that you follow) ²¹***that they may all be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You. May they also be one in Us, that the world may believe that You have sent Me.***

The life of your children is at stake, the spiritual destiny of your children. So, my dear brothers and sisters and parents, revisit your standards and revise them. Make your knife sharp and let your convictions become sharper tonight. Don't compromise. Consecrate.

Finally, *James 4*. We have the other person also, right?

James 4:7-17

⁷***Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil...***

Now, there's a period, right? So, Peter elaborates the period between submission and resisting. What does he say?

1 Peter 5:5

⁵***Likewise you younger people*** (how many young people here?) , ***submit yourselves to your elders.*** (That is how you submit to God.) ***Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."*** ⁶***Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, ⁷casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. ⁸Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. ⁹Resist him, steadfast in the faith,***

How do you resist him? By submitting to every authority that God has placed you under. That is how you resist. You know why? The Kingdom of God is a Kingdom which works on authority. It's on authority. It's either obedience or what we call as 'submission' or rebellion. Question today, to many of us here in the house of God: are we really obedient? Check your obedience and I will tell you how much you are overcoming the devil in your life. Check your obedience. Check your obedience to the Word of God; check your obedience to the submission that God has placed you under. One of the things that we keep telling; we have our own school. We have a set of children. We say, "If you want the blessing of God in your life, submit to authority." God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. Do you know why? Because all of them, by default, are rebels. Have you seen a two-year-old girl? You know a two-year-old girl who is very nice and cute and looks very harmless; you say, "Hello, little one. Come here!" That is default position. If you cannot teach them to be submissive and obedient when they are young and tell them that there are consequences for your disobedience, when they grow up, they will become more sophisticated rebels. Let me tell you in my home. A long time back, right in front of my mother, I said some word, sanskrutam and she heard it. And you know what? In my home, we were taught to obey. And she said, "What did you say?" She brought kaaram (chilli) from the kitchen. "Naaliki chupuchu (show me your tongue) ." And she put chilli powder on my tongue. I screamed. She said, "Rebellion will have consequences." I was taught right from childhood. Disobedience has consequences. I was taught. She told me once. She said, "Vijay, tomorrow is your exam. I know there is a birthday party. Don't come for your cousin's birthday party. I know it's her first birthday. You study at home. I have to go." You know what I did? I called my uncle, "Uncle, nenu kuda vastanu (I also want to come) ." What am I doing? Circumventing authority. So, my uncle said, "Okay, okay. Emi paraveledu. Vachey ra. (No problem. Come) ." Aadi emi paravaladu. Naaku

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problem, later on. (There is no problem for him. I'm the one who would have the problem later on) So, after he came, picked me on the bike and took me to the birthday party, there, I see my mother; she looked at me like that and I just ignored her. She said, "You ignore me? Come back home." Tomorrow is unit exam. And obviously, it was not a unit exam but some exam was there. I don't know. I forget what exam. She said, "First birthday ki vachavu kadha nuvvu? (you came from the first birthday, right?) ." She made me study the whole night. And I did not finish the syllabus and by the time the exam time came and I had to leave to school, I did not finish the syllabus; she said, "You are not going to school because you did not finish your syllabus." You see here – a man under authority is because I was taught that disobedience has consequences. And let me tell you something; not boasting – I can take correction from anybody. I always tell God – it's easy for me to submit because I was taught the consequences of disobedience and rebellion right from childhood.

My dear parents, take this to heart. Don't say, "Vaadu chinodu kadha? Emi telusu vadiki? (He's just a small boy, right? What does he know?) " Anni telusu (He knows everything) . You know something; Derek Prince gives this example. He says, "Tell your daughter 'you cannot eat biscuit. No biscuit for you. Don't ask me'. And suddenly, after a while, your friend comes home for a snack. Suddenly, what will happen? Right in front of your friend, when you take the biscuit packet and say 'mummy, can I have a biscuit?' And then, you are like, embarrassed and you have to give a biscuit. They know very well when to catch you." "There are two dirty words," Derek Prince says, "in Christianity – manipulation and domination. And every rebel, by default, is a manipulator." Not a robotic manipulator; human manipulator. Right from childhood. I don't want to go into this and I'm going to stop here. That's a completely; it's like a seamless topic. You have to teach that because it's a huge topic. But I want to tell you something – learn to yield to authority. Learn to be accountable. Learn to submit and it will go well with you. Otherwise, you know what God will say? "You are just like the devil, a rebel." And that fellow will come, nicely devour you, and you have no idea that you are being devoured by the enemy because both of you proud. Let me tell you honestly, so many people in Christendom are absolute loose electrons. He, who has Chemistry ears, will hear. Absolutely loose electrons. You know what God is saying? "Let this be the year you learn to submit." I don't want to go there.

So, you have three enemies, my dear brothers and sisters – the flesh, the world and the devil. How are you violencing? This is the question and I want to leave it there this evening. How are you violencing? Are you compromised? Are you equipped? Are you absolutely serious about your walk with the Lord or have you taken it easy? And if you have taken it easy, let me tell you something, you are the prime target of the enemy and as Zac Poonen says and as Derek Prince says, "You deserve to be deceived." Because evil men and imposters will wax more wicked and wicked in the last days and I don't want to be found among the crowd who is rebellious. No, Lord. Most of the times, I pray, whenever the Spirit convicts, I say, "Lord, give my children a meek, gentle, submissive, quiet spirit so that it will go well with them every day." Take that opportunity as a father and speak that into the lives of your children. Amen. Let's pray.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we pray, Lord, that You have quickened us this evening. You have exhorted us in a measure and even as we continue to meditate upon Your Word, You would stir us up more and more and make us more and more submissive; more obedient, more of a people who are able to fight in these last days; who have the strength to resist what is coming in the days ahead, O Lord; because evil days are coming – perilous times are coming and You are looking for a Church who is prepared, a set of people who can obey orders from the command center in Heaven. Train us to be spiritual violent in the days to come. Thank You, Father. We praise You; we worship You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.