

Father, this morning, we just come to You, Lord. Your Word says, O Lord, that Your Word is light. And the entrance of your Word brings light. I pray, You'll allow Your Word to enter into our minds, into our thinking into our hearts. Your Word says that Your Word is like a hammer. And I pray, Father, You'll allow Your Word to work like a hammer and break down the hardest the oldest the strongest strongholds in our minds which oppose Christ which oppose the knowledge of God. I pray, Father, the light of Your Word bring clarity. Let every imagination be dispelled. Let every clarity of purpose, clarity in our walk, clarity in the work we do. Speak to us, Father. Speak to us that we might all fulfil the call and the purpose in our lives that, like Samuel, we'll not let Your Word fall to the ground. Speak to us, Father. For in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

This morning, actually, last night and this morning, I was a little confused because we were going in a particular way with the messages. And then, suddenly, I realized today was Father's Day. You know, I do not stick to these days. But like you know, I decided to stick to this day only because of who God is. Otherwise, I don't preach women's day or children's day messages, but Father's Day, how can I avoid? Because He is the Father. So, I was asking the Lord to reconcile it both. The journey we are taking and also that we glorify You as a Father. So, this morning, the text; I mean, it's a long passage. We're reading practically the whole of chapter 5 of *Book of Joshua* because it's connected with warfare with Joshua. We learn from the *Book of Joshua* how Joshua fought and possessed the land is how we fight in our minds and possess the promised life.

Joshua 5:1-12

¹ So, it was, when all the kings of the Amorites who were on the west side of the Jordan, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel until we had crossed over, that their heart melted; and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the children of Israel. (We had seen how they had crossed the river Jordan the last week.) ²At that time the Lord said to Joshua, "Make flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time." ³So Joshua made flint knives for himself and circumcised the sons of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. ⁴And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: All the people who came out of Egypt who were males, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way, after they had come out of Egypt. ⁵For all the people who came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness, on the way as they came out of Egypt, had not been circumcised. ⁶For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people who were men of war, who came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they did not obey the voice of the Lord—to whom the Lord swore that He would not show them the land which the Lord had sworn to their fathers that He would give us, "a land flowing with milk and honey." ⁷Then Joshua circumcised their sons whom He raised up in their place; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way. ⁸So it was, when they had finished circumcising all the people, that they stayed in their places in the camp till they were healed. ⁹Then the Lord said to Joshua, "This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." Therefore, the name of the place is called Gilgal to this day. ¹⁰Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho. ¹¹And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day. ¹²Then the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year.

Most of you weren't there. I think hardly anybody here even before Church began. GTC began earlier Church where I used to minister as a Pastor. We had done a series on the *Book of Joshua*. And I think, I don't have copies of it; I think somebody has. So, God was telling me come back to *Joshua* and keep coming back so that we learn how to fight this battle. Remember, the last few weeks we have been looking at the head; we've been looking at the mind. First thing to go is the head. The body follows where the head or the mind goes. Or he who has the head has the body. Do I have your head today? Every one of you?

1 Corinthians 11:3

³ I want you to know is that head of every man is Christ, the head of every woman is man...

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On earth, God designated that man is the head; therefore, the enemy goes after the head. Because he knows if the head fails, almost always, the rest fails. That's how God designed how each unit should work. In every unit, the family would have a head, which is the father. And all that we are seeing around the world is because the head got messed up. The head got messed up. Like I said, a couple of weeks back, in one country alone, there are alone 70 million headless homes. So, you can see, when you have headless homes or heads that refuse the God-given responsibility, the effect is seen on the street and in the schools, and in the colleges. You'll see that happening. The rebellion we see on the street is just a reflection of home. So, remember why God assigned homes that way. The portion we are looking at today is where all the heads had failed, all the heads of the homes had failed. Yet, the children survived because their spiritual head, that is Moses and Joshua, did not fail. All their heads physical heads, their fathers had failed but their spiritual heads did not fail. Therefore, the entire generation of children grow up in the desert and be successful and possess the Promised Land. So, the title of today's message is 'Desert Babies'. I read a famous novel. I think it is Willkie Collins; I can't remember in the back of my head. I read I read it in the 5th class, 3-4, called "water babies". Today's title is desert babies. When God spoke to these children, they are men now, desert babies have come out, entered into the Promised Land. They have crossed river Jordan, and God spoke to Joshua. And Joshua spoke to them this second generation the only thing they demanded was this. In *Joshua 1*, this is what they tell Joshua.

Joshua 1:16

¹⁶ Then they answered Joshua saying, "all that you command us we'll do. Wherever you send us we will go..."

This is before a single battle. God had succeeded in making a generation whose fathers failed into a cohesive military unit. This is what the soldiers say, "Whatever you say, we'll do, wherever you send, we'll go. The key is here – just as we heeded Moses in all things, so, we'll heed you." If I were to ask honestly to ask, people here, "Who do not have in your own homes in your own lives personal lives a spiritual head as a man as a father?" I believe more than half the Church will stand up. It doesn't matter. All the spiritual heads had failed but they kept their eyes on Moses which their fathers refused to do. Do you know what it means? Means you could be here as a family and the father may not listen to the Pastor at all, what he is preaching or what he is teaching but your child could be listening with both the ears and obeying it. Since God is saying here, even if your physical head fails, your spiritual head can still lead you across. They chose to keep their eyes on their spiritual fathers, one was Moses and the other was Joshua. Because this is the age God will raise spiritual fathers. Because in the world, the devil threw the system, the government have entered in homes. And have increasingly taken over the homes. And God counters strategy is always through His body, His Church. For everything the world does through the enemy does through the world God counters it through the Church. He doesn't counter it through the world; He counters it through the Church. In the world, you'll see that they're hardly any fathers. They have left their headship because the pressure is too much to bear because of the movement that is taking place. So, the Churches are full of headless children and God's answer to that is that I'll raise fathers in the Church. In *1 John* chapter 2, this is what He actually says,

1 John 2:12-13

¹² I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. ¹³ I write to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one.

Between the children and the young men, there is a father. It is the father who turns his children to young men who will overcome. And God says, "My counter strategy is to raise a spiritual father; fathers who know the heart of God from the beginning and leave a generation of children to become young men who will overcome the evil one."

Apostle Paul was one such father. Though he was never married, he never had children of his own but he was a true spiritual father. He was not just their teacher; he was a spiritual father.

1 Corinthians 4:15

¹⁵ For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

He says, "Not only did I beget you through the Gospel, I carry the burden of you as a father, I don't look at you as a teacher." The teacher in a classroom who teaches and the father who tries instructing you at home is different. The teacher

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is only interested in your success because it looks good on his resume. But after he finish class 10, he is not bothered. And even if you don't do well, he still gets his salary. The teacher is also an instructor; the father also is an instructor, but the father's life is tied up with the child of the children. And Paul says, "I am the father; I am not just an instructor." So, if you look at the first three generations of Israel – the first generation came out of Egypt; the second generation came out of the wilderness and possessed the Promised Land; and the third generation started losing the Promised Land. So, if you look at these three generations, only one generation kept the Promised Land, it was the generation that came out of the wilderness. Not the one which came out of Egypt or the ones who lived in peace and lost. One of the primary instructions given to fathers is this,

Deuteronomy 11:18-21

¹⁸ "Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ¹⁹ You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ²⁰ And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, ²¹ that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers to give them, like the days of the heavens above the earth.

You see God gave one instruction to the fathers of Israel and it is repeated in the New Covenant in *Ephesians 6:4*, God says,

Ephesians 6:4

⁴ And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

This is not talking about education in schools; not talking about that. It's a different thing, thoroughly unconnected thing, God is telling in the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, "Fathers, instruct your children in the Lord, in the training and the admonition, the scolding, the correction in the Lord." It is given to the fathers to instruct the children so that if you go back to the previous verse in *Deuteronomy* the last verse, so that what God says, "You will live long, that your days and days of your children may be multiplied in the land." In that life, Christ wants to give you long life; not only that, "your days of heavens above the earth." You'll experience the power of the Kingdom of God in your lives. The key is He tells fathers, "Teach your children the Word." You'll see that where the first generation failed, the third generation failed, the second generation succeeded because they learnt from Moses and from Joshua. Subsequent generations also will fail. It is written like this in the *Book of Judges 2:10*,

Judges 2:10

¹⁰ When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, (which generation? Joshua's generation, the second) another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel.

You see a generation and that's what happened to the world. A generation have risen from Christian homes – skilled in the knowledge, education of the world, but they do not know their God, and they do not know what their God has done. Even in this land, we started schools everywhere in this country. From one end to the other, we started English medium, vernacular medium, school started by Christians. But in none of these schools, we actually told them about Christ and the history of Christianity in India. For your Telugu children sitting over here, who wrote your Telugu dictionary? Did a Telugu guy write the Telugu dictionary? No, it's a missionary who wrote. I, who am from Kerala, who wrote the Malayalam dictionary? A missionary from Germany, if I am right, came down, learnt the language and wrote the dictionary in my language. That is our heritage, that the very books which people of every religion, every language used in India, the legacy was left by the Church but is never part of our history; yet, that is the intrinsic part of our history, but it was never mentioned, never recognized. So, what happens? A set of children arise, who do not know the Lord, or the work He has done for Israel. We have brought out millions and millions of kids through Christian schools, they never know Christ, and never heard about Christ, and never taught about Christ. And that's what happens because we forgot spiritual instructions comes above education.

Let me tell you, in India, our idol is education; it's is not spiritual instruction. Education at the cost of spiritual instruction, we'll go to that level. And God says, "You'll raise up a set of children who'll not know God, and the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals." Why did this happen? Why do children do evil in the sight of the Lord whom

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they don't know? But the Lord knows. And they serve the gods of the flesh, of this world, it's because they were never instructed about God and the ways of God. And God says, "Be very careful, be very careful as fathers."

Yet, there was a generation that came out of the desert. So, one of the first instruction to fathers, in the Church, to father is, "Teach your children the ways of God and discipline them according to the ways of God." And that's where Hannah so successful in the Bible is because I'll tell you, there are so many couples with children, if you want, (because it's a different world we are living in) your children to be successful in the ways of God, the first thing as parents you need to have, have unity about the instruction you'll give your children. You need to have unity. If you have division in your house if the husband is flesh and the wife is spirit or the wife is flesh and the husband is spirit, the children automatically go in the ways of flesh because they are flesh; they are not saved. I still remember in my Bible; I still have it; which year, I don't know. It's 26-4-1998. How many years ago? Twenty years ago, Ron sellers –Assemblies of God. I still remember the message written here about how to raise children and the first thing is consistency, agree and be consistent. Parents need to agree on this – it's not your way or my way; it is His way. It is not your way or my way; it is Yahweh. Please remember; otherwise, your children will fall apart.

One of the primary reasons why God says, "Do not be unequally yoked to an unbeliever," and one of the primary purpose of marriage is and what God says is, "I will have godly offspring." How can you have a godly offspring when you have light and darkness together? It's going to be a real struggle. It will be a battle when it should be a wonderful journey of a believing mother and father bringing up a child; it becomes a battle every day of your life. One parent pulling the child this way and the other parent pulling the child other way and like Solomon, all you can do is takes a sword and divide them. Don't do that. It was just his wisdom. So, the thing is the instruction from the Heavenly Father instruct your children in the ways of God and always be wise. That's what Hannah did. Hannah kept Samuel with her because children always watch and imitate. Little children always watch and imitate. They are listening with their eyes more than they are listening with their ears and they watch. That's why they will follow their parents; they will follow their mothers, especially in the beginning, they really will follow their mothers. When they see a praying mother, it will always sink into their mind that, "My mother is a praying woman." If they see their father is a man who sits and studies his Word, it will always imprint in their minds that and then, later, they will know what is the book that he reads. They carry these images with them and images can be very powerful because children carry their first images with them. On the other hand, if it is conflict they see and disregard for the things of God they see, they carry that also with them. So, the first instructions to the fathers, God says is that, "Watch out and teach." If you are a single parent man or woman, I'm telling you the commandments still stand. The children are a heritage they are from Him, they belong to Him and they have go back to Him. During the few years in the beginning, we have them – the first five, six years, He says, "Teach them." After five years, it is very difficult. The first five years will actually frame a child's mind. This is the first instruction. In the second instruction, God gives the father is in *1 Timothy*,

1 Timothy 5:8

⁸But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

He demands that the fathers provide for the children. Okay, now let me be very clear about it. *1 Timothy 6:8*, He also defines what provision is.

1 Timothy 6:8

⁸And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

Don't put all your wants including all these gadgets as part of the father's provision. No, it is not; not even your desire for higher education; even that is not your father's provision. Father is primarily asked to see that the child is safe, the child has got food, his clothing on his back and this education system and all came later. In the beginning, children were only educated of the Scripture. God is very clear about it. We need to learn skills for it. Father teaches the child skills and sends them to school but that should not make you. I will tell you, when I did my undergraduation and PG, my college fees was twenty rupees and I studied in the best college in the city. When I came to EFLU, I did not pay a pie. It was not a burden for my father. Today, to send a child to LKG is a burden. First, the fees and that's the first thing my father told me. My father told all of us the same thing, he said "I will invest whatever I have in your education but I promise you one thing – I will never come for your admission. I will never come and bend my head before the principal and say, 'Sir, have mercy and put

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my child into the school'. I will never do that. You get your admission, I will pay for it." And you know what? My father did not have to bend his head before anybody. He provided for us, he gave us this. Because this is Father's Day and I can still remember what my parents went through and put us through but we did not become a burden on them with our demands. So, sometimes, we confuse our wants with our needs and we think, "My father, my mother is not a good mother because I did not get all these things." God says, "Who told you that you need to get all these things?" Most of my friends, when I went to class eleven and twelve, were from government schools; not even from a private school where I came in from. So, they were weak in English. That's the only thing that they were weak but they were fantastic in other subjects. Actually, some of them scored much higher than me. Government schools are free. For children who says, "My father doesn't provide," no, your father had to send you to government school. God did not say in the Bible you should be sent to boarding school. No! Everywhere I have gone, even to Jamshedpur, old friends who are all engineers, senior officers in Tata steel plant and all and they all studied in government schools. If you want to study, you will study in any school. If you don't want to study, they can send you and pay through their nose and send you to the best school, still, you will not study. So, please, when you judge your parents, for children who have the habit of judging your parents, the most failures were the first set of parents who came out of Egypt – they grumbled, murmured. Even God was mad at them and said, "None of you will enter the Promised Land." Yet, He told the next generation, "Even if you think or utter one thing against your parents, I will curse you." It's interesting what God said. Be very careful. He told the next generation. Because your prosperity is not in their hands; it is in God the Father's hand. "If you have listened that instruction and followed the instructions," God says, "you can still come through."

So, the second thing that God demands from the fathers is to see that the children have provision in their lives. Spiritual instruction and provision, food, clothing, shelter. Not what kind of food, not what kind of clothing and protection. God says in *Deuteronomy 8:4*,

Deuteronomy 8:4

⁴Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.

Deuteronomy 29:5-6

⁵And I have led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn out on your feet. ⁶You have not eaten bread, nor have you drunk wine or similar drink, that you may know that I am the LORD your God.

What is He saying? He is saying, "You experienced My provision and My discipline through the hands of your spiritual father, Moses." They didn't have many sets of clothing. Did you see what He did? Even when one generation was perishing in the desert, God was framing another generation in the same desert through discipline. One generation arose even though their fathers failed to understand the heart of God. They kept their eyes on Moses and they followed the lead of Moses. God led a generation into the wilderness; He met their need but He refused to meet the needs of their flesh. And the fathers who came out of Egypt rebelled against it, but the children learned from it. That's what he is saying, "You didn't eat the food of Egypt, you didn't drink wine. The only thing you ate was Manna and drank water. Because they had tasted other things, they were always craving for those things. But because I disciplined you with these things, you learned." Two generations in the desert, their genetics are the same. But their reference points are not. So, one generation, whenever they are thinking about food or any thing, "This was the way like it was in the world." Another generation, when they were thinking, "This was the way in the desert." They don't think about Egypt at all. Reference point is different. So, in your mind, what is your reference point?

The second group are survivors. They have survived the failures of their fathers and they have survived the tests of the desert. And now, they are in the Promised Land, and the whole land lies before them. We saw last Sunday and Wednesday, they sanctified themselves, their eyes are on the ark of the Covenant. They have crossed river Jordan, and while they are waiting, Joshua receives next set of instructions from God. This generation has been blessed with food, clothing and protection by God. Is there anybody here, who has not been blessed with food and protection? No, everybody. They have been blessed with food, and clothing and protection, without being circumcised. But God says, "Without being circumcised, I can only bring you thus far. You still haven't possessed one inch of the Promised Land. The way forward is blocked. You are in transition. If you want to go forward, there is only way you can go forward; you need to be circumcised. *Joshua 5:7*, Scripture says,

Joshua 5:7

⁷Then Joshua circumcised their sons whom He raised up in their place; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way.

He tells them, "Circumcise them here." Now, you need to understand; we know what circumcision is. But, we, sometimes, confuse what circumcision is. In *Genesis 17*, when circumcision is instituted, first time. God says,

Genesis 17:10-11

¹⁰This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; ¹¹and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be (what?) a sign (say sign) of the covenant between Me and you.

Circumcision is only a sign. Circumcision is not the covenant. Circumcision is the sign of the covenant. If you look at our God, our God is a covenant-keeping God. A covenant is like a hard, contract. In modern terms, we call it 'contract.' Circumcision is stronger than a contract but every covenant has a sign. It is the sign that declares that you are part of the covenant. So, when God made a covenant with Noah, He gave rainbow as a sign. Rainbow is not the covenant; the rainbow is the sign of the covenant. So, when you look at the sign, you realize, "I have a covenant inside." So, God has given a covenant and the sign of the covenant was circumcision. The cutting away is not the covenant but it is the sign of the covenant. You know what it means? Sign shows you are part of the covenant.

Like you know in the West Europe, a set of countries which is called the "Nato." Not that treaty organization, most of the European Nations and America is part of Nato. The Nato is bound by a contract. The contract is – even if a small nation in Nato, tiny little nation called Macedonia; let's say Macedonia. Let's say Macedonia, is attacked by an enemy, all Nato members are supposed to fight together. It's the contract. That's why nobody attacks Europe, because the Nato alliance is there. Anybody attacks, any member of Nato, all of Nato comes together and fights as one unit. Are you getting the picture? So, circumcision was the sign you belong to God. And uncircumcision was the sign, you didn't belong to God. You have covenant, you have a sign of the covenant.

So, remember, last week, when the Israelites were hemmed in by the Philistines and one Jonathan arises, willing to fight, what does it say?

1 Samuel 14:6

⁶Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will work for us. For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few."

We are covenant people; we are bound by contract. If anybody fights us, God fights for us. We cannot lose. If God is for us, who can be against us? How do you know, Israel, God is for you? He says, "I got a sign of the covenant. And they have no sign. Therefore, if they fight us, God fights for us." That's what began. That comes from faith. When David goes with bread, to his brethren,

1 Samuel 17:26

²⁶Then David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, "What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

He says, "The Israelites army, the heavenly army, we are all bound by contract. Why? Because, we have a sign." God is telling this young generation, you are going to fight. God has contracted with you, to fight for you, to give you victory but you need a sign. Now, the sign is outward. The covenant is inward. This sign is outward, covenant is inward. Like we say, everybody prepares for the wedding day, especially the girls. Another wedding coming in three weeks' time. Everybody prepares, the time spent in choosing the suit, the bridal dress and the make-up and how many visits to the beauty parlour and to all. How much we prepare for the wedding, how less we prepare for the marriage? Wedding is for a day, marriage is for a lifetime. We prepare for a day, without preparing for a life-time. The covenant is a sign outward, but the reality is

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inside. If the reality inside is missing, then the covenant outside sign makes no difference. So, you have hundreds and hundreds of Israelites standing outside with the soldiers with the same sign but no reality inside. So, they are all trembling before that one man, who has no sign. Yet, one fellow comes with the sign, and the reality inside. And he says, "I am contracted, this guy can't defeat us." You see the difference, in *Deuteronomy 30:6*,

Deuteronomy 30:6

⁶And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

There is a sign outside; there is a reality inside. The first generation came out of the desert. They had a sign outside; they had no reality inside. A second generation came out of the desert – they have no sign outside; they had the reality inside. They love their Lord with all of their heart, with all their mind, soul, God says, "That's fine. Just have a sign outside." Let me tell you – a lot of people say, "But God knows I love Him." But that's not enough; you need to have a sign of the covenant outside too. If you are believer in the heart, look like a believer outside. With lot of stuff happening in the world and the Church has lost its power because people only have no sign outside. They will say, "God knows my heart." God says, "I know your heart," But that's not enough. The children of Israel, who came out of desert, God knew their heart and they were one unit, ready to fight, they just told Joshua, "One thing, all, let God be with you. Anything you say, we will obey." God said, "It is still not enough." You need to have a sign outside. Why? Because our affections are always decided by our thinking. God says, "Love God with all your heart, all your mind." Don't think in the ways of the world. Your heart and your outside should match. You are a covenant people. The reason the first generation was rejected was the hearts were never circumcised. Because their minds, their thinking could never be changed.

Deuteronomy 29:3-4

³With your own eyes you saw those great trials, those signs and great wonders. ⁴But to this day the LORD has not given you a mind that understands or eyes that see or ears that hear.

You saw all these miracles, all these signs of God; yet, in your mind, you could never understand the ways of God. The sign remained a sign. They never understood it. Why? In your mind, you would never change your thinking. You thought like the world. Something that was unbelievably spiritual, you could give it to them, they will take it and turn it into something carnal. I hear Pastors, unbelievably powerful Pastors, a piece of revelation they get, they take that unbelievable revelation from God, by the time they pass it on to their congregation, it has turned into absolutely carnal. And the problem is – the congregation continues with their hearts, never being circumcised because the hearts are always yoked to the world. All these years, they had wandered in the desert. And God never spoke. Now, they are very close to inheriting the promises of God but they cannot inherit unless they are separated from what held their fathers back.

You cannot fight this battle unless you are free inside from the affections of this world. Remember, in the first generation, only two made it. That is the history of the Church in every generation, only a few will go on into the next level. Why? Because this world will trap them.

How do you know that you are very close to that promised life of Christ? How did the second generation of Israel know that they were so close to start possessing (they had to fight to possess) the Promised Land? When the cutting started. Is God cutting something away from your life? Are you allowing Him to cut certain things away from your life? If so, you are getting close to your Promised Land. It can be anything. It can be people, it can be job, it can be things, it can be career, it can be relationship, it can be anything. But God will cut away flesh in my life, in your life and if it doesn't, I cannot cross over. He says, "Fine, you can sit here on this side." You will not win a single victory, because people who walk without that sign, in the flesh cannot overcome this battle. It is painful.

Joshua 5:8

⁸And after the whole nation had been circumcised, they remained where they were in camp until they were healed.

It is very painful. God says, "That circumcision is very painful." For them, it is physically and for us, emotionally and physically and spiritually. It is a very painful act. Because what God is cutting away from our lives is where things and people who were so close to us almost a part of us. But God says, "Those same things which you held on to are the very things

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which will hold you back from possessing.” Because God is more interested in my correction than my comfort. If He cuts me, He will heal me and all the strongholds will come and He gives you time, He says, “Stay. I am not rushing you.” He gives you time to heal. Paul will say this in,

Romans 2:28-29

²⁸A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. ²⁹No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person’s praise is not from other people, but from God.

All our affections are in our heart. The circumcision actually begins in the heart. The problem in Israel’s first generation was not that they were not circumcised in the flesh; they were not circumcised in the heart. When God tried to take them to the wilderness, He started feeding them something that they were not used to. They fought against it. They really getting mad because they wanted the same food they had it in Egypt and they fought against it. They didn’t like the manna, they wanted meat, they wanted fish, they kept on grumbling and they wanted to be led in the ways of Egypt and God refused. Their hearts wouldn’t be circumcised. But the children who were born to them in the desert because they never knew Egypt, they were not bothered. And I always tell Vijay, if Lord tarries to come and if our homes are right, one of the greatest set of victors will come out of GTLC. You know why? Because they don’t have world in their homes, they have no world in their schools and they have no world in their Church. They are desert babies but as I said – Church, if they belong her, we will take care; home, you take care; and school, Jacinth will take care. The problem is your home. Watch out your home. If one place is unsafe, your entire structure will collapse. There are three places where your child goes – home, school, Church and if these three places stand in alignment in one line, you will have overcomers coming out of like this. Unbelievable overcomers coming out of you because they are desert babies. He will cut you but heal you but He says, “The real circumcision is the circumcision of the heart.” He cut Israel, sometimes you see a cut is voluntary but sometime when you are stubborn God will cut.

In *Genesis 11:32*, the first man,

Genesis 11:32

³²Terah lived 205 years, and he died in Harran.

The first cut in Abraham’s life. He cut his father out then told him, “Move.” Then, Scripture says, trouble has risen,

Genesis 13:7

⁷And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram’s livestock and the herdsmen of Lot’s livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land.

There was strife between Abraham and lot. Let’s say, Hebshibah goes to study in Gujarat. She doesn’t speak one word of Hindi or Gujarati. She goes there, she is in a University of 3000 students. Finally, she finds one Telugu girl and after a little while, she and the Telugu girl starts fighting. This whole land, he has only one flesh and blood and God allows strife to come because he needs Lot out. “He is not the part of the call not the part of your plan and he is not the part of your promise. If you don’t let him go, then I will make situations so bad that you will tell him to go.” Circumcision has begun. Lot has to go. First, children get detached with fathers as they grow older as they start with their life; then, this nephew, you have no son; so, this nephew and then, you have a son.

Genesis 21:9

⁹And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing.

What does Lord say? “Let the scoffer go. There is no room in My Kingdom for the scoffers.” It is very painful for Abraham as he is his son. But God says, “You want to leave your descendants inherit, let the scoffers go.” “Lord, he is my son.” God says, “I know that but he is not the part of the plan. Let him go.” Circumcision is taking place. It is the circumcision of the heart. The other one is very easy in two days you can get healed but this doesn’t get healed easily. Then, in,

Genesis 22:9

⁹ Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood.

Now, all the good in his life also is surrendered and his circumcision is complete. You know what God says immediately? In,

Genesis 22:15-18

¹⁵ Then the Angel of the LORD that is Jesus Christ called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, first time He said, “stay your hand.” ¹⁶ and said: “By Myself Jesus is saying in His own name I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son— ¹⁷ blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. ¹⁸ In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

That’s the greatest blessings he gets. You know why? Because he allowed God’s process of circumcising of his heart is complete. God says, “At this point, I know, Abraham, you love Me with all your heart, all your soul, with all your strength. Why?” Because you walked away from your father, you walked away from your nephew, you walked away from your first son and now, you put your second, only son on the altar. I know you love Me with all your heart, with all your mind and with all your soul because when I look into your heart, it is circumcised. It has no affections more than for Me. It’s not that he loved his father, he loved Lot; it’s not that he did not love Ishmael, that he didn’t love Isaac. It is that he loved God more and God says, “Those are the ones who will start winning.” Our spiritual circumcision brings singleness of eye. You cannot walk two roads at the same time. Many people are trying to walk two roads. God says, “It is not possible.” So, Elijah asked this famous question on Mount Carmel in,

1 Kings 18:21

²¹ And Elijah came to all the people, and said, “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” But the people answered him not a word.

How long? You know why so many of you young people are miserable? You are miserable because deep inside, you know you are not struggling with sin, which is fine; you need to struggle with sin, fight with sin. You are not struggling with sin; you know that you are hypocrite. You know that you love the world and by force, you have to come to Church. Given an opportunity, you would prefer to be before the TV or in a movie theatre. But you know, that’s the struggle you are facing. You are not coming here because you long the Lord, either it has become the habit or the circumstances has compelled you and God says, “How long will you falter between two opinions?” Therefore, what happens between the people? It doesn’t matter if Jesus come and speaks, He still doesn’t settle because they are on two roads. They are fighting and not agreeing. The children of Israel the first generation is fighting every word of Moses. The second generation has no problem with any word of Moses. Yet the word is the same. There is no difference in what Moses speaks to the first generation and to the second generation. It is the same. But the reception is different because the first generation is always sitting between two opinions, “Why it should be that way?” “Why can’t be this way?” They are struggling.

...If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” But the people answered him not a word.

Circumcision is the sign that you are very close. The outward sign, it is the sign and God is saying, “Are you being cut?” Are you allowing Him to cut? Or you are holding on to your old ways? I am telling you to the young people, married people, to many homes, this message will be heard by thousands for the weeks. Many homes are conflict zones because of two opposing ideas. “So what if God had said that you are the head. It doesn’t matter.” “I am the head, listen to me.” But where is your head? What is in your head? Homes have become the conflict zones and the children go out to the world and the world has told them, even given them a number “If your father spans you, call us.” So, the child comes and says, “Who told you that you are the head? CPS is the head.” CPS is the Child Protection Services in the west. The children who go to the school all are given numbers that if your father or mother spans you call us, we will take you out of your home. So, who is the head? Absolute conflict zone. There is no head.

There is an inward and an outward. There is an individual circumcision and there is a corporate circumcision. The corporate was not outward. Something was happening even while God was separating a younger generation He was also corporately cutting away the older generation who was flesh. He was separating the flesh and the spirit. Everytime one man fell dead

Desert Babies!

in the desert, means it was flesh dying. One more...one more... they are all dying. One after another. God is saying, "You know what? Circumcision is happening in the camp." Every time one of the older generation dies, "I am taking them out." "Why?" "Because they will not possess. They will become the stumbling block." Finally, only one man is left. And that man had given in to his flesh once. God said, "Because you are the leader, gave into your flesh, you will be the last man to die." And he is going up the mountain, what a sight it must have been! All of the Israel is watching, they can see Moses going up the mountain. They cannot see God walking with him. But they know, once he goes up, he will not come down and once he goes up there and dies, they will be crossing over. The last of the old generation will be dead.

So, there is a mass circumcision going on over there. Because these are all opposing ideas. Jerusalem and Babylon cannot cohabit; the Kingdom of God and world cannot. God had said it very clearly, *"Friendship with the world is enmity with God."* So, if you look at life, you will see God is just feeding them, protecting them, giving them a roof over their head but they are not able to experience the spiritual victories in their life because God says, "I told you, you cannot halt between two opinions. You will not allow your hearts to be circumcised. Therefore, you will wander like them until you fall dead. But until you fall dead, I will take care of you. That is the part of My contract." But possessing the new land, He says, "Unless you allow your heart to be changed, it's not going to be possible." Why? Because that's the way the mind works. You can only be loyal to one person. You cannot be loyal to two people at the same time. Even Jesus Himself says in the last days to the Church; He says this, *"I know your works. You are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were cold or hot."* One – be cold and have a blast in the world or be on fire for God and turn your backs completely to the world. He says, "You are neither." And He says, "Because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold," He says, "I will puke you out." But now, a generation has risen, they have the reality in their hearts. All they required is the outward sign and yet, it is painful. Yet, God will heal you. But be very careful. See that you don't get circumcised for the wrong reasons. The purpose of circumcision is to enter into a covenant with God but when you are entering outwardly into a covenant with God, inwardly also, you have entered that is what the baptism in the New Covenant. We just don't go and get baptised. Baptism is an outward ceremony but you need to have the inward reality. If the inward reality is not there and you do the outward ceremony, what happens? You struggle like the older generation. Because you can get circumcised absolutely for the wrong reason and there are examples in the Bible

In *Genesis*, it says,

Genesis 34:20-25

²⁰ And Hamor and Shechem his son came to the gate of their city, and spoke with the men of their city, saying:

Who are these? Now, these are Canaanites. They had taken Jacob's daughter, Dinah. Hamor had taken. Now, the brothers and say, "No, we cannot let our sister marry you because you know, we are all circumcised. You are uncircumcised. So, if you all get circumcised, then we will allow our sister to marry you." So, they came and said,

²¹ "These men are at peace with us. Therefore let them dwell in the land and trade in it. For indeed the land is large enough for them. Let us take their daughters to us as wives, and let us give them our daughters. ²² Only on this condition will the men consent to dwell with us, to be one people: if every male among us is circumcised as they are circumcised. ²³ Will not their livestock, their property, and every animal of theirs be ours? Only let us consent to them, and they will dwell with us."

The Canaanites said, "Let's all get circumcised. Then, we will all live like one community. All we need is an outer sign, with no inward reality." A lot of people do the same – "Pastor, will you baptize me?" "Why?" "No, I want to marry this Christian girl." A lot of people who go to the Middle East, they convert. Why? Because if you become a Muslim, your job, career opportunities are big over there. A lot of Indians, when they go to the west – Canada, US and all, the name changes. Hari becomes Harry. You look at their names – all changed. God says, "There is no inward reality at all; absolutely no inward reality." And you know what happens in *verse 24-26*?

²⁴ And all who went out of the gate of his city heeded Hamor and Shechem his son; every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city. ²⁵ Now it came to pass on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and came boldly upon the city and killed all the males.

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They were in pain; they were circumcised; they were not healed. There is no God there to heal them. So, they had to wait for the natural process to heal them because God is not involved in this circumcision. God says, "I've got nothing to do with this circumcision. You can get circumcised. I am not part of this contract." And two of Jacob's sons come and kill everybody. Why? Because they got circumcised for the wrong reasons. A lot of people get baptized for the wrong reasons and because your baptism was not physical, the demonic realm saw it; he comes at you with all his strength and they realize, "What is happening to my life?" God said, "You put a marker on your head. Before that, nobody knew. You said 'I belong to Christ' when you did not belong to Christ and you were actually, in the spiritual, opening yourself as a target to the enemy." God says, "It's a battle. You entered into a contract without God entering into the contract with you." Circumcision is a sign. Be careful.

And the second thing he says in *Joshua 5:8*,

Joshua 5:8-9

⁸So it was, when they had finished circumcising all the people, that they stayed in their places in the camp till they were healed.

God gives us time for healing.

⁹Then the Lord said to Joshua, "This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." Therefore the name of the place is called Gilgal to this day.

He rolls away the reproach. Allow Him to roll away the reproach of Egypt. That is the reproach of this world. Let me talk to you straight from the heart – some of you are not married still only because you took His Name and stuck to the demands of marriage which He set. Some of you, your marriages have collapsed only because of Him. In the world, you are reproached. "Everybody's growing; your colleagues have got married; your younger ones; the youngest one has also got married; why are you not?" But that's your reproach. The reproach is because, in your heart, you decided to get circumcised and said, "No, I need to be equally matched, equally yoked with a believer and all the matches that are coming don't match with God's Word." Your heart got circumcised and you are bearing a reproach. Or some of you, after you got married, you got saved and you were on fire for God and your spouses left you or are missing in action – there but not there. God says, "You are bearing My reproach but I tell you – I will roll away your reproach. You don't have to carry it. Your reproach is rolled away because you have My Name on you now. You never have to be ashamed. You don't have to be ashamed. If it because of My Name's sake you went through this in your personal lives, why do you carry that reproach? And you carry it as a bag." "What is this?" "This is the reproach of Christ." We hang all these medals from the world. God says, "Carry it. All of Heaven will see that he is carrying it as a label – it is the reproach of Christ. It has been rolled away." When all the affections of the world is rolled away from our heart, the reproach of the world will also be of no effect on us. The reproach of the world has effect on us because the affections of the world are in our heart. It didn't matter to Paul at all. "I was the Hebrew of the Hebrew, from the tribe of Benjamin, Pharisee of Pharisees – all this, I was. Now, what I am – a nobody but I carry it as my badge. Why? Because I consider it as rubbish for knowing Christ Jesus." That is the spiritual experience at Gilgal. You don't sit there and think about the days of the world, "How great it was in those days when everybody loved me, everybody liked me, everybody commended me and then, I came to Christ and people started leaving. Daddy left; Bhaiya (big brother) left; Bhabhi (sister-in-law) left." That's what Abraham could also think, right? "Everybody left." But He says, "No." God says, "Abraham, you have been marked out. I see your heart. You love Me more than anybody else." So, allow Him to roll away the reproach. Don't hang on to it. Allow Him to. Because some of you children have lost your parents because of your faith and some parents have lost their children because of their faith. Abraham lost Ishmael because of Abraham's faith. Ishmael lost Abraham because of Abraham's faith. Moses lost his two sons because of his faith. Samuel lost his sons because of his faith. And we, willingly, carry that reproach. God says, "I will roll that reproach away." This is the reality of the life of a believer when he walks. He realizes – "This walk may cost me, not necessarily; but may cost me almost everybody in my life," and one man was there like that called Enoch. When he finally ended his walk, he was all alone. Allow Him to heal. Allow Him to roll away that reproach. "What will people say?" It doesn't matter. God is with me. God is for me. The reproach he carries till the end of his life and finally, at the end of his life, lying in a dirty dungeon. Nobody even thinks about him. One fellow, Onesiphorus, searches, finds him and he says, "Everybody has abandoned me but I don't hold it against them." "Why?" "Christ is with me." The reality is there.

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You are scarred in life but that is the sign you are very close to your promise. In *Galatians 6:17*, this is what Paul says,

Galatians 6:17

¹⁷ From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

He says, "Leave me alone. Don't trouble me. Don't question my credentials because, on my body, I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ," and God is asking us, "Do you bear My marks. I was the One who was circumcising. That was a physical sign then but now, I take this scalpel of My Word and through My Spirit, I start cutting away everything in your life that stands between you and Me and I will not stop it until I have you all to Myself. That's the reason I died and redeemed you." And He asks, "Do you bear My marks? I will heal you and I will also roll away the reproach of the world," because the world does not like people who are sold out for Christ. They hate them. They want compromisers who will compromise. As soon as Joseph refused to give in to Potiphar's wife's request to compromise, the next words were, "That Hebrew you brought to this house!" Suddenly, his identity comes out as a Hebrew. Till then, wasn't he a Hebrew? Yes, that never was an issue until he refused to compromise. Understand that. Circumcision is painful but it will heal you and it will also roll away that reproach.

Everything Paul faced, he faced for Christ but he chose Christ and his reward for Christ Himself. In *Philippians 3:8*, he will say,

Philippians 3:8

⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord,

Our issue is this, our honest issue with which people struggle is this – we have been taught about loss but we are not able to appropriate the excellence of Christ. So, we struggle. Some of us don't struggle because we know this and we love it. And we really consider the rest of the things as rubbish. Let it go. What does it matter? It's rubbish. We have to. It's not about cutting away; it is also receiving Christ. Otherwise, we will be miserable people. Everything that he faced was that.

In *Joshua 5:11-12*,

Joshua 5:11-12

¹¹ And they ate (what did they eat? They ate) of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day. ¹² Then the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year.

Something which their fathers never experienced, they experienced. In *Exodus 16*, it will tell you what manna is like.

Exodus 16:14

¹⁴ And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, as fine as frost on the ground.

It was like wafers. Now, let me tell you – babies and children will like wafers. If you try to feed me wafers for breakfast or lunch or dinner, I will be irritated. Do you want to live all your life on wafers? God says, "That's what will happen to you. You will eat the wafer of the Word of God because you never could be circumcised while there was the produce of the land of God waiting for you." But the day they were circumcised, their diet changed. Their food changed. Manna was only for the desert. It was never meant to be our food. In *Hebrews 5*, this is what the writer of Hebrews will say,

Hebrews 5:13-14

¹³ For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. ¹⁴ But solid food...

There is solid food in This (the Bible). It can really satisfy your soul but God says, "You have to graduate from milk." And to graduate from milk is our struggle. To graduate from baby to young men, there has to be a circumcision of the heart and you will see, it is our affections that are holding us back. Transition is taking place with one generation. *1 John 2:13*, that's what God is telling.

1 John 2:13

¹³I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one.

There is a transition taking place from child to young people because they are overcoming. This is a generation that is going to fight and possess their inheritance. Their older generation was not willing. Let me ask you this question – how many among us can sit with the Word and in prayer without break for a few days until we break through? And you will realize – we don't have the strength to fight. We still have to be fed; we still have to be given milk. Anything more than milk, we have indigestion. Do you see the results? And God says, "There is this Promised Land waiting for you. It's yours but you have to fight. You have to fight for it every day." Because a new generation has risen who has no taste for the fleshpots of Egypt. They have no memory, no liking. They have been, now, weaned off manna also, which is the milk. They have been weaned off manna. Remember even those who followed Jesus what happened in *John 6:60*?

John 6:60

⁶⁰Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?"

Last Sunday, we had an anniversary service. So, we had guests and a couple of the guests said, "Your Church is like Degree classes." What does that mean? Some of the people who have said this to me, I have heard them say the same thing ten years ago also. So, you are still content to be in primary school. When are you going to graduate and get into degree classes? My question to you is that. While in your professional career, you are acquiring skill after skill because you know you need it for the world, how come, in the Kingdom of God, you are content with primary class? That's exactly what the writer of Hebrews says, "Elementary teachings." Why? Because your heart is not set on the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and you are content with the world and God says, "I will take care of you; I will feed you; I will clothe you; in the night, I will be light for you; in the day, I will be a cloud for you; but I will promise you one thing – you will not eat the barley of the land because that's for a generation who are willing to cut their hearts off anything of the world," and they said, "Here we are, Your voice, Your Word, Your Command. We follow You." And they will succeed in the world too but they always will know to whom they belong and their affections belong to Him.

Let me tell you one thing as to why we are tough with the younger generation. Physically, medically, spiritually speaking, cutting and healing is easier when you are young. Cutting and healing is more difficult when you are older. Now, we are talking spiritual and physical truths. When a child has a cut, it heals in one day. When you're 60 or 70 years old, you have a cut, it takes a longer time to heal. If you are diabetic, it doesn't heal also. It's the same thing true about children. You train up the child in the ways of God, he will take all that discipline easily. You take a man or a woman who gets saved at 60 and you try cutting them, they will fight you all the way. It's very difficult because ideas have been set in their minds. Because the cutting is in the mind and in the heart and this is a live patient who has not been given anaesthesia, fighting the surgeon. Why do you think they give you anaesthesia before surgery? This is a living surgery. God doesn't give you anaesthesia. He says, "Feel the pain. Let Me cut you out." It's easier when you are young. The older it is, the more time it takes. Abraham was circumcised when he was 99 years old. A year later, he told Sarah, "Please tell you are my sister." He still denied his wife because he was circumcised too old for habits to change. Isaac was circumcised when he was young. So, he will allow his father to bind him to the wood without resistance because he was cut when he was young. Those of you who allow God to cut you when you are young, I promise you – you will run like a champion and you will finish like a champion. Don't fight His cutting when you are young. The older you are, the more difficult it becomes. It is true all through history and all through the Bible. Joseph, David, Jesus were all ready to reign at 30. Joseph was ready by 30 to take over Egypt; David was ready by 30 to take over Israel; Jesus was ready by 30 to preach the Kingdom and die. They were all cut early.

So, this Father's Day, God the Father is saying, "Will you receive My instruction? Are you ready to cut away all that I say that you should cut away? Do you see, even when you were disobedient, I still was good to you. The young people remembered all that." You see, spiritual leaders can fail. Moses failed. He took the rod and hit the rock because spiritually, the leader failed, that does not mean God did not quench the thirst of the people. He still gave them water. He says, "Do you see? Do you see My faithfulness?" He is asking a generation. "Do you see? Even when the leadership failed, I still took care of you.

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Are you ready for this fight? Are you ready for this battle?" But there is a battle ahead and God says very clearly that the flesh has to be cut away. Why? Because *1 Corinthians 15:50* says,

1 Corinthians 15:50

⁵⁰ ***Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God...***

It cannot inherit the Kingdom. We have to cut it away ourselves.

When the Ten Commandments were given, there was given this mountain, probably, of rock, gleaming with fire. Then, they had this Rock, that was Jesus Christ, following them which gave them water. Now, God says, "Make knives of little rocks. Make flint knives and cut yourselves." So, it was not God who was cutting them; they had to cut themselves. *2 Timothy 2:21*, Scripture says,

2 Timothy 2:21

²¹ ***Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.***

See, when we were children, we gave our children their baths. And one thing we knew – we knew they were clean. When they grew older, we said, "Go, take your own bath." Nobody is sure whether you are clean. I know how my mother used to tell because, to go to the bathroom, I had to go through the kitchen and it in the mountains and it is cold, absolutely cold. No hot water. So, what I would do was – wet my legs, wet my hair and face and rub it up and try to run. She would catch me on the way and pull me back because mothers know children very well. She would say, "Stand over there!" And I used to shout at her and say, "Amma! It's so cold. I'm not having!" She didn't say anything. She just mentioned one word which may not even have meaning for you. She just said, not in Hindi, but in my language, "Accha," which is how she called my father. I disappeared straight back into the bathroom and had my bath. That's all it took. That was how we respected our fathers. I was telling my nephew – I cannot remember one day in my life where I had talked back to my father. I wouldn't dare to. It's a no-no. It's an absolute no-no. You simply don't do those things. That's all it took – one word. But when you grow up, you have to cleanse yourself. When you are children, we will tell you, "Don't do this. Don't walk like this. Don't talk like this. Don't dress like this. Read your Bible. Pray. Do all these things." We will tell you but a day will come when you have to cleanse yourself. God says, "That is the place." In *Joshua 5:9*, it is called,

Joshua 5:9

⁹ ***Then the Lord said to Joshua, "This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you."...***

"When I look at you, there is nothing of Egypt in you. You are all Mine. I look, nothing of the world. I look on you, nothing of the world. I look into your heart, nothing of the world. I look into your mind, nothing of the world. You are Mine. The reproach of the world is rolled away from you."

...Therefore the name of the place is called Gilgal to this day.

Gilgal is the place of your consecration. Spiritual marker. It is the place of your consecration. Understand that. That's where the reproach, the world is cut away. In *Philippians 3:3*, Paul will say,

Philippians 3:3

³ ***For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,***

We are the circumcision because in the Spirit, there is no flesh at all, no world at all. Therefore, it doesn't matter; it may be one line from the Bible or a two-hour sermon, we still rejoice. It may be one song from WhatsApp. We still rejoice because it's all about Christ because there is nothing of the world over there. God is saying, "That is Gilgal."

You need to realize, as soon as flesh manifests, they lose. Israel will lose the battle against Ai because, in the camp, flesh manifested. They lost. And you know why they lost? I'll tell you why they lost.

Joshua 7:2

² Now Joshua sent men from (where?) Jericho...

That's why they lost. Do you know why we lose? Because we go out; tomorrow, Monday is going to be a new day. Tomorrow, Monday, I will go from my point from victory. God says, "You will lose. Every day, you have to go from your point of consecration; not from your point of victory. Go back to Gilgal. Start every day from the foot of the Cross. Not from your victory but from your consecration and they will lose." And if you study the *Book of Joshua*, you will see interesting things turning up over there. When was Joshua's greatest victory? When he defeated all those kings where even the sun stood still, right? You go and read *Joshua 10:6*,

Joshua 10:6

⁶ And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp at Gilgal...

Did you see? Gilgal is here; Jericho is here; the other cities are here; they started from here; Jericho fell after 7 days; he camped in Jericho, sent men to Ai and he lost. He got the lesson – "That's not where I should camp. I should camp at my point of consecration." He came back to Gilgal. Now, he is going to face the biggest battle of his life. All the kings of the Amorites but he is going from the point of consecration. And you know what Scripture says?

Joshua 10:14

¹⁴ And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the Lord heeded the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel. ¹⁵ Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

He came back. That was his greatest battle where God actually listened to a man's voice. What does it mean? Do you know what it means? It means God did not speak to Joshua; Joshua spoke to God. Usually, whenever the prophet spoke, they will stand there and say, "Thus says the LORD." But this is not what is happening. He is in the height of the battle. It's a massive battle; time is running out; he is not able to finish the battle. So, he spoke to God and said, "Stop the sun and the moon." And God said, "Time, stand still because My man over there, absolutely consecrated man is asking for time." And God is telling the same message to people. If you think you have lost time in life, if your consecration is perfect, He says, "I will make time work for you; not against you." And that's what Scripture says – never has it been a day before or after that God listened to a man and stopped time; because for all of us, the biggest thing we are chasing is time. And some people feel, "It's too late for me to change." God says, "No, it is not. Time can turn around for you." That's what his greatest victory.

So, you will see, God asking fathers certain things. First thing He tells fathers, "Instruct." Second thing He tells fathers, "Provide." Third thing He tells fathers, "Be an example." In *1 Corinthians 11:1*,

1 Corinthians 11:1

¹ Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

Now, be careful to what Paul is saying over there. Paul is not saying, "Do everything I do." He is not saying that. He is saying, "I have also made my mistakes but wherever you see in my life that I am imitating Christ, imitate that." Fathers set godly examples for their children though they may have failed in many areas and those things, we look at and we follow their examples. The next generation did not stand there and point out all the mistakes of Moses. They said, "No, we saw Moses following God and all we are asking Joshua is – you just follow God like Moses followed and we will follow you." There are many things our fathers which we don't want our children to copy but there are things which our fathers did which we want our children to copy. We leave behind a legacy. My father did know the Lord but he left two things for me; one thing he said is – "Time. Don't you dare waste time." Second thing, he said, "Read as much as you want. I will see to it that I will get you the books that you want to read." When the library was over, he called up the Principals from neighbouring schools and said, "When you come in the weekend, can you bring books for my son?" And they brought. When we reached the Indian border, the first thing we did was check into a hotel; he locks up and he takes me and says, "Come." He took me to the book store and said, "Pick the books you want." Two things he taught me; one – don't waste time; he used to tell me these things even before I knew how to read properly – "Time and tide waits for no one." "Man makes money; don't let money make you." He never scolded me for reading. There were certain laws which are manageable. We are hard and fast with those. My father was never like that. He told me, "Ten o' clock, lights off. Go to bed." Which I obeyed very nicely. I always put off

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the lights at 10 and took his torch. My father knew I would be reading with his torch and I used to fall asleep. He never scolded me. He would come quietly in the night and he would take the torch, put the book aside and walked away. He never scolded me for reading. Never. When I look at my father and look at what I'm doing today, I realize – I would have never survived if he hadn't taught me two things – save your time and read. It was a discipline. It was a very difficult discipline. Honestly, if you look in the Church, how many people can really read non-stop? You will see people struggle.

There are things which I would never wanted to do. My father drank; he smoked and he ate pan. I decided the first thing when I saw that, I decided I'm not going to imitate this. I first looked at a glass of beer and I tasted it and I thought, "How can anybody drink this?" It stayed in my mind always. I could never understand people who drink beer. Then, I was alcohol. I looked at it and I said, "Man, he is such a nice father. When this goes in, what does he become?" That's one reason why I don't drink Coke or Thums Up because the color is the same. It's built into the head. So, you don't have to imitate everything which your father did but there are a lot of things which our fathers did which would have been good for us if we had imitated them. That's what Paul is saying. That is something which our fathers have done or our fathers should do; one – instruct; two – provide; three, Scripture says, "Imitate." Because children imitate fathers.

So, as we come to the end, in *1 Kings 19:19*,

1 Kings 19:19

¹⁹So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him.

That's where we see Elisha and Elijah. In *verse 21*, Scripture says,

1 Kings 19:21

²¹So Elisha turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen's equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant.

You know his dedication in the beginning was fantastic. In modern terms, as soon as Elijah called him, he resigned his job and left his home and followed the one who called him. We don't hear anything about Elisha for years together. I don't know. Some theologians say that it is up to 15-20 years. We don't know. Years together, we don't hear anything about this man. You will hear a little, in between, about another prophet called Micaiah, who will come. You will hear about Elijah bringing down fire, killing the king's soldiers. All that, you will hear but you will not hear anything about Elisha. The next time you will hear about Elisha is the last day of Elijah on earth. That's when you hear about Elisha the next time. It's interesting, right? A transition is going to happen that day. Everybody is aware that Elijah is going but nobody is aware that Elisha is going to take his place because for years, there is this silence about this man who steadfastly followed the one who called him. On the last day, God opens the curtain and shows Elisha and Elijah on the last journey together – Elijah's last journey. And you know where it begins? In *2 Kings 2*,

2 Kings 2:1

¹And it came to pass, when the Lord was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.

Where did their journey begin? The point of Israel's consecration. That's where the journey began. God is telling us – a generation has to inherit Elijah's mantle; a generation wants that double portion which God is promising to the last generation. God says, "You need to follow as He followed." All the others knew He was going to be taken. He had revelation, gave everything but nobody was willing to be circumcised or to be consecrated as Elisha. That day, Elijah will go. He will follow him because his heart has been separated from everything. So, he will follow Elijah till the end and that day, God will take him off. But you will realize – when he takes him off, who is taken off,

2 Kings 2:11-12

¹¹Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. ¹²And Elisha saw it, and he cried out (what did he cry?), "My father, my father,

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That's what he cried – "You were my father. All these years, what did you do? You instructed me, you took care of me and I followed your example. You are my father. Now, you are gone but you did not leave me without a legacy; you have left something of you for me and I am going to wear that and walk in your shoes from today." He tears his robe apart and he took Elijah's mantle and he now walks. There is a seamless transition from one generation to another generation because one man chose to follow God. And he is a young man. That's what God is talking about this on a Father's Day. Elijah was a true spiritual father. He provided for Elisha. He instructed him and he left a very powerful example for him to follow. Jesus is our spiritual Father and those 3 and a half years, when He took those disciples around, He asked them a question. In *Luke 22:35*, He asked,

Luke 22:35

³⁵ And He said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?"...

He is asking, "Didn't I always provide for you?" He is asking you and me, "Didn't I always take care of you? Didn't you have food on your table? Didn't you have clothes on your back? Weren't you protected from the elements?" Jesus is asking them, "Did I?" In *John 15:15*, He says,

John 15:15

¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.

Didn't Jesus instruct His disciples? He said, "Didn't I show you the ways of My Father? Didn't I teach you the ways of My Father. You see, I am a Father. I took care of you. I instructed you." And in *John 17:19*,

John 17:19

¹⁹ And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

That's what I tell Pastors and I tell Pastor Eric, Pastor Vijay and all of them – don't fight when I tell you certain things because, for their sakes, we have to sanctify ourselves. There are a lot of things which we can do which we don't do. It doesn't affect us at all but we don't do those things. Why? Because we want to leave a model for others. Jesus did not have to be sanctified. But He says,

¹⁹ And for their sakes I sanctify Myself...

Because He said, "The disciples are always watching Me, following Me and are walking around Me. They don't listen to half the things I say but I know they are watching Me. So, there are a lot of things that I can do but I won't do because if I do it, they will also do it and they don't have the truth inside to do it." Because people usually follow people. Jesus was a true Father, real true Father. Paul was a true father. Elijah was a true father. Moses was a true father. He told them to feed them, to instruct them and to be a godly example. The strangest part of it is that one generation hated Moses for what he did; another generation loved Moses for the same things. The question is: which generation are you? There is nothing different that Moses did with both the generation. It was exactly the same. The food was the same; the instruction was the same; everything was the same. Response was different. God is asking us this morning, "How is our response?" Answer me!

See, like I said, we want the product; we don't want the process. If the things which you are holding in your hands or the clothes you are wearing had voices and speak to you, they will tell you, "You have no clue." The thread says, "They thrashed me and they thrashed me and then, I became a thread. I thought it was over. Then, I become in the loom and they hit me and hit me and I thought it was over. They dunk me in dye and I was screaming; my eyes were burning and my color changed. It was not over. They brought somewhere. Then, they cut me and cut me. And you are, so coolly, walking around wearing it. Do you know what I went through for you to wear it?" See, we like the product but we don't like the process. We like to hear, "They overcame and they possessed the land and God gave them peace with their enemies all the days of their lives," but what made them become that? It is the wilderness. They learnt the lessons of the wilderness. Two generations were in the same wilderness; one generation learnt while the other did not. God took care of them both but He

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only allowed one to cross over and God says, "This is true for every generation. Don't get fooled by the product. Be part of the process. Don't get fooled by the position. Long for the presence."

Have you heard two people with the same positions – Saul, King; David, King. Did you ever hear Saul ever talk about the Ark? No. What was the first thing David did when he became king of Jerusalem? He said, "How can the Ark rest here? The Ark has to come to Jerusalem." And even if he made a mistake in the bringing of the Ark, God still loved him and forgave him; but this fellow, who was never interested in the presence of God, God was waiting to knock him off the throne because his heart was not circumcised. That is how God looks at all of us – where is your heart? Where is your mind? Where is your head? Is it circumcised?

So, this morning, shall we stand up? Fight this good fight. Yes, I know World Cup football is there. Cricket is easy. This takes hard work. That's control. We like sitting and watching and jumping but that's the product. The product is because of a process. Why? They have to train over and over again and listen to the voice of their coach. It demands circumcision in their hearts to cut away from the things of this world and focus on one thing. Today, we pay and we sit there, sleepless nights and days, sitting there and watching at the edge of our seat but that's the product. We will only watch because we never went through the process. God is saying, "Life is like that. Life in the Kingdom of God is also like that." And God's Kingdom is bigger than all these. God says that He demands that kind of a discipline from them and He got one generation trained in the desert, absolutely trained in the desert. Cut away from everything of the world, fill them with His Word, model the leadership before them and they said, "We are ready. We will go take it." Their fathers complained for 40 years. They could walk 7 days without opening their mouth, non-stop. They could. That was a generation. They could open their mouth at the command of God and shout. That is training, spiritual discipline. That's what God is talking about a generation. The Bible talks about a final-day generation that will rise and my prayer is always – at least, one or two from this Church and rise up to be a part of this generation. We are celebrating Christ; not Fifa, okay? But don't go from this hall with the football in your mind and forget all that you have heard, you young people.

Closing Prayer:

Father God, we just come to You. We just thank You for every father here, every child here and I pray, Father, for every one of these children, they will have a godly father to model, Lord; a godly parent, a spiritual parent they can model, Lord. And I pray, from our hearts, our reaction will be like the second generation, Lord. We will learn from the mistakes of those who have gone before us; yet, we will look at the godly example they set before us and learn of it too, Lord. We will learn to be content with Your provision because, Father, we know we are just passing through. Yes, we are content with what You have given us here. We are just passing through. This is not our final destination. Our final destination is somewhere else, Lord. As travellers, help us to be content. Help us to receive in our hearts all the instructions You give us through various different media, Lord. the Word spoken from the pulpit or the net or book, whatever it is, help us to be instructed, O Lord and help us to follow godly examples in our lives. So many young people and I pray they will not fail, they will not fall. The ten years of teaching discipline that they have received, some are going into college and I pray the spirit of Achan will not rise in their hearts for even if no one will see, yet, You will see. Nothing is hidden from Your eyes, O Lord. I pray we will constantly cleanse ourselves so that we can be a holy vessel in Your hand, O Lord. We surrender the Church into Thy hands, O Lord, each day, every day of this week. Go with us, go before us, O Lord. And for those who disheartened, I pray, today, their hearts would be lifted up that we have a God who will make even time work in our favour if we are willing to fight this battle, Lord. All I pray is that our affections and our hearts are completely sold out to You and everything and everybody else only come a second, a close second; but never first. Thank You, Father. I commit every person, need in the body, need in the family, a need in finances, whatever it is, Father, You are that faithful God; that even in our disobedience, You still quench our thirst and I pray, Father, meet Your people at their point of need, Lord. Thank You, Father. We lift up holy hands and we bless Your Holy Name, Lord. Thank You, Father. For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. For in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

Benediction:

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