

Father, we just come to You this evening. We just thank You. We just praise You. We just worship You. We just thank You for this gift of life today that You enabled us to come through the day, to come to Your house to worship You. Thank You, Father. Thank You. Thank You. We thank You, Lord. Once again, we surrender our hearts, our minds, our bodies into Your hands. We speak to our soul, 'Be still in the presence of God.' Anoint us afresh, our ears that we may hear, we may study, we may understand, and we may walk in Your ways. Establish us in Your ways, O Lord. establish us. From the youngest ones here, Lord, to everyone, teach us. Help us to understand. For in Your presence, in Your ways there is Your presence, and in Your presence, there is rest. Speak to us, Lord. For in Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

So, we are twenty-four days into this new month, right? Yes, twenty-four days. That means seven more days left. Only seven days left. Next time, we come back on Wednesday, the month is over. It's over already. That means, if your maths is right, we have only three hundred and forty-one days left in the year. But three forty-one and hundred and twenty-seven days left to complete our tenth year. I'm more concerned about 127 than 341. Because the question is: as we are all here in the house of God, how do we see? How do we see? These are just numbers otherwise. How do we see the days that are passing by? The days that have gone by? The days that are ahead? Because unless we constantly learn to see through God's eyes, how God sees things, we will never truly understand what is happening in our lives, what is happening around us? Even probably one of the greatest scholars in Jesus' own time, Nicodemus was not able to understand simple things of the Kingdom. He struggled to understand even what we know today as basic things about God's Kingdom, he with his incredible knowledge and learning could not understand. So, Jesus tells him in *John 3*. Today's message will be very simple and also very complex.

John 3:9-11

⁹ Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?" ¹⁰ Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? ¹¹ Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. ¹² If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"

This is Jesus' response. He said, "I'm trying to put it across to you in earthly terms and you don't understand. If you don't understand earthly things, how will you understand kingdom things, heavenly things?"

To His disciples, He said something else. This was to Nicodemus, the scholar. To His disciples, He said, a very well-known verse in *John 6:63*.

John 6:63

⁶³ It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.

The words Jesus said that He speaks, the words Jesus speaks – the Word of God, is Spirit and life. The flesh profits nothing. You have to look in the context which Jesus is speaking to understand fully what He's saying. There is a discussion after the feeding of the five thousand. It's all about bread. In *John 6:48-50*,

John 6:48-52

⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. ⁵⁰ This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die.

He says, "I'm the bread that came from heaven. If you eat of Me, you will not die."

⁵¹ I am the living bread which came down from heaven. 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." ⁵² The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?"

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Now, Jesus is talking heavenly things in earthly terms. He says, "My words are life and Spirit." Scripture will say in *verse 60*. I did not give it there; it doesn't matter. Scripture says, "That is at the point, that's when the disciples started leaving." That's when they started leaving. Meaning, when we don't understand spiritual things which are put across in earthly terms, you start tuning off. Now, you can't leave, because you are forced to sit here. But you will always see in the Kingdom of God, many people slowly leave. They leave because they are not able to digest the heavenly things which are put across on earthly terms. Because the flesh looks at it and says, "It profits nothing." What's the point? It profits nothing. So, let's look at what Jesus is trying to say. Let's look at an earlier passage.

Matthew 6:31-33

³¹ ***"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'"*** ³² ***For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.***

So, keep it there. Okay? The gentiles, meaning those who don't know God, who really don't know God don't really understand the Kingdom of God, seek after things that profits the flesh. These things profit the flesh. Otherwise, we wouldn't be here, right? We ate. we drank. We are all dressed. It really profits the flesh. And that's what every normal man seeks after. God says, "I'm not denying you these things. For Your heavenly Father knows you need all these things." If you haven't eaten or drunk or dressed, you wouldn't be here.

³³ ***But (He says,) seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.***

What God is saying is that, the normal man, not normal; actually, he's abnormal, but the world calls him normal, the man in the flesh, everything he sees or experiences, he relates to his physical or to his flesh. But he says, "If you are truly born of the spirit, that is truly, biblically born again," *John 3:6* says,

John 3:6

⁶ ***That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.***

He says, "When you're born of spirit, there is a complete change of order in your life. You now become spirit first." And even if you're born as a small baby inside, born of the spirit as Peter when he was leading worship, he read from the portion in Peter which says, "Drink the pure milk of the Word of God." The Word of God is milk. The Word of God is meat. The Word of God is honey. Meaning, you have milk, meat, and dessert. It's all of it, depending upon how you grow. But it begins, we all begin with milk. We didn't begin with meat. We began with milk. But that is a natural sign of being born from above. You're born of the spirit. Jesus says, "My words are Spirit and life." For your spirit, God says, "My Word, when you're born again, is milk. It feeds you. And if you keep on feeding and exercising that spirit, you'll actually learn to put spirit first and start actually seeing things spiritually first, and not fleshly or physically. That is what Pastor Vijay was trying to teach us past Wednesday and Sunday about coming after Me. God says, "Come to Me and come after Me." To go after Him, there has to be, he taught it extremely well. I was fascinated with Sunday's message. I enjoy when I can sit under somebody else's teaching. You remember to go after in the second call. In *Luke 14*, it says,

Luke 14:25-27

²⁵ ***Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them,***

You're coming after Me. If you're coming after Me, you're seeking the Kingdom. If you're seeking the Kingdom, let me tell you, you have to learn to put the spirit first and the flesh second. If you put flesh first, you'll never understand what God's Kingdom is.

²⁶ ***"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."*** ²⁷ ***And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.***

When you hear this, 99% will leave, because they are not able to put spirit first and understand. In the *Gospel according to Matthew*, same thing He puts in a slightly different wording which makes us understand better. Let's go to the next one in *Matthew*. He doesn't use the word 'hate' now. He uses the words 'love' more.

Matthew 10:37-38

³⁷ He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁸ And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

He makes it little more palatable, because that word hate disturbs us. He says, "If you love anybody, even yourself, or anything more than Me, you'll not progress further into the Kingdom." You'll not progress further into the Kingdom. So, what does God really mean by this? What is He saying? He's saying, "There is a kingdom in which we live. It's the kingdom of flesh. We are all flesh and blood. We are this kingdom we live in. And then, there is the Kingdom of God into which we are born again into." And God is simply asking which will take priority in your life this year? Let's forget till last year. Which will take priority? The question is: do we really have a choice? Look at it.

In *Matthew 6:33*, in which we looked, Jesus says, "*Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.*" What does it practically mean? It means, you put spirit first. You put spirit first. I need food for my body. I need understanding, wisdom, and knowledge for my mind. And then, I have my spirit. The question is, it's easy, one, two, three, four, five, because there are children sitting here. All ate in the morning. All drank in the morning. All dressed in the morning and then, went to school. You need food for your body and education for your mind. That's the order. Now, in the evening, you have come to Church. That order doesn't matter. That doesn't mean food is the most important thing in your life. No. That's not it. It's how you see life from inside. We will think, O, if spirit is first then, early morning, I have to go to Church. Nobody will be here. That's not what it means. It also doesn't mean you are the only students in the Church. No. No. There are many students in this Church. All the students are not here. Because they also have made choices. They have made choices. That's what God is talking about. When you seek the Kingdom of God first, it's a spiritual Kingdom. It's a spiritual Kingdom. It is very easy to choose. Because you can see, you can smell, you can feel it, you can touch it. You can do all kinds of things with it, but spiritual? God never says, "We are destroyed because we do not make choices." No. Everyone makes choices. All of us are here, because we made choices. In *Hosea 4:6*, this is what God says.

Hosea 4:6

⁶ My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

Why? Because to make choices, right choices, you and I need knowledge. That's the key. To make choices, therefore, in the Kingdom of God, I need the knowledge of God and His Kingdom. To succeed in this world, I need the knowledge of this world and power of this world. Knowledge alone won't work, you need power too. In the Kingdom of God, seek ye first the Kingdom of God, what is that? Power! "The Kingdom of God," Paul will say, "not a matter of talk, it's a matter of power." Because the knowledge of the Kingdom of God can depress you, can make you a mad man. Because you look at it, it's humanly impossible to attain. So, God says, "Don't seek that first. Seek My power. Seek My power to keep My righteousness." A lot of people get depressed because they don't seek power, they seek knowledge. Because knowledge can be like, two days back, I talked to my sister, because you know, Aswathy had a baby. Yesterday, Aswathy had a baby. So, my sister is completely worried. Though the first delivery was normal, the second also was normal, she is worried. Why is she worried? Because she is a doctor. You have knowledge of medicine, but you have no power over the delivery. Same thing, Doctor Richard was here. Because you are a doctor, you have an issue. The problem is when you have an issue as a doctor, you know every complication possible. We when we have an issue, we have no knowledge. So, finally, when we are at our last stage, we go to the doctor. Understand? So, God says, "Knowledge is not the first thing alone. Seek simultaneously, I won't say first. It's put like a maths equation. $2(a+b)$ is $2a + 2b$. Like seek ye first the Kingdom of God, plus His righteousness. They come together. Seek knowledge. Seek power. Seek power. Seek knowledge. Otherwise, it will make you very very miserable. Okay?

To the woman at the well, Jesus said this. Samaritan woman is the woman at the well.

John 4:23-24

²³ But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴ God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

Again, we come back to the spirit. So, God is Spirit. So, though I have flesh and I have an intellect, I can worship only in the Spirit. I cannot worship in the flesh. I cannot intellectually worship Him. I can intellectually admire Him, but I cannot worship

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Him intellectually. I can only worship Him in the spirit, because God is Spirit. The flesh will always ask this question: what will it profit me? How does it help me in this world? Flesh likes spiritual things as long as it helps flesh. It's not like it doesn't like spiritual things. How does it help me in this world, in this flesh? Remember this – flesh and world are made for each other. You need to understand that flesh came into existence the moment man sinned. Till then, there is no flesh. Adam had a human body and a soul. The Spirit of God was upon him. He was walking in the body in the Spirit, communicating with God daily. But flesh was not there. Flesh, that spiritual entity was not there. That was born the minute man sinned, flesh was awakened. And through the flesh, the carnal fallen man, the devil framed this world. So, the flesh is made for this world and the world for this flesh. They are made for each other. Jesus, on the other hand, our role model, is the ultimate man who walked in the Spirit continuously in the flesh. He came in the body, in the flesh and taught us how to walk in the spirit. Fighting this fight, Paul puts this fight very clearly in *Galatians 5*. He says,

Galatians 5:16-17

¹⁶ I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh (walk in the spirit) ¹⁷ For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish

Contrary, you want to do a lot of things when the more knowledge you receive, you understand – these are the things I need to do; because those are the Kingdom things, but you realise your flesh is fighting it and you are not able to overcome because you did not seek power. Walk in the spirit and walk in the power of the spirit. Okay, that's what we are looking at. Okay, when Jesus came in the flesh, He fought this battle every day. And Scripture says He won every day. He never lost His battle. He walked in the spirit though He was born in the flesh; born of woman in this flesh, He walked every day but won every day. So, He just gives a format how it should be. Okay, He is not looking at our difficulties; He is looking at our victories and says, "I want all you to win this battle," but there is a beginning. The beginning is *John 3:5*. Very simple beginning.

John 3:5

⁵ Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

The power lies in the Kingdom. Where is the power? In the Kingdom. You cannot enter; you want power? The first step is you need to be born again. Very simple, but not simple. You have to be born of water and the Spirit. The water has two applications; Okay, ^{1st} *Ephesians*.

Ephesians 5:26

²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

So, water there symbolises the Word. The people who want to get baptised (probably, next month), listen carefully – water is the Word, Word of God is like water. How are we born again? By the word. Two references.

James 1:18

¹⁸ Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.

How are we born again? By the Word of God, you heard the Word of God; and the Word of God hit something inside. Why I am telling is that many I don't know statistically; the Lord knows; but I personally believe many millions sitting in Churches, not outside Churches in the world and not born again; they are not born again; because they never convicted by the spirit of God and they were never born of the Word and the Spirit. But they have a religion outwardly Christianity, but no inner conviction of the Kingdom. In 1 Peter, the portion just before which Peter spoke,

1 Peter 1:23

²³ having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the Word of God which lives and abides forever

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The Word of God is like a seed. That is how Jesus was born. He was born of Mary but the seed was the Holy Spirit put there, He was born of the Spirit and God says, "Unless you have born of water (this is the Word of God and the Spirit), you will not see."

The second part of water – *1 Peter 3*, who formally talking about the people during Noah's time.

1 Peter 3:20

²⁰ ***who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through*** (how are they saved? They are not saved from water; they are saved through) ***water***.

Okay. It's not like Enoch was taken away; Noah wasn't taken away, all around him, over side; everywhere, it was water. They were saved through water. There is also an anti-time which saves us. What is that? Baptism. Baptism is a type. How are we saved? Through water. Let's look what it means in *Mark 16:16*,

Mark 16:16

¹⁶ ***He who believes and is baptized will be saved...***

How do you know you have believed? You want to get baptised. Because you know two people cannot live at the same time. One of them has to die and you also know that once you know somebody is dead, what you do with him? You bury him. You don't keep; even it's your own father, you don't keep him, because you know he will start stinking. You know that person has to be buried. So, when you have born again of the spirit, the old man is there and you know the old man has to die and the old man has to be buried. So, all those who have born of the spirit who receive the message born of the spirit automatically decide I am going to get baptise. That's what Jesus says, "He who believes in will be saved,"

...but he who does not believe will be condemned.

He says, "Even if he does not believe, go get baptised, there is no meaning. You still be condemned." Baptism doesn't save you; it's the belief that saves you. Believing will always get baptised. And then, what happens? There, suddenly, eyes open, you are ready to be taught, the most beautiful part is that your eyes will open to this truth as you open your Bible. *In the beginning, God created the Heavens and Earth and the earth was void and was without form and darkness covered the surface of the earth.* That's you and me before we are born again and the Spirit of God hovered above the waters. That's you and me, the creation of new man has a form, but it is void, empty and it is dark; and the word of truth comes and says, "Let there be light." Suddenly, we realised, "I am born again." We don't have to turn. As we open the Bible, if your eyes are open, here, we know that it has parallel meanings. It has the creation of the new world; it is the creation of the new man. Your eyes are open to the God's truth. So, the Word of God never become spirit and life and our life will never see the Kingdom of God the beauty and glory of the King for us to desire Him, we are not born again. Because the flesh profits nothings.

Remember that passage from *Isaiah 53:2* which talks about Jesus?

Isaiah 53:2

²***He grew up before him like a tender shoot, (Jesus out of a dry ground and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.***

Now, Jesus, if we go by Scripture if is true, nothing like in the movies we use to see with golden hair, blue eyes, tall and handsome; naturally, we want to be around Him but that's not what Scripture says. If you looked at Him, your flesh does not desire Him; only the Spirit will desire Him. That's why you will see the Pharisees, Levites, the priests, they all stood up because they were all strong in the flesh; the sinners who wants a consultation in the spirit were flocking around Him because there is nothing in Him that will profit the flesh. So, even our movies are tunes by the Hollywood door or whatever the wood is made this movies to attract our flesh to Him, because they know, if we portray Him probably absolutely ordinary looking man, like knowledge from old day, how many of you know Om Puri? the Hindi movie actor Om Puri? Ever see him successful like all the others? No, he was one of the most fantastic actor, but pointless he has no looks, no looks at

all. You know in the movie Industry, even if you have no acting skills, you need looks. That is the flesh. This does not profit flesh. See, flesh also, on the other hand, sees no profit or beauty in spiritual things. Are you seeing the difference? The flesh does not see anything beautiful in spiritual things. On the other side, the spirit does not see any things beautiful or profitable in flesh, this is the flesh that is going on; the flesh of mind says, "Nothing good in the spiritual things" and spirit says, "There is nothing good with the fleshly things." So, when you are born from the above actually, there is openings of eyes and gradually, more and more we see the beauty of the King and the glory of His Kingdom, not just that we also see the ugliness of ourselves.

Pastor Vijay uses these three terms which Apostle Paul uses, "I am the least, worst, chief of sinners." What is that Paul saying, "Paul, are you growing in sin?" No, he is not. He is actually aware of death and depravity of man. You are aware of two things; one – you are aware of the enormous beauty of the King and glory of His Kingdom; you are also aware of the depravity of man (self) not about the other man, about yourself. That's why we say, "Put no confidence in flesh. Look at Me. Absolute." We are aware of two things – our spiritual eyes are opened to God's beauty and our own ugliness and the child of God is aware of this constant war. What we are called to go? After God. The call of God is "Come to Me. I will give you rest." And then, "Come after Me." But to go after Him, we need power of God. "*Seek ye first the Kingdom of God.*" You see, everybody seeks power. The spiritual man seeks the power of God (listen carefully) the spiritual man whose eyes have been open seeks the power of God to fulfil the will of God. The man of flesh seeks power. He is not very much bothered from where it comes, he seeks power to fulfil the self-will. The spiritual man seeks the power of God to fulfil the will of the God; the fleshly man. Sometimes, a fleshly Christian also seeks power to fulfil the self-will; both seek power; but from entirely different ends. One seeks the Glory of God, the other seeks the glory of self. we can look at it how we react, a lot of Christians give up in prayer. Why? Because they don't receive an answer or God doesn't answer them, they got offended and they walk away, because the entire purpose of prayer was to answer my will. Think 2000 years back, Apostle Paul prays, "There was his messenger from the devil sent to afflict me, buffet me in, three times I ask, three times God said, 'no'," okay, we all know that. Fast forward it 20 centuries, if it is today's man, it will be written, he stopped journeying, left; he decided to stick to one town; he decided he stop preaching; "I will attend one Church; I will also look for a secular job; then, he became very casual about Church attendance; slowly, he dropped out; and uses to sit at home and watch Christian channels; then, he slowly stopped watching most of those channels and started watching other channels; all because why? his prayer was not answered. That's how people react. How if Paul have reacted that way? Think how people react when God says 'no'. Christ will always point to this reality; always point this to reality – what am I seeking? Am I seeking the Spirit or am I seeking flesh? Am I spiritual first? Am I intellectual first? Am I carnal first?

Look at examples which Jesus gives so that we understand ourselves. Let's look at something we all know – Prayer, everyone prays except the atheist, atheist prays only at the end of his life. Okay, everybody else prays. So, prayer is a very common thing. Prayer can be an exercise of the flesh; it can be exercise of the intellect; but the minute become an exercise of the spirit, the flesh loses interest or the flesh fights at it. Okay, look what Jesus says, let's turn to *Matthew 6*.

Matthew 6:5-7

⁵ ***"And when you pray,*** (he said, "When you pray," not, "if you pray," He says everybody prays) ***you shall not be like the hypocrites*** (why? because they love to pray, love to pray, I hope Sundays, if you come and say, "Pastor, call me to pray," if you do desire that you love to pray, they love to pray) ***For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of...***

But, you see, when they pray, position is very important where they pray. They have to stand so that everybody see them prays, or in the corner of the streets, it's a Jewish culture all are believers; so, suddenly, you see them in corner and pray and everybody will say, "Oh, rabbi is praying. He is a praying man. Let's go quietly."

...the streets, that they may be seen by men (not heard by God, see the difference seen by man and 'not heard').
Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

Your prayer is answered! What is the answer to you? Why did you pray? Because you wanted to noticed by man; your prayer is answered. They all say you are a praying man. In today's term, we give them a tag. What do we attach? Prayer warrior! You got your tag, you got your prayer answered. This is what you prayed for, right? You have been noticed by men. We have noticed.

⁶ But you, when you pray (God is telling now to his disciples, you when you pray), **go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.**

Let me ask you this question: if your prayer life is secret and nobody see it, how does it profit your flesh? You know why people don't pray? it's got nothing to do with the answering of the prayers, it's got to do with it not profiting my flesh. Every genuine spiritual man and woman in the Bible history have a hidden prayer life, not known to man; known to God. We call this one and that one prayer warrior, the question is" how would you know? But that alone is not enough okay. You can have a secret prayer life and you still be carnal, so that alone is not enough, you have to go the next verse. Verse 7.

⁷ And when you pray...

First, God says, "Go into the secret place where nobody sees, go where nobody aware you are praying." That's the first step. Second step – that alone is not enough because lot of people in all religions also pray in secret. "That's not enough," He says. Second thing:), **do not use vain repetitions** (another translation uses 'don't babble') **as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.**

Therefore, do not be like them.

Second thing He says is that, I put it in normal simple language – don't think your God is an idiot, that He needs to understand what you are trying to say. So, you need so many words to explain your Father already knows what you need. Imagine my son comes to me and says, "Dad, you know what? Could you please explain *John Chapter 3*, which connected with *1 Peter* and also with *Isaiah*," I'll say, "Are you trying to teach me? Hang in there! Have you come to teach me or have we to come to learn?" We don't realise some of our prayers are often teaching God. He says, "Your Father already knows what you need." Now, understand this, God says, "When you actually go into your prayer closet and when you pray, prayer will involve a lot of listening than speaking," because you need to know what the Father knows what I need. Flesh has its desires. So, flesh will go and give its entire shopping list, "I want this. I believe in the Name of Jesus. I bind everything that is stopping. I release everything that is bringing it." Flesh will go on. Intellect also has its limits. How much can you understand? But when the spiritual comes, the Spirit comes.

Now, I'll show you what it means to seek His Kingdom and His righteousness and learning to grow in the Spirit. Let us look at Scripture through Scripture. *1 Corinthians 14*; Paul is talking about prayer; take prayer as an example. Once I pray in tongues, my Spirit prays; my understanding is unfruitful. So, when I pray in the Spirit, my flesh profits nothing; my understanding profits nothing. The question is: how long will you pray in the spirit when it profits nothing to your flesh and to your intellect? It's not whether you pray in the spirit. That's irrelevant. Most pray in the spirit. How long will you pray in the spirit when it doesn't profit your flesh or your intellect or anything? What is the conclusion then? Paul says, "I will pray with the spirit, I will also pray with understanding, I will sing with the spirit and also, sing with the understanding." He says, "Understanding, yes; but I will not stop there." You have to read it in context what he is actually saying so that we can connect it to what Jesus is saying. Let's look at *chapter 4*.

1 Corinthians 14:2

² For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.

He says, "It's a one-way communication." You speak and you don't understand what you are saying. Others don't understand what you were saying; only He understands. So, to pray in the spirit and to continually pray in the spirit, it will demand incredible surrender to the will of another.

Second thing –

1 Corinthians 14:3-

³ But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.

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Prophecy is like preaching. When I preach, you all understand, you are edified, you are exhorted, you are comforted. So, what is the Bible talking here about, let's look at verse 4,

⁴ He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.

Are you getting it? No, you didn't get it. God says, "In your secret closet, you should be praying in the spirit. When you come out, you should be speaking with understanding," unless verse 13,

1 Corinthians 14:13

¹³ Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.

He says, "You don't pray in tongues in public. You don't have to. You can do it in person but if you want to pray in this, ask God, 'Lord, I am speaking in a tongue. I don't understand it. There are people in here, they need to be edified, they need to be exhorted, they need to be comforted. Give me interpretation'." Are you getting what God is talking about? He says, "There is a secret place and there is a public place. The man who is in the secret place praying in the spirit and the spirit without understanding or anything is dying to the flesh, but if you are praying in the spirit, seeking God through the Word, when he comes out, he will be able to prophesy, exhort, comfort, edify. That life nobody sees and nobody should see. God says that we have two lives – one is hidden; one is visible. Visible should be a result of the hidden but in that hidden life, you have no profit for the soul, for the intellect and to have that hidden life, God says, "It's what the spiritual man understands,

Ephesians 6:18; he says in that spiritual war,

Ephesians 6:18

¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

And one of the reasons he says, "When you pray in the spirit, I don't give you understanding," is if you knew we wouldn't pray because most of the prayers are for others and it does not profit you. If you really had an eye opener to when you pray in spirit, suddenly, you realise, "My God, I prayed for one hour thirty minutes for my sins and thirty minutes for others." Understanding, our list is ready – five minutes, first one, second list. God says, "That's why I speak in mysteries." Mystery means it is hidden; it's not revealed.

Let's turn to *Romans 8*,

Romans 8:26-27

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

It says we actually don't know what we are saying; there is a limit to the flesh, there is a limit to the intellect. We actually do not know what to pray. God says, "First, go into the secret; second, stop babbling like the gentiles do. Anybody in religion." You ask an average Christian, "You pray?" "Yes." "Every day?" "Yes." "What do you pray?" "The Lord's prayer." "Do you understand it?" "I never thought about it." Most religious people don't understand what they are praying and God says, "Don't babble. Your Father already knows what you need."

...but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

How does the Spirit pray? He prays on His own? He says, "No," He prays through you and me. When we get into the prayer closet and we start praying in the spirit, slowly, as we move into the spirit, Scripture says, "The Spirit takes over and He starts praying through us with groanings that cannot be uttered."

²⁷ Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

When you pray in the spirit, what happens? God says. "Something I can do with you. I can take your hands off your prayer life. One part of your life is surrendered to the will of God because you have no control over it, your body doesn't know what is happening, your mind doesn't know what is happening, I am in control for once and starting to pray through you, for you according to My Father's will." Maybe that is one of the reasons people don't pray in the spirit too long. What is this? Will of God.

Hebrews 5:7, you will see the practical exposition of this.

Hebrews 5:7

⁷ who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear,

I believe Jesus prayed in tongues and He cried and was given over His body and mind with the Holy Spirit of God and the Spirit of God prayed through Him. Groans that couldn't be uttered and I believe He had a voice like Pastor Vijay; probably, more than that. So, He always had to wake up and go to a known place because it's the way He prayed. In His prayer life, He offered His body. He is a living sacrifice for the Holy Spirit to use as He saw fit. Now, let's get back to Jesus; back to what Jesus taught.

Matthew 6:8-10

⁸ "Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. ⁹ In this manner, therefore, pray...

Now, He is telling us when you pray with the understanding part; spiritual part, He takes care of; understanding part, He says, "This is the manner you should pray." What is it?

...Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. ¹⁰ Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

Your Father knows what you need. So, this is how you need to pray, 'Father, let Your Name be hallowed. May Your Kingdom come.' Everything is connected with one thing – 'Your will be done'. What did the Holy Spirit pray? According to the will of God; God says, "If I were to give you understanding, you would be so depressed in the flesh that you will stop praying in the Spirit also." *Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* Everything Jesus did was centered on this 'will of God'; that is our destiny. What is our destiny? We talk about destiny, year of destiny and all. What is our destiny? This is my destiny 'to fulfill the will of God for me' should be your destiny. Lord when it is time to go, either death or rapture, I should have fulfilled your will for me on earth. Remember His startling appearance in humanity, *Hebrews 10:5-7*,

Hebrews 10:5-7

⁵ Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. ⁶ In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. ⁷ Then I said, 'Behold, I have come— In the volume of the book it is written of Me— To do Your will, O God.'"

"That is why I came. Why did I come? It's to do Your will." What is my prayer every day? Thy will be done in my life. First, Thy will be done in this world. That is our prayer – Thy will be done. Then, we pray in the Spirit, God is turning that prayer into 'Thy will be done'. Supplication for all, 'Thy will be done for all your people'. God had a very detailed plan for His Son, *in the volume of the book, it is written of Me*. Very detailed plan for His Son. A plan that was absolutely consistent with God's character and His will for Him. God has an absolutely detailed plan for every one of you sitting here because all of us are in Christ; very detailed. Where do you find it? In the volume of the book, it is written about each one. In the volume of the book, you and I, when we search Holy Spirit, will lead us to the will of God. God never intended us to make our own plans and then, ask Him to bless them. That is a real insult to the one who created us and redeemed us. We don't even see it that way. Imagine, we don't see our prayers are sometimes what? An insult to God! A God, all knowing powerful, holy, mighty God and we write this prayer request and say to God, "Lord, in Jesus' name, Amen." He says, "You know, your prayer is an

insult. I have a plan for you. You have a plan for yourself and every time you come to me you are telling me to release My power for your plan.”

Jeremiah 10:23

²³ I know, O LORD, that the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps.

So, imagine the audacity of man, one who does not pray, he says, “I am my own man and I will direct my own steps.” Two- the fellow who prays and goes and tells, “I know You own me but I know better than You. So, I will say what You need to do with me.” We know that better as parents, right? When we have teenage children, the son or the daughter comes and says, “Dad, I need 500 rupees,” the first question we ask is, “For what?” We don’t say, “Take it. Do whatever you want.” We don’t say that but we think God is a fool. “I want this, I want this...I am invoking Your Name. Just give it. I know better.” God says, “No, a man’s life is not his own. It is not for man to direct his steps. It’s not!”

Proverbs 20:24

²⁴ A man’s steps are directed by the LORD. How then can anyone understand their own way?

It’s a theoretical question. In the morning, Pastor Vijay and I, before praying, were discussing and we get spiritual depression at times. The more you know the Word of God, we realize, most Christians will not fulfill God’s purpose in their life. That is the truth. They will not. It’s not that they will not go to heaven. No, everybody is a child. All who are born again is a child and God loves all children but they will not fulfill their destiny and therefore, they will miss their crowns all of their eternity. That is a truth. So, we always ask this rhetorical question, “Where are we? Have we lost it already?” Sometimes, we worry. Today morning, we were discussing about that one hundred and forty-four thousand – is it a numerical number or a hypothetical number? If it is a numerical number, we have to think. We put a hypothetical case like this – Jesus died in 33 AD, He comes back in 2033 AD, 2000 years, 144 thousand, 144 thousand divided by 2000, that gets you how many people? 2. Everyone who died in 2017, hypothetically speaking, mathematical statistics only two were overcomers and next problem; it’s a mathematical statistic. That is why it is a problem. If you look in the *Book of Acts* and you see the saints of the *Book of Acts*. So, in the first century, it was not two per year, may be 200 or 2000 per year. So, when you come down some years there are no overcomers at all. So, we pray Lord, it’s a hypothetical number. It’s not a real number because we are not talking about coming to You anymore; we are worrying about coming after You. That is what Paul says, “Forgetting everything, I am pressing on.” So, saints who come on Wednesdays, you shouldn’t be worrying about am I saved. No! That is not the question. So, the truth is – will we live out our destiny, God’s destiny? Our destiny is the will of God for each one of us. In *Romans 12:1 and 2*,

Romans 12:1-2

¹ I beseech you (Paul says “begging you” to saved people) ***therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.***

First, that flesh who doesn’t like anything spiritual please offer your body daily as living sacrifice. Don’t allow him to rule. Your power or victory over flesh be more and more each passing day because then you know at least you are on the road. Second...

² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...

Your understanding of the Kingdom of principles matters, spiritual understanding should be increasing with each passing day because you are no longer looking at the way world looks at things. Your perspective has changed because you are seeing it now the way God looks at things. What happens?

...that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

So, the perfect will of God is there. And He says, “Don’t miss it.” There’s a perfect will of God. Good, pleasing and all, leave it. It’s more than that. There is a perfect will of God which only the Spirit will be able to see. If you see a message, the flesh will say, “Good.” And immediately, what will he do? He will put on your WhatsApp, after listening to the message an icon of two hands clapping. Why? Because the flesh said that it was fantastic. He was so happy. Another one which stimulates your

mind, you will put the other online. But the one that touches your spirit, usually, you have no reaction. Why do you have no reaction? Because you are on your knees before God. No reaction because you know this is true. When you look at that and when you look at yourself in the mirror, you realize – you know what? I’m not prepared for this; yet, I know this could be the perfect will of God for me and I’m not prepared for this. Why will, hypothetically speaking, most people miss their God-given destiny? Because we haven’t learnt and are not learning in an increasing manner the discipline of obedience. That’s what Jesus is trying to get into of how the Kingdom of God works. I can never fulfill the will of God unless I’m first obedient. God is not first revealing to anybody the revealed will of God. He’s first teaching us obedience.

Hebrews 5:8

⁸ though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

Like I said, if you join the army, they are not going to teach you to shoot. That is later. What will they teach? They will teach you to obey. So, one day, when they tell you to shoot, you will shoot without blinking or asking questions. They don’t teach you all these things. The first thing in the army which they teach you is to obey. That’s why even if an officer brings victory by disobeying higher orders, he is still court-martialed. The victory is irrelevant. The victory is good. They say, “Fine. But you go to jail because you’ve disobeyed orders. You were taught first to obey. Victory was not the thing. You are first taught to obey.” Thirty years of His life, what the Father taught His Son, who came in the flesh, was – learn to obey. “When is My ministry, Dad?” “I will tell you. Learn to obey.” “Am I ready?” “Obey.” Thirty years. No ministry. “Learn to obey.” What is the will of God for you and me first? First, learn to obey. At the age of thirty, God said, “Rise.” Thirty years of incredible effective ministry in the eyes of the Father; not anybody else. Brothers had an opinion, “If You really want to be a well-known preacher, then You should be putting out posters pointing like this,” like how Pastor Vijay shows it. Jesus said, “Your time is always. I will go to the wilderness. Thank you.” Father has an idea of ministry; brothers have an idea of ministry, about ministry. He said, “I will stick to My Father because I’ve been taught to obey My Father.” Our problem is – when we are pulled by so many things, we are not able to go in that place where the Spirit is telling us to go because we were never taught to obey first. It’s not what we don’t know. We know, deep inside, the Spirit is telling, “There is some problem with all these things. This is the way.” But when you look at that way, you say, “Everybody is going that way. I’m the only one this way. I will go that way.” Because we have never learnt to obey. Because when we learn to obey, we have an incredibly effective ministry in the eyes of the Father; not in the eyes of the world. Till today, the world says, “He was a failure. A loving and a kind Teacher but a failure.” But the Father says, “Absolutely effective Servant.” And in His closing statement of His ministry of His work from the Cross, “It is finished. I have done the perfect complete will of My Father. It is done.” God can speak and lead in so many different ways but only a yielded soul can hear from Him. Are you getting it? “How are You leading?” He says, “If you read My Scripture, there are twenty-four different ways.” Somebody else will study and find that there are forty-eight different ways. Another one will come up and say, “Ninety-six different ways.” God can lead us in a multitude of ways but only a yielded soul will hear His leading; because we have to hear.

There was a time in Daniel’s life when he prayed. He didn’t get an answer but he prayed and he prayed; for how many days Twenty-one days. Then, the answer came. Same prayer. “I need an answer for this.” Twenty-one days. Isaac prayed for his wife to conceive for twenty years. In Jeremiah’s case,

Jeremiah 42:4

⁴ Then Jeremiah the prophet said to them, “I have heard. Indeed, I will pray to the Lord your God according to your words, and it shall be, that whatever the Lord answers you, I will declare it to you. I will keep nothing back from you.”

He says, “Okay. You want me to find out the will of God. I will go pray.” What does Scripture say?

Jeremiah 42:7

⁷ And it happened after ten days that the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah.

Will we wait? Will we yield in prayer? That’s the problem with Saul. “Time is up. God, time is up. I have to do something about this.” Whose plan was it? God says, “I don’t know why you are so tensed about this. Whose plan is this? Mine or yours. With My plan, I should be tense but why are you tense?” Man’s life is not his own. Whose life is it?

Exodus 24:16

¹⁶ Now the glory of the Lord rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

What did he do for six days? Nothing. He fasted and he waited. Six days – absolute silence. Nothing. He didn't say, "Lord, why are You not answering me? Why did You bring all the people here?" Nothing. The seventh day, God spoke to him. That's the question of what God is talking about. In the year of destiny for many, have we really changed from inside? Because God wants to bring everyone to higher level of yielding and obedience so that His will can come to pass in our lives. That's what God is looking for – "Who is there who is actually seeking My will?" It is one who realizes (not just says) that his or her life is not his or her own. That's why I told many teenagers – you will really know if you are after God when you leave this place and you have the freedom and the autonomy to decide. God is always watching our obedience because it is to that that we are called.

1 Peter 1:2

² elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, (for what?) in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

What are we? Foreknowledge of God? For what? Obedience. We hear about sanctification, we talk about sanctification, we study all about sanctification; God says, "Okay, Pretty good. But where is your obedience?" Even as you are getting sanctified, God says, "Are we becoming more obedient?" Flesh hates this. What hates it? Flesh hates it. Spirit leads to more and more of this.

Pastor Vijay and I were discussing and we were talking about Jesus' Ministry – three and a half years. There are three parts of Jesus' Ministry. The most successful part we look in terms of ministry is when He died on the Cross. Because of that, we are all saved. So, that is the fulfilment of His ministry. Then, there are other two parts. One is His public ministry where He preached and healed and demonstration of God's Power; everything; then, there is this second part; the second part is that, in three and a half years, He got eleven disciples, okay? The first part is irrelevant; that is only for that generation – they ate, they drank, they died. The second part, where He raised eleven disciples brought the next generation in. That's what he and I were talking, that our success in ministry, "We are not called to die on the cross for salvation of others; no." We don't do that; it's only One. But our success in ministry will be always be counted by, not by the crowds, the ministration of His power; but how many disciples did we raise to reach the next generation? If we fail in that, our ministry is a failure.

Moses was not a failure. He raised to lead us a generation of disciples; Joshua was a failure. Joshua said, "As for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord." Do you know Joshua's son's name? Even his sons were not disciples; He raised up no generation of disciples to lead the third generation. So, they went away in their own ways. Understand what God demands from different people. We are very clear what God demands from us. God says is, "You bring disciples out." That is the Commission. Those disciples will generate another set of disciples. That is how the Gospel has reached from there till today, not because of the crowds; it's only because of the disciples. And discipleship is difficult. Because the core of becoming a disciple is the word called "discipline." And the core of discipline is obedience, and Jesus was the perfect Disciple of the Spirit of God, because He learned obedience by what He suffered. Understand? That's what happening with all of us. Are you obedient? Ask? Are you obedient? It's a simple question you once have to ask. That's the whole thing – are we obedient? That's the key. That's what God is looking for. That's the only thing God is looking for. Now, are you obedient? And it is those He can use. It's not that we will not fail and fall; God says, "That's okay," but when you fail and fall, because you were trained in obedience, you will come back to repentance; and to the sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ. Even repentance is an act of obedience. It's an act of obedience. It's the first act of obedience of salvation; "I heard the Word, realized this is what I am, this is what He is." See, you repent. What is that? Act of obedience. Understand? We are not talking about being perfect; we are talking about being blameless. The only way any one can become blameless in the sight of God is by sprinkling of the blood. Okay? But you grow in your obedience. So, keep this in mind; "Redeem the time; learn to obey." You should be obedient.

Now, all of you teenagers except Abigail and Emmy and other two little one, Joann and all; I am talking especially to the young ones; because you've got a brilliant start ahead because you are young; the older you get, the more indisciplined and disobedient you were, it becomes more difficult to get disciplined and obedient because that's the nature of flesh; the flesh has become more stronger and stronger and stronger. But when you are young, like a Joseph or a David or a Daniel; if you

Children Of Destiny!

have learnt the discipline of obeying; you will also, like Joseph, reign in the Kingdom, and like David – be picked up there and reign in the Kingdom, and like Daniel – stand before every King and give them the counsel of God; simply because if you look at the; what was that? These three were young, and they had learned the discipline of obedience. And all happens in the secret place; our obedience is not in public; our obedience with God in that secret place. That's the real obedience. It starts with prayer. All those who haven't been baptized in the Spirit, exercise that gift to the maximum. There's no profit for the flesh there. There's no profit for the intellect there. We don't understand unless He gives interpretation. I told you, in all my life, He's given me interpretation of my own tongues only once or twice. When I needed to hear, that's when He gave. Otherwise, somebody interpreted when I was praying; but other than that, most of the time there was no interpretation but you never cease, though it doesn't profit the flesh; it doesn't elevate the mind, you still realize, "A man is not His own." Not his own.

Sunday, God willing, if He tarries to come, we will look at the next thing about fasting, "When you fast"! If that's what He gives for Sunday. Let's pray.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we just come to You, we just thank You, we just Praise You. We just worship You, Lord. Thank You, Thank You, Thank You, Lord! Help us to first know and accept that we are not our own, and we cannot, therefore, order our steps! We are Yours! And You have to order our steps. But we also have the power to choose to go our way! So, I pray, this year will be yielded even more, O God, to Your will, to be disciples, because You can add everything else; You can give us power in an instant, You can give us knowledge and understanding, but You cannot give us the discipline of obedience in a day, it's a life. So, I pray, Father, that You continue to teach us and discipline us, until the obedience of Christ is found in us. I commit the Church here, especially the young ones, I pray. Lord, they will desire this because they will know their destiny, God given destiny, not only for this life but also for the life to come, is connected with this one thing, that they will be obedient children, and You will open their eyes, more and more, to the reality of Your Kingdom as each day passes by, Lord! Thank You, Father. Thank You, Lord! You brought us safely to Your House. Now, we believe and we pray, You will reach us also safely. Thank You. Thank You, Father! We commit all those who are not well in the Body of Christ, by faith, speak Your word of healing that Your Word will go forth and touch them and heal them and strengthen them, God! Thank You, Father. Thank You, Lord. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.