

# Submit! Resist! Flee!

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*Father, this morning, we just come to You. The entrance of Your Word, I pray, even today, let it bring light. You have exalted Your Word above Your name. We too exalt You Word, Lord. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of the Lord endures forever. Heaven and earth will pass away but not even a dot from Your Word, O Lord. We were saved by the Word, we're kept by the Word, and one day, we'll be judged by the Word. And therefore, Father, today, help us to have hearing ears believing heart, and the will to obey Your Word at the cost of anything, and everything. Speak to us, teach us, mould us, in the image of Your Son, who is the eternal Word Lord. Speak, Father. For in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.*

Keep in mind the messages we've listening past few weeks. Whoever has your head, your mind, has your body. What goes first? Your mind goes first. Almost everything, except certain things of course has an origin, even sickness. You know, if Adam and Eve hadn't taken the suggestion from the enemy into their mind and then obeyed, sin hadn't come. We would be disease free, trouble free, problem free, all begins in the mind. But most diseases or many diseases, remains because it remains in our minds. A sick mind is more dangerous than a sick body. Poverty is a state of mind. More than a state in which we live. It's a state of mind. You can have everything in the world and be a pauper in your mind, and you could have hardly anything and be extremely rich towards God. Okay? These are all things first established in our minds. That's why we have to be very careful what we receive with our mind and what we believe with our heart.

So, continuing our series and we continue to look Old and New Testament together. Remember? Last few Sundays, we're looking from the *Book of Joshua*. The battles in the *Book of Joshua* are outside and physical but the battles for us are inside. All that happens in our life outside are actually irrelevant compared to what happens inside. And because the actual battles are inside, the wounds, the real wounds are inside. And the real weariness, tiredness of battle is inside, battle fatigue is inside. With them it was outside, with us it is inside, remember that. In *1 Peter 4:7* is an introduction to the last days, Peter says,

## **1 Peter 4:7**

***<sup>7</sup> But the end of all things is at hand; therefore, be serious and watchful in your prayers.***

NIV will say "*Be clear minded, sober,*" means to be clear minded. And "*watchful in your prayers*" because if we're not clear in our minds, our prayers will be ineffective. Because we really don't know what to pray for. Because there is no sovereignty in our minds, we're not really praying without understanding what the things are we need to really, genuinely pray for? In the next chapter, in chapter five verse 8 and 9. Scripture says again, "*Be sober, be clear minded.*" Have control over your thinking.

## **1 Peter 5:8-9**

***<sup>8</sup> Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.***

There is an enemy we have, an adversary, he's an enemy. And he walks around like a roaring; meaning – intimidate us.

***<sup>9</sup> Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.***

All around the world believers, even actually this morning news, in the actual news, in the national news on Fox, it was talking about Christians, all around the world are the most persecuted group on planet earth. Peter said that, "Don't get offended by your suffering, don't get discouraged by it. You're just being part of the brotherhood. They're going through the same sufferings. I hope you are."

## **James 4:7**

***<sup>7</sup> Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.***

I don't know whether I gave you this title before, but title of today's message is "Submit! Resist! Flee!"

**Joshua 7:1**

***<sup>1</sup> But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed things; so the anger of the Lord burned against the children of Israel.***

Joshua 7; they're going out to battle, without knowing something has happened in their midst. The first battle was much easier because they just had to destroy, because God had already destroyed the city, the walls came in. So, the second time they're going out on frontal attack and they're going to face a terrible, humiliating defeat. And they had no clue why they were defeated, because something had happened in their midst. If you remember the old days, if you've read Dickens, and Oliver Twist and all that, if you know. In the old days, when thieves went to rob houses and all the doors, and all are firmly locked, you'll also see they'll take a little boy with them, who's been trained, little boy. Because there'll be a small window which will be open for air and they'll push him through that. The boy goes in and goes inside and opens the back door for them and the thieves get in. Oliver Twist was actually used for that and caught. Charles Spurgeon says, "When satan cannot get you down with a big sin, he will trap you with a small one." Trap you with a small one. Small one will get it. And you don't realize the small one, one day, will open the door for the big one.

Here, they didn't even realize – we're looking at a generation that overcame. Last week, we saw Desert Babies. What defines them was how their minds functioned. They had shut their minds to every other voice in the desert, even to the complains and the groanings of their parents and listened to the voice of God that came through Moses. This is a generation that is ready to fight the battle because their minds are conformed to the Word of God to the image of God. you'll see before and after; God has done this with individuals in the Bible. But this is the first time He does and works with the entire congregation, entire set of people. That's why it is very interesting that God could actually change the mindset of the entire nation and they overcome. Then, the devil sneaks in and he brings death and confusion. A lot of them die, around 23 or 26 die that day. Young ones, minds were conformed to the image of Christ Jesus who were ready to battle ready to possess the land without even possessing one inch they die, because of one guy. Because of one guy they die. So, also remember the first sin, to manifest in the Promised Land in the midst of the new generation, was the sin of covetousness. Beware!

Achan, when he is destroyed, and his family is destroyed we'll see he has children. For all probability, when God judges the first generation Achan was under 20, remember the first generation was judged two years into the wilderness. So, if he was under 20, he probably as a young man or a teenager, saw the hand of God in Egypt. He has seen all the miracles, the plagues of God, the judgment of God over Egypt. He had come through the Red Sea. He has walked through the desert for 40 years. He's eaten manna every day of his life for 40 years. He's sprung from the rock that was Christ. His clothes did not wear off, nor his sandals wear off. He has experienced miracles of God. He's one of that young generation who probably saw everything under 20. He is come into the Promised Land. He's also vowed "as God is was with you Joshua, we will follow you, we'll do everything." He was part of that vow. He saw the priest go into the river Jordan. He saw the river Jordan split dry. He's one of them who crossed over. He's somebody who eat the produce of the land. He saw the manna. He saw the walls of Jericho, fall. He even kept his mouth shut as they marched around the walls of Jericho. He saw the walls fall. He's the miracle of a city falling without them having to do anything. And he saw one part of the wall standing because there was a crimson red across the wind. He saw it all. And then Scripture he coveted something. He saw gold and a cloth, a Babylonian dress, remember that. Never underestimate the power of sin in the fallen man.

I heard a preacher say about another preacher in a Pastors' Conference, he says, "Though Jesus is in your heart, your grandfather is in your bones." Meaning – Jesus is in your heart but Adam is in your bones. Don't forget that. Never forget that. Until we're rescued from this body, who will rescue? That is the cry of the saints – it's not, "What should I do with this body? When will I escape the trap of this body to experience You without the temptation?" And the struggles with sin. That's the cry of saints for thousands of years. So, on that day,

**Joshua 7:4-5**

***<sup>4</sup> So about three thousand men went up there from the people, but they fled before the men of Ai. <sup>5</sup> And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them from before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore, the hearts of the people melted and became like water.***

You see how quickly tables can turn? Earlier, it was written – because their the kings of the land, when they had heard what God had done for Israel, how He had dried up river Jordon, their hearts had melted. Now, it's the reverse. They had hearts. Devil was supposed to flee before us; now, we're fleeing before the devil. Their enemies supposed to flee before them but they are fleeing before their enemies. God's answer, they cry, they weep, Joshua weeps, they've lost courage. See, Joshua is not a bold man. Need to understand; you think that Joshua was a mighty one, he was a weakling. See, when God says something to us, we need to be very careful. Why is God saying? He didn't tell Moses, "Be bold and courageous", He did say that. He knew he was bold. But to Joshua he said, "Be bold and courageous, Joshua, be bold." Because he looks into us and He tells us those things which we actually struggle with. So, when you read the Bible, you look at what God is telling the specific groups, and you need to realize because He is not a manufacturer; He's a Creator. There is a difference between a manufacturer and a creator. A manufacturer makes things, from things that are already existing. He puts them together and puts them together. But the Creator is creating something out of nothing. So, He knows us like no one will ever know us. So, when God tells, "Be bold and courageous, Joshua," He knows because Joshua is not a courageous person. And the first defeat you'll see him saying "Lord, why did you bring us here?" When He tells husbands, "Love your wives as", why does He tell that to husbands? Because he knows that is a struggle of every man to love his wife. Why does He tell wives submit to your husband in all things? Because He knows after the fall, that is the struggle of every woman. Why does He tell, "Children, obey your parents"? Because He knows after the fall, that is the struggle of every child. So, in entire Bible, you'll only find few scatterings of children who obey rest of them are struggling with obedience. *Employees fear and respect your employers.* Because He knows that is their struggle. Employers treat them very well because He knows that is their struggle.

So, when you read Scripture understand God knows what our struggles are? And it is those struggles He's pointing to us and once you know that struggle, then you realize that is your battles, and when you know that is your battle, and if that is your battle, that's where your victory lies. Because sometimes, we don't even realize we are fighting battles. Because we think battles are outside, no battles are inside. And when we lose those battles inside, we are actually fleeing before our enemies. So, instead of we chasing the powers of darkness; what we see today is powers of darkness chasing us. What's the reason? Why did this happen? God says, "Get up. Why do you lie there on your face? Why are you lying on your face and crying? Israel has sinned." God diagnosis is very clear. Where there is sin, the only answer is repentance. "Lord heal me", God says, "Healing won't help. You need to repent." Where there is needing for healing, repentance doesn't work, because you've already repented but you need healing. Where there is oppression neither repentance nor healing will work, you need deliverance. So, God is very clear. They've no clue, they are thinking we are fine, God brought us here, we are ready to fight. "What happened, Lord? Why did You do this?" The Lord says, "Get up! There is sin in your camp. You have transgressed My Covenant. For you took something which I told you not to take." We don't even realize to take something which God says not to take and bring such a disastrous defeat in our lives. Because if God does not fight for us, we'll never win a single battle against the powers of darkness. And God made it very clear to Israel. "I am taking you into land with walled cities giants; there are 7 nations mightier than you I will fight for you. If I don't fight for you, you will never win. It's impossible to win." We don't even realize the kind of things that brings defeat into our lives. Sin will always bring defeat. God says, "If you walk in sin, you'll flee before your enemies. If you overcome sin, your enemies will flee before you." Enemies meaning in the powers of darkness. That's why we need to know the ways of God. Ignorance is one of those.

In *Hosea 4:6* says, "My people are destroyed because of lack of knowledge." *The thief comes to steal, to kill, to?* How does he destroy us? Or why does he destroy God's people? If you want to ask people in the world. The world's number one killer is not sickness or poverty, the world's number one killer is ignorance. God says, "My people are destroyed because of lack of ignorance, lack of knowledge of God's ways. How God functions how His functions? And the righteousness of God. Our major struggles are with righteousness of God and people get defeated by the powers of darkness, because they understand very well the righteousness of God. That's why if you see the most powerful nations – one was Russia, other was America, U.S. These are the most powerful nations on planet earth. But both of them lost in Afghanistan. They actually withdrew their armies. Russians were there occupying, they withdrew, Americans are practically withdrawn. Why? Because you see, they are fighting terrorist, and terrorist have no rules how they fight. When you are going from a free nation to fight a terrorist-controlled area, you are governed by the rules of your nation. You cannot fight the way they fight. Because immediately outcry will be there of Human Rights Violation. So, you are fighting a battle with an enemy, who you do not know, but he knows very well, you have rules. And if he fights, you know these rules actually hinder you, he can get you out of this place. That's what they do in Palestine. What do they do in Palestine? They shoot rockets into Israel and they do it from classrooms where children are sitting knowing that Israel cannot fire back at the classroom because they know that

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there are children sitting. These guys have no clue if the children die in the process because they don't care about lives but they know on the other side they are governed by a set of rules. So, the enemy knows that God's Kingdom is absolutely based on righteousness and that, if he can make us break the laws of righteousness, our God will punish us. And God's people perish because of lack of knowledge of the righteousness of God, how God functions. He can bring you through every miracle in the world. He can bring you through river Jordan. He can circumcise you, He can say that the reproach of Egypt is rolled over, He can bring the walls of Jericho but you pick one thing you were told not to think you will lose in the next battle because that's how His Kingdom works. For us, it doesn't matter. Big deal. Why did thirty-six people die because one guy picked a bar of gold. God says, "Because he broke the rule of My righteousness," Your God is righteous. That is something which we don't understand and the devil understands very well. So, he uses God's righteousness against us because he knows we are ignorant about the ways of God. That's why Christian students do not prosper when they try to study or pass exams the way the world does. The Christian student who copies is the first fellow to be caught. The Christian fellow how takes a bribe in the office is the first one to be dismissed. How does it happen? Because God says, "I will expose you."

Our mind is not like, "We want to cover," and God says, "No. I don't cover I expose because that's the way My Kingdom works." First battle, they are beaten. That's why God says, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness," because you cannot have any reconciliation without repentance. Our issue is we have taken obedience out of the Gospel; therefore, we have taken obedience out of our lives. They were delivered out of Egypt because they did not have the power to deliver themselves. He delivered us out of the power of the devil because we don't have the power to deliver ourselves. In the desert, He fed them, He clothed them; He made them drink from the rock but they wandered for forty years and let them die in the desert because of His righteousness. Because He was righteous, He took care of them and because He was righteous, they did not inherit a single promise. Two sides. Because He was righteous, He fed them, He clothed them and He protected them. And because He was righteous, He did not let them to be promoted because to be promoted, you need to keep His righteousness. Lot of Christians, in the last two thousand years, are just fed, clothed, taken care of all the days of their lives but they have never been promoted to next level because they do not keep the righteous demands of God. Please understand that He will not change; His ways cannot change. The Promised Land was never possessed by the first generation because they were never ready to fight.

Most Christians are not ready to fight this good fight of faith. Our testimonies are not connected with our inner battle, our testimonies are connected with – we got a healing, we got a promotion, we got a rank, and we made some money. Even our best testimonies will not match the testimonies of the world. For every other blessing on the outside, you can find ten other people in the world who are better than you. The real testimony is the testimony of these battles within. The question is: can we fight? The question is: are we fighting those battles, are we overcoming those battles? In the Bible, in Old Testament and New Testament, God gives us very beautiful pictures about a physical fact and a spiritual truth.

### **Matthew 9:20**

***<sup>20</sup> And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment.***

Life is just going out of her. She is just losing life when she should be gaining life. Instead of gaining, she's actually losing. Jesus comes to the synagogue and then it says in *Luke 13*.

### **Luke 13:11**

***<sup>11</sup> And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up.***

She is bent over for eighteen years. Bent; this is how she comes to the synagogue for eighteen years. It's a physical picture of a spiritual reality of people. Let me ask this question: how long has the spirit of anger, the spirit of fear, the spirit of pride, the spirit of lust, the spirit of covetousness or the spirit of sloth or laziness or the spirit of gossip bent you over in this life? What if God had to show the actual picture of our inward battles which we are not winning? In this case, because it is physical, we are aware but everything is not physical; it is spiritual. With Achan, it was hidden for forty years and he never dealt with it but one day, it came out into the open. He perished, his household perished and 36 innocent men also perished with him because he hadn't dealt with something which was hidden deep within. With Moses, it was deep within

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hidden anger, one day, when it should have never come out, it came out and he lost his chance to be an overcomer in the Promise land. That's why Peter says, "Be clear minded, be sober because the devil is prowling and he knows."

**1 John 5:19**

***<sup>19</sup> We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.***

The question is: how does the devil controls the wicked ones? How does he control the whole world? Because when I look around I don't see any devil around. But Scripture says, "The whole world is controlled by him, under the wicked one. How do these spirits, these demons control this whole world? God shows us in Scripture.

**Galatians 5:19-21**

***<sup>19</sup> Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, <sup>21</sup> envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.***

Now, come back to *verse 19*; this is when it happens, what we know and experience in us and outside of us. This is what we experience in us and other experience outside but adds to this behind – spirit of adultery, spirit of fornication, spirit of uncleanness, spirit of lewdness, spirit of idolatry, spirit of sorcery, spirit of hatred. Add spirit to everyone and you will know who is controlling you and how he is controlling the world. This is how he controls the world. There are spirits behind everything and if you give into these over and over, they become established strongholds. In certain settings, when everything; it's like the boy; because there are traffic lights and traffic cops, he drives carefully. And, power goes, no cops, he knows the cameras are not working, whoom, he goes! What happened? When the setting was right, Moses was patient, patient, patient, holding it, holding it and one day, he lost it. Why? Because there was something hidden, which even he didn't realize. That's why God says, "This is how they control." These are the spirits that rule this world and rule the lives of people. All this things in us, primarily, are first manifested as emotions. Then, our thinking. Once that thinking takes over, then our thinking is whopped, messed up. Now that emotions start controlling our thinking, when we look at that person, we feel so angry because that emotion is controlling our anger. That's why, sometimes, when we go to a place, you meet a complete stranger. You know, you are meeting him or her for the first time, sometimes, you like them and sometimes, you don't like them even though you have never seen them. Because their face reminds you of somebody to whom your emotion is attached in the past. That's why God sends you familiar looking strangers into our lives, so hidden emotions can be revealed. When you have that thought, "I have gotten over it." God says, "No, you haven't. It's just hidden." That's what God is saying – our thinking gets whopped. And then, if you don't deal with it, ultimately, destruction will follow. That's why, Scripture says, "Be sober, be clear minded, and pray always so that you will really know what are the issues to pray about. Be sober."

**1 Peter 4:7**

***<sup>7</sup> But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.***

Say, "Sober." Be sober. You know if you are not sober, what happens?

**Genesis 9:21**

***<sup>21</sup> Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent.***

When we lose control of our mind, we uncover ourselves. You may think, put this front before people, you are the most patient man on earth. And when one day, you lose control, the words that come out of your mouth is not just anger. Along with anger, came all the filth that was hidden in the heart. They look at you and say, "Wow! I never thought you think like this. I never thought you even knew these words." He was drunk and he uncovered himself. So, remember, be clear minded.

In *2 Peter 2:7-8*, it talks about a man who was fighting his inward battle. This is Lot.

**2 Peter 2:7-8**

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***<sup>7</sup> and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked <sup>8</sup> (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)***

Three times, the Word of God calls him righteous; he is living right in Sodom and Gomorrah, in the midst of sin and iniquity. But Bible calls him righteous. Why? Why does it call him righteous? Because he is fighting his battle inside and he is winning. He has no works outside to proclaim for the Lord. There are two things which we do by faith. One – we win the battle inside; and then, one – we win the battle outside where we do exploits for God.

In Lot's name, there is nothing he has done for the Lord. But he has won the battle inside; he is righteous inside, because he is seeing all these things happening outside and inside he is fighting it, fighting it; and therefore, he is clear minded when it comes to sin. Therefore, even his daughters realize, "We cannot make our father do this, which he will never do. So, let's get him drunk, get him drunk." The girls knew their father very well, "This guy won't do it." He won't; because he is man who is winning his inward battle though he does nothing for the Lord. Understand this.

### **1 Samuel 18:8-9**

***<sup>8</sup> Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?" <sup>9</sup> So Saul eyed David from that day forward.***

Look at it – king Saul was a very old man. He's a king, old king, much, much, much older man. Even his sons are older than David. David is just a teenager. Let us think about it. Mahesh came here, and he did an offertory and he sang so well. And I look at him and I am jealous, "He took the attention of people from me." Think about it, how ridiculous is it, right? Think about this, this is the King, probably, 50-60 years old and this is a teenage boy. Did he ever think this little sin, he allowed him one day lead to anger, bitterness, and he would be a reprobate and his head would be cut off and his body, pin to the Philistine wall. Did he think this would be where it would start? Did we ever think this was the beginning that he would forget entire purpose of God, the anointing of God, what he is supposed to do, whom he is supposed to battle? He forgets the Philistine, he forgets his enemy, the rest of his life; his entire life, he is chasing David.

One little thing, but never underestimate the power of sin, the power of the flesh. Satan just puts the little boy through the window. And he will open the back door, *2 Samuel 11:1*,

### **2 Samuel 11:1**

***<sup>1</sup> It happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.***

Did you think, in your own terms, that, one day, when you decided, "I am not going to school," you are perfectly well, but decided, "I am not going to school, I am going to bunk." That one decision is going to cost him his family, his nation, lead the nation down – one little lazy decision. The time when kings go to war, David remained at home. Sometimes, you look back at the history of many men, one day, when God opens the analyses of history, it will be written, "One day, when you were supposed to go to work, he didn't go and he stayed at home. That was the beginning of his downfall." "One day, when she was supposed to do this thing, she didn't do and devil saw the open space and he entered and saw the downfall." Did you ever see that, as simple as that? That was the beginning.

That's why God puts all this things in the Bible to teach us, do not take, you have an enemy, the lion and devil is a roaring lion, checking us out, checking us out. And never stand, strong in your strength. Don't think, "I can handle it." God says, "You cannot handle it. Only I can handle it, but if you want Me to handle it, listen to Me. Ask of me, I will tell you what to do. That's why Scripture says in *Ephesians 4:27*,

### **Ephesians 4:27**

***<sup>27</sup> nor give place to the devil.***

Don't give place to the devil. Do not give place to the devil. So, where is your mind now? Do I have your mind? Or you gave place to the devil? Do I have your mind? Don't give place to the devil. "At the time in the Church, when you were supposed

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to be listening carefully..." Don't let your mind go elsewhere. That's what David did. Stay focused. Do not give place to the devil.

See, where our minds are, in *Colossians 3*, Bible is very, very clear. You want to fight this battle, look at eternal things.

### **Colossians 3:3-8**

<sup>1</sup> *If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.*

<sup>2</sup> *Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.* <sup>3</sup> *For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

<sup>4</sup> *When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*

<sup>5</sup> *Therefore* (The battle is being defined. This is the battle you are fighting with. Therefore, when he comes, you should come with glory, to come with glory this is what you need to do now) ***put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.***

Remember that's what Achan caught. He was caught with idolatry – covetousness.

<sup>6</sup> *Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,*

We are trying to escape the wrath of God and God says, "You are to escape the wrath of God be very clear where your mind is. See how your heart, emotions and your thinking is going.

<sup>7</sup> *in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.* <sup>8</sup> *But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language*

Say out loud – ***filthy language*** because I know many of you young ones, when you are in the school and colleges, you think it is cool to use filthy language and I am promising you with the authority of the Word, you will not cut it out of your life, the wrath of God will come upon your life one day. You think it is very cool use all those words. You want to gel with the worldly crowd.

Today, if you watch in the western news media, except the Fox, most of the liberals, the kind of language news reporters use, you have to shut your ears and switch off the channel. Absolute filth they will call their own President. That's the standard to which they come down. I am not talking about movies; I am talking about news. What about movies? All the movies you watch have good language? You think you listen and listen and don't pick that language, that doesn't become the part of your system? You may fool but one day, it will come out of your mouth. Be careful. The Scripture says, "Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming," and it's coming. It's getting closer and closer, every second ticks by. Because the reason why I am saying is when you see these things, when you are fighting these things, you know the battle is real. This is the proof that you are in a war.

Before I was saved, I never had these types of battles. It didn't bother me at all. I still remember when I was in college, before I got saved, the guys who walked with me loved me because they said, "You have a sense of humor but please, James, every second word is obscene." Then, I got saved. The next day onwards, they looked at me and said, "What has happened to you?" First thing God took out of my tongue is obscenity. But I didn't even realize that it was gone. I am telling you, people use obscenity like no man's business. Be very careful. All these things are serious things. You see how God works. You study the Bible, you look at the Bible, you need to understand why these things are so important to God because keep your eyes fixed above, don't look into this world, look up. Look how God has ordered His Kingdom and He revealed through His Son and through His Word and through His Spirit. In,

### **Genesis 2:8**

<sup>8</sup> *The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed.*

### **Genesis 3:17-18**

<sup>17</sup> *Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. <sup>18</sup> Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field.*

Something is changed between *Genesis 2* and *Genesis 3*. Go back to,

**Genesis 2:8**

***<sup>8</sup> The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed.***

When you read the Scripture, read it carefully – the Lord planted “a garden”; God did not plant “a jungle”.

When I grew up in the other country, we had flower garden in the front and the kitchen garden in the one side and at the back. And I loved it. It is the thrill of a little boy studying in the Class IV and V. My Dad would give us little plots and you dug and made the plots and you made a channel for the water to flow – that was the joy part. There is plenty of water in that town, you don't have to worry about water. So, you open the tap in the bathroom and allow the water to come, water the entire garden and water the entire garden. Beans here, tomatoes here, onions there and it was my job. One thing you need is that if you want to plant a garden, you need order. Jungles don't need order. It will grow wherever. If you leave a garden untended, it will become a jungle. And He had put the man whom he formed to tend to the garden. Does your life resemble more of a garden or a jungle? Does your mind resemble more of a garden or a jungle? Is there order in your thoughts? What is it? How is your mind? How are our lives? Little by little, is order coming back? That is what God is trying to bring order. In jungle, there is no order. We had both, one side garden and another year, parents were posted right next to the wild life sanctuary. Then, it was not a wild life sanctuary; it was a jungle. Half of the wild sanctuary was in India and other half was in Bhutan and lived next to a jungle with all elephants, leopards, bears; you name it, they all were there. In the nights, the herds came out, Dad and I used to sit at the veranda and watch them go; my sisters would go under the cot, the lantern was put off and we used to watch. And every day evening and every weekend, we went through the jungle to the river but during rainy seasons when we couldn't go, three weeks later, when you went, we had to take a machete with you to cut our way through because the jungle had overgrown. This is the difference between the jungle and a garden. So many people, their minds are like a jungle that God has to cut a way through before He can touch you. God says, “No, I did not plant thorns and thistles. I planted a garden.” When man sinned, the garden started bringing for thorns and thistles and then you know what? Out here (mind) all messed up. And God says, “Would you bring order back?” That's what God is talking about. Do we see that order? How is our spiritual life? Do we have order? Do we have order in our lives? There has to be some kind of an order in our lives. Do we have structure? Do we tend the garden after we planted? That's what God is talking about. There has to be an order. That is the battle we are fighting against disorder in our souls. The world is in total chaos; it is that they outwardly show. The minute the law and order is taken off, that's why the society collapse into disorder. Because the disorder inside is manifested outside. All you need is to take the cops and the cameras, disorder descends. But God says, “No, that's not the Kingdom of God is because there is order being implanted inside; so, outside, we don't need cops.”

In,

**1 John 5:4-5**

***<sup>4</sup> For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. <sup>5</sup> Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?***

He says, “Anything and everybody born of God has to overcome the world.” It's a battle and we already saw what the world is. What is the world? How does the enemy control the world? Through the spirits. If I have not overcome my anger, continuously overcoming more and more, that means I am not even in the battle, anger has overcome me. I am not even in the battle. The very fact that I am fighting anger is the sign that I am saved. The battle itself is the sign of your salvation that you are born of God. When you are fighting jealousy, it is a sign that you are born of God. When you are fighting unforgiveness, it's a sign that you are born of God. I pity those who have no battles, go back and check your salvation. “It doesn't bother me, I don't care.” You know what? You probably are not saved. Because the sign of being born of God is that there is a battle. This is talking of the end of battle but you are in battle. You are fighting it. Because overcomers are in a fight. And the battle itself is a proof.

In the cities, the old structures are there and then, somebody else bought it and they are going to build something over there. So, they will put up all these huge metal and plastic hoardings and cover it. But if you go into that place, you will see



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the whole thing has been broken down and the full place is a mess, bricks, dust, iron, steel and cement and sand and you will look there and say, "My God! What a mess!" But do you know what the mess signifies? There is a construction going on. The mess itself is a sign that there is a construction happening. The very mess in your life should be a proof that there is a construction God is doing inside you. It should not be the false worldly order. Because there is no battle inside. That's dangerous. It is very dangerous. You should not get comfortable with your sin. Do not be comfortable with your flesh. Do not be comfortable with those ways because the wrath of God is coming on those things, because of those things. So, the demolition sites are not bad because that's the proof that there is going to be a construction there. That's how you overcome by faith.

Everybody in the world has faith. But it is not saving faith. They have faith in the world, they have faith in people, they have faith in ideas, they have faith in objects but saving faith is in the person of Jesus Christ. And the assurance of my faith, the proof of my faith is,

### **Romans 1:5**

***<sup>5</sup> Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name,***

Why am I fighting anger? Because God said, "Fight anger." The wrath of man does not bring the righteousness of God. Slow to speak, quick to listen, slow to anger. Why do we fight anger? Because God said so. So, we are trying to obey the Word of God with the power of the Spirit of God and that is the proof of your salvation. *So, let nobody has to have the root of the bitterness.* Why do we fight bitterness? Because we realize God says that this is unacceptable. Why we fight jealousy? God says, "Behind it, is the spirit of jealousy." And God says, "Kings has been destroyed by that spirit because they were jealous over a little boy." We fight these things and we are bringing our mind to the obedience of faith. Because that is proof. If people ask – How are you saved? I know I am saved because of the battles I am fighting. Because all those of born of God overcomes the world. You can never overcome unless you fight. One generation who came out of Egypt, never overcame anything because they were willing to fight. A second generation was willing to fight; therefore, they overcame and possessed the land. The first generation did not possess Promised Land; they were defeated in their mind in the wilderness itself. So, they didn't even have to go to the Promised Land; they were defeated even before they fought a single battle. That's why I said, "You are defeated first here (mind). You win here first." God is saying be serious. This is what the real salvation is. This is the fight we are in. In *2 Corinthians 10*, connected with the battle,

### **2 Corinthians 10:5-6**

***<sup>5</sup> casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,***

Not my obedience. "Lord, I am good. I am obeying You." That's not my standard; my standard is to look at the obedience of Christ and see if I am coming up to that obedience. Because I may feel that I am better than somebody else. Somebody may feel that he is better than somebody. That is not the mark. There is only one mark priced. There is only one obedience, obedience of Christ. Otherwise we all feel good. But God says, "No."

***<sup>6</sup> and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.***

God demands a fulfillment of our obedience because we are not saved by works, we fulfill the righteousness of God through our obedience. Get these things clear, because all these things matter. Everybody talks about the last days without realizing that is what practically Jesus and the Apostle taught everyday was about the last days. The day and the hour was not known but everything that was written primarily for us for that day.

Let me ask these young ones sitting here – When you go to school, you may learn many subjects. And you are receiving an education. But the teacher also always reminds you about the fact of exams. After all the classes, if you still fail the exam, the grade card will only show 'fail.' Nothing matters how many hours you spent in the class, how many notes you took, none of these things matter, the only thing is grade says "E" not extra ordinary. Extra ordinary, yes; after so much effort, how did you fail? The only thing that matters is – will you pass the exam? In the same token, after all the attending of the Churches, meetings, Bible studies, notes, memorizing Scriptures, all these activities, what if we fail the test?

**2 Corinthians 13:5**

**<sup>5</sup> Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith.**

How do you know you are in the faith? Because I am fighting. I know I am in the faith. Because whoever is born of God overcomes this world. How do we overcome? Through our faith. So, the very fact that I am fighting this battle itself is proof.

***...Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.***

You are battling this battle but how do you know that I am fighting this battle? Is that enough? No. How do you know that in this battle Jesus Christ is in you? See there are people in the world also who fights these same battles.

I told you this long time ago – once I was travelling from Guwahati to Hyderabad, I got in the train from Guwahati and there was this religious leader of another religion and they all were in white and his devotees brought him. He was in the seat next to me. They came with flowers, touched his feet. From Assam, we entered into Bengal. Bengal was ruled by CPM. You know “who cares for nobody” between NJP to few stations, vendors come and they sell everything under the sky. Electronic goods, smuggled from China to badam (almonds) to everything. One of these union guy with his basket of badam (almond) put his basket and touched this holy man’s feet. The holy man lost his holiness. He told him, “Move the basket.” The vendor said, “I am not. When I finish selling, I will move the basket.” It began into a fight. Shocking was not the fight; the shocking part was the language that came out of the holy man’s mouth. I was watching this and I realized that, “You know what? They also fight this fight.” So, how do you know that your fight is genuine and theirs is not? Our fight is this – Christ, if He is fighting the battle within you, Christ wins. He never loses. Understand that. Christ wins. That’s why it says do you see yourself winning? No. Jesus Christ. Christ never lost a single battle. Christ wins! Whatever you are struggling with, you fight it in your own ways, you will never win. You hand it over to Christ and ask him to help you, the power of the Holy Spirit to come through, you will win and you will fight in this battle until you have that spirit, under your feet and keep him under your feet. That’s what it is talking about. Remember, please don’t think it is only about fighting because religion also teaches people to fight these fights, but they cannot win. That’s why you see Greek philosophers, Greek scholars in the ancient past who thought about the issues of life, you will see, many of them committed suicide. Even Socrates drank Hemlock. They committed suicide while Jesus willingly died. They committed suicide while Stephen prayed for his enemies and he died. Did you see? Because Christ was winning the battles, Stephen was winning the battle, Paul was winning the battle, while others lost it. Even though Socrates, Aristotle, Plato were incredible men, they all lost their battles. They lost the battle. The battle is won here. It is won by Christ and it is manifested outside. That is why it is important we fight. It is important we fail a few times, get up fight, fight until you win and keep winning. That’s the sign Christ is winning in you. We are safe, only as long as we are fighting and overcoming.

In *Revelation 3:5*, God tells the Church,

**Revelation 3:5**

**<sup>5</sup> He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life;**

Your name will still remain there, it won’t be taken out. Why? Because you are overcoming. The one who writes can also blot out. Understand that. That battle and the battle is first fought in the mind. In the mind, you have to decide. All the young girls, sitting in the front – in the mind, you have to decide first. Because don’t ever think you are too young to hate. Nobody should ever think you are too young to hate. You are old enough to hate. And it could be so deep inside, you may not even know that you have it. It could take you to hell, to the point you may pray to harm others. Remember that. I hear stuff. You may pray to harm others. Remember that. Be very careful. God says, “Bless your enemies. Pray for them. Leave it into God’s hands.” Don’t ever think you’re too young to hate. That’s why a generation is growing up in Palestine, little kids, little kids primary school given toy guns taught to hate and chant, “Kill them!” What do you think they are going to grow up as? Taught to hate. Taught to kill. And their minds are warped. That’s why they go and get killed by the Israeli forces when they are trying to break through the wars because they’ve been taught like that. Please be careful. Be very careful. We think all these outside battles I have won, I have got my promotion, I got my house, I got my car. God says “Irrelevant in the Kingdom.” Eternity means nothing compared to what you build on earth to what He has kept for you in heaven. Nothing. The question is: are you winning the battles inside? Are you winning? That’s why I said there are two sides of faith – one is

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the inside battle which Lot won, but he lost the outside battle. He never built anything. The other side of the battle is the things we do outside, by faith, for God. You have to win one and two. You have to have one and two to be complete in Christ. You can have two, the outside works losing the inside battle. I will show you examples from the Bible.

**1 Samuel 10:9-11**

***<sup>9</sup> So it was, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, that God gave him another heart; and all those signs came to pass that day. <sup>10</sup> When they came there to the hill, there was a group of prophets to meet him; then the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. <sup>11</sup> And it happened, when all who knew him formerly saw that he indeed prophesied among the prophets, that the people said to one another, "What is this that has come upon the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"***

And the next one.

**1 Samuel 11:6**

***<sup>6</sup> Then the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard this news, and his anger was greatly aroused.***

He is anointed, he prophesied, he is angry with the anger of the Lord and the next verse is.

**1 Samuel 11:11**

***<sup>11</sup> So it was, on the next day, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch, and killed Ammonites until the heat of the day. And it happened that those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them were left together.***

He prophesied. He won his battles outside. But he was destroyed inside by jealousy for a little boy. Understand? Like a coin has two sides, faith has two sides. A battle I fight inside and the work that I do for God outside. You could be incredibly successful in the work you do outside by losing the battle inside and if you lose the battle inside you still end up in hell. On the other hand, if you have done nothing on the other side, but you have won the battle inside, you still end up in heaven. That's how it works. What God wants us is use to win battle one and two, both. That's what *1 Corinthians 3:11-15* says,

**1 Corinthians 3:11-15**

***<sup>11</sup> For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup> Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, <sup>13</sup> each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. <sup>14</sup> If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. (And then,) <sup>15</sup> If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. He is getting a reward for the work he built.***

Why? How is he saved? Because his foundation was right. What is the foundation? It's the life for Christ inside he is battling. Foundation. That's why I said it is important to have a foundation. Why is the world's good works never won? Because they had never had a foundation. So, watch out for your life how you deal with the people close to you. That is what matters.

Why did God say, "Love not the world or the things of the world"? Because when I love the things of the world, I cannot love the things of the world and love people at the same time. I take the love for people away and put it in things. That's the problem. The problem is not with the things; the problem is with love. The minute you love dresses, you will not be able to really love the sister next to you who is better dressed than you. It is not possible. Spirit of jealousy will come when you see she's better dressed than you. If you love cars, when your neighbor buys a better car... Now, you don't even have to buy; you just have to book an Uber. You see why God said not to love things? Because love is meant for people, not for things. And if you love things, you have to withdraw it from somewhere. "No, my heart is so big. I have enough love for things and people." No. God says, "It doesn't work like that." Ultimately, this is where the judgment comes in. And the fact that the first part of faith is the foundation – how do I know my life Christ is there? You cannot build on any other foundation other than Jesus Christ. That's why examine yourself whether you are in the faith and whether it is that Jesus Christ is within you. How do you know Jesus Christ is within you? One – I am fighting for the very things Christ is fighting for. Two – Christ is fighting for me because I am winning. If I'm fighting it myself, I am losing. If Christ is fighting, He is winning. Therefore, I know I am saved and I am being saved. Otherwise, the works don't matter. And like Lot, I built this house in

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Sodom; I've built all this; I had all these cattle and flocks but I'm fighting unrighteousness in my life every day. The righteous man in this righteous soul was fighting the filth of Sodom and Gomorrah. Fire came all his wealth was burned away, but he was saved through the fire. Why? In him, there was a life that met the righteousness of Christ. That's what the Bible is talking about.

Like I said on Sunday, we prepare for a wedding day; never prepare for the marriage. The wedding is one day. The marriage is for lifetime but it is in marriage your vows are tested. "Oh, the wedding day! Hold hands. Oh, forsaking all others, looking into eyes, blinking. Oh, look at them, so cute. It is cute." And then, life begins. And you realize we only prepared for the wedding; we're never prepared for the marriage. Prepare for the marriage here – for better or worse, sickness or health, poverty or riches. For marriage, you prepare here first. My yes is yes, my no is no. I don't quit. I don't quit on this. That's where it works, understand that. Like I said, we like the product. We don't like the processes. The battles are fought in the process. Lot, the foundation stone was intact. That's what we saw in *2 Peter 2:7-8*. He was rescued; yet, when fire came into Saul's life to lay the foundation stone, it was gone by then; God had blotted his name from the Book of Life, if you want to put in New Covenant terms.

Rewards are for those who continue in their salvation. That is why we study Scripture carefully because Jesus said, "My Words are words of life." Understand that. This is a real battle. A battle we fight every day. All the days of our life, the battle keeps on changing. I don't struggle with obscenity, speaking obscenity, foul language anymore. That's my not struggle. My struggle is in other things. I tell senior pastors, "You know, brother, the older we grow in the Lord, the Lord will answer our prayers even more slowly. They said "Why?" Because it says for us, He demands a virtue which is very paramount in the Kingdom of God, which is called 'patience'. He saves Noah, the mighty men through patience persist the promises of God and it says – no man of God will be deprived of that virtue and one way, you ask for something and you know it is right, you know you are fit – all the parameters, but the answer doesn't come, "Because I'm teaching you to be patient. Wait. Wait. Wait." This battle never finishes. Some of our battles are with impatience. "Lord, when?" Understand there is God's side and my side. God's demands, man's obedience. They're perfectly met.

Let me show you this incredible part of God. It's an incredible part of God in *Romans 11:19-23*,

### **Romans 11:19-22**

**<sup>19</sup> You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in."**

Who is this? The gentile. It will say "*I am the vine, you are the branches.*" Natural branches – Israel. He broke it and grafted me in. Feeling good, you know, Yahudi was broken off and I was put in. I'm better than Yahudi. God says "Wait a minute.

**<sup>20</sup> Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith...**

The only reason you are there is because of faith. When your faith goes, you also go. They went because their faith went. You are in because of your faith. If your faith goes, like they went, you too will go.

***...Do not be haughty, but fear.***

All the young ones with their Bibles and notebooks - *Do not be haughty, but fear.* Because *to whom much is given, much is required.*

**<sup>21</sup> For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.**

Are you getting it? If God did not spare the natural children of God, Abraham's natural children, the Jews, He may not spare us the spiritual children.

**<sup>22</sup> Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God...**

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Two things we have to consider – the goodness of God and the severity of God. Don't always sing "God is good all the time and all the time, God is good!" Also sing "God is severe all the time and all the time, He is severe." That is balancing. Our God is a loving, kind Father. Our God is a consuming fire. When?

***<sup>22</sup> Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness...***

Condition - if you continue in His goodness; otherwise, you also will be treated with severity. Continue in His goodness, because God is righteous. God is righteous. God will not compromise with His righteousness. That is why God is very clear about getting this. He says, "You fathers, being evil..." He knows we are evil. And therefore, we give you good things to our children. "Okay, my son did that. Okay, still, take this." What do we do? We blink at righteousness, because we allow our carnal love to overcome righteousness. God doesn't do that. Because His entire Kingdom is held together by His righteousness. Continue in His kindness, continue in His goodness. How do I continue in His goodness? What is the great gift God has given you and me to continue in his goodness? *Romans 2:4* says,

### **Romans 2:4**

***<sup>4</sup> Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?***

You see, the very sign that I repent, is a sign I am continuing in His goodness. If you know you are wrong and don't repent, you are not continuing in His goodness. And if you continue in your rebellion, you are slowly being cut off. That is how you look inside in these battles. "You know, Lord, is my battle really genuine? Am I really working out my salvation with fear and trembling?" Because if you do something which you know you should not have done, you would repent. When you don't repent, you are forsaking the goodness of God. And what is left if you continue in that, is the severity of God. Unbelievable! The rest of the world cannot understand this God of Israel. How can you bring up people, destroy the nation of Egypt, bring your people, destroy the Pharaoh and his army, bring them, clothe them, feed them, cover them, light by night, cloud by day, take them all around and then, kill them all in the desert place? What is this? God says, "Because of My righteousness." Nobody can understand the God of Israel. But that's not the gods of this world. The gods of this world don't demand this righteousness. That kind of righteousness, no god demands. Tell me one god in this world who demands that kind of righteousness. Nobody demands. Not a single god of any culture you pick it up, they don't demand. Our God, the real God demands. Therefore, we have to be very clearly and aware – the kindness and the goodness of God. When we talk about grace, balance it with truth. Grace and truth came with Jesus Christ. When you talk about the loving God, don't forget – He is a consuming fire. When you talk about the love of God, don't forget to mention the fear of God, because when you battle against sin, you understand who your God is. Always balance it.

In *Romans 9:20-21*, we see the sovereignty of God.

### **Romans 9:20-21**

***<sup>20</sup> But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?" <sup>21</sup> Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?***

Can't the potter make two pots? And He decides, "Okay, this will be in My house. This will be outside. This is for honor; this one is for dishonor." Doesn't He have the right? That's the sovereignty of God. One man for His honor. One man for His dishonor. One man as an example; one man for His judgment. He says "That's My prerogative, I'm sovereign." "Lord, I'm caught in this sovereignty. What will I do?" He says, "Balance it with the obedience of man."

### **2 Timothy 2:20-21**

***<sup>20</sup> But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.***

Same words.

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***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.***

He says, "The sovereignty of God and the free will of man." Can the pot tell the potter, "How can you make it like that?" God asks, "Can you talk like that?" A potter makes one vessel for honor, one vessel for dishonor. That means, were you set that way? No, you chose that way. God says, "You chose that way. When I made Saul, I meant him to be a vessel of honor. I told him – 'you and your generations forever, if you obey Me, listen to My voice, follow My commandments, I promise you – your generation will always sin on the throne' but he chose to be a vessel of dishonor. In My sovereignty, I already knew this is how he will end but I didn't intend him to be that way; he chose to become that." He says, "If anyone cleanses himself or herself," that's our choice. Balance Scripture. Put emotions at the backseat. Put them at the backseat because 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians are fully emotional, as we say in Telugu land, "Full emotional only." And it is very easy for preachers to manipulate emotions. It is very difficult to manipulate reason. It's very easy to manipulate emotion. If I have to get your reason, I have to stand by it and show you from verse from verse, the order of God's Kingdom, the order of His ways, His consistency from Genesis to Revelation; this is the way until it is fixed in your mind and in your reason – this is who God is and this is how it works; but if you want to manipulate your emotions, it is very easy. Get the Worship Team over here and tell Peter, "Peter, do this and drummer, drum at the back." Then, I start manipulating emotions, "God is for you! It doesn't matter – once saved, always saved. Once you have come to Jesus Christ, your past, present and future sins are forgiven." Then, why should you worry about the mark of the beast? Why should I fight sin? I got you on your emotions. "God is interested in your health. God is interested in your prosperity." And the musicians keep playing in the background. Reason is a different thing. Don't get fooled by emotions. Emotions are excellent servants; terrible masters. Be, sober minded. Hear from God and be very clear about the will of God. Then, put your emotions wholeheartedly to obey Him.

I remember, 18 years ago, when I was going to that country to be with the Church and Pastor Stubbs prayed over me; he prayed over two people on that fateful Sunday – one was me; the other was Major Lalson. I was going to Bhutan; Major Lalson was going for his third stint, if I'm right, with Russian rifles into Kashmir. He never came back; he died. I came back after a couple of years later. We both were prayed over the same day. While I was leaving, this gentleman, Pastor Stubbs told me, "Son, remember – wisdom and zeal. That's the order. Not zeal and wisdom. Wisdom and zeal." A man with wisdom but no zeal goes nowhere; a man with zeal and no wisdom will go fall. So, you need to have reason and emotions pumping. Wisdom and zeal. And 25-30 years, I don't remember; 25 years ago, I'll tell you an interesting thing – I preached in AGs in the Youth Alive on a Saturday. I was a rookie. Do you know what a rookie is? I was just starting to preach. I preached in the Youth Alive and there was a crowd 400-500 congregation. The next day was Sunday. So, I come on Sunday and I was just an ordinary sitter like you in the Church. When the Church was over, Pastor Stubbs outside, put his arms around me and said, "I heard you preached yesterday and I heard you are better than me." That's when I knew I could preach. That was exactly what he told me. I never knew I could preach. I am telling you the wisdom and emotions at the back; not at the front. One – Jesus knew the will of God in His life. Scripture says, "Nobody could change His mind. He set His face like a flint towards Jerusalem." When Paul knew he had to go to Jerusalem and be taken a captive over there, even when prophet Agabus comes and shows him, he says, "Exactly! I already know. That is the way I need to go." Reason and emotions; not emotions in the front.

Be sober-minded. That's how Paul will tell the Church in Corinth how zealous they are when God corrects them. In 2 *Corinthians 7*,

### **2 Corinthians 7:11**

***11 For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.***

That's what. We all fall. There is nobody who hasn't fallen and who will not fall. We will all fall. That's not what God is looking at. David fell much worse than most of the people but God saw the zealousness in his repentance and God says, "The way this guy went out to clear himself, the way he was broken over what he did, the way he was able to vindicate the righteousness of God, the way he was able to confess it and able to put it right," He says, "This man is a man after My own heart." It is not just, "Yes, I did wrong. Sorry, Lord. I did wrong." God says, "I don't see any change in you. I don't see you seeking help. I don't see you fasting over a sin; I see you fasting over a breakthrough. I saw you fasting for a promotion. I

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saw you calling up for marks. I saw you calling out for exams; I never saw you fasting over a sin that has broken My heart and you are not even aware of it.” What zeal! Read Scripture carefully. Look at the lives of people. This is a Father who understands His children. That’s why He gives you commands about relationships. It’s all about relationships – husbands, wives, children, employees, employers, rulers, the ruled, the subjects – everybody; the Bible is full of relationships at every level. What you are supposed to do at home, what you are supposed to do at your office, what you are supposed to do in the public space, what you are supposed to do in Church, what you are supposed to do with the congregation, what you are supposed to do with your... everything is there. And you look at that and say, “Lord, show me. Teach me.”

Are you getting it, little, little? Are you fighting this battle? Do you see this battle inside you? Do you see these battles you are fighting? Because the call of God is genuine and the genuineness of your call is shown by your battles and your willingness to fight these battles. It’s in the battle you know whether you overcome or not. Always study the lives of the believers in the Bible and how they fought, how they lost, how they won; look at them all. In *Genesis 11:31*, the first battle of the first man; what does Scripture say?

### **Genesis 11:31**

***<sup>31</sup> And Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram’s wife, and they went out with them from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran and dwelt there.***

Was the call of Abraham true? Is he moving by faith or is he putting emotions ahead of his faith? Emotions are leading him now; not faith. Can an unbeliever lead a believer? Can the weak lead the strong? Can a fool lead the wise? And the journey stopped there. It’s very painful, this battle. He is not able to win this battle because that’s his father. Battles are not easy; battles are very painful. In *the Book of Joshua*, in those battles, they bled outside; in this battle, we bleed inside. In *the Book of Joshua*, the battles you are fighting are outside; here, you are fighting inside. “How do I leave my father?” It was very painful but it was necessary. But God waited. He was not going to push anything on Abraham. He was very young in the faith. He waited until his father died. *Genesis 12:4-5*,

### **Genesis 12:4-5**

***<sup>4</sup> So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. (First says when. When you read the next verse,) <sup>5</sup> Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother’s son...***

Now, he took. In the call of God, you don’t take everyone. Even Jesus could not take everyone. Some of the places He went, He wouldn’t take most of His disciples; He only took 3 of His disciples. And some of the places He went, especially every day, when He went to pray, He would take no one. Early in the morning, He didn’t say, “Peter, come and support Me. John, come and stand beside Me. James, come and stand before Me.” No, He went alone. There was a pattern in His life. He didn’t take everyone with Him. When Jairus’ daughter was being healed, He took only 3 with Him and kept all the others outside. When He went to the Mount of Transfiguration, He took only 3 disciples. He left all the others out. You don’t take everyone. The call is genuine but the pain is real. Even on His last final but one day; final day prayer, do you know how He goes in *Luke 22*?

### **Luke 22:39-41**

***<sup>39</sup> Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed...***

He had order. Prayer life was ordered. Clear order of prayer.

***...and His disciples also followed Him. <sup>40</sup> When He came to the place, He said to them...***

See? When He came to the mountain, He had a very specific place in that garden where He prayed every day. He didn’t have a house; so, He prayed in gardens. And in every garden, if you were living in those days and if you had gone there, you would have probably seen an imprint of two knees dug into the mud, knowing that this is where He prayed every day. He came to that place.

**...He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation."**

He says, "There is going to be a struggle. There is a battle coming. If you don't pray, the enemy will win. The enemy is coming. If you don't pray, you will lose." They didn't pray; they fell asleep. Therefore, they lost. When they came to arrest Him, they all ran. They ran before their enemies.

**<sup>41</sup> And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw,**

I know if I throw a stone from here, I can throw it beyond that door. So, Peter, James and John are all here; Jesus goes that far away from them and He prays. You cannot take everyone with you everywhere. So, God will allow conflict to arise to separate. You see, God sees the end from the beginning. Are you getting it, the battle inside? The first battle of Abraham, Terah has to die. Second battle, he loves his nephew, especially because he has no children. He loves his nephew. But God sees a compromiser from the beginning and at the end. So, He separates the compromisers from the steady. Don't let that stop you. God will allow the compromisers in your life to go and He might use conflict to let them go. Don't go after them. It is God who is separating them. Don't get your emotions in the way and say, "Oh, how can I let go of this chinna papa (small baby)? He's been with me all these years?" God says, "Let him go, because if you keep him, he will block My plans for you. Let him go." Don't put your emotions in the front. Allow God to speak to you.

Then comes Ishmael. Ishmael was Abraham's ministry in the world without God. You know about ministries in the world with God? Its name is Ishmael. Isaac was Abraham's ministry with God. Let me ask you this question: does your ministry bring contention in your life or laughter into your life? Ishmael brought contention; Isaac brings laughter. How does your ministry work out? This is for older people, okay? Children, just listen. In *Genesis 21:9-10*,

**Genesis 21:9-10**

**<sup>9</sup> And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing. <sup>10</sup> Therefore she said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac."**

One is scoffing. That's why I said I have major issues with scoffers in the Church. When I look into Scripture, Scripture says, "Throw the scoffer out because his place is in the world. Cut them out. Let them go." Because the devil will use them to go after Isaac – what is born of God in your life. See, Ishmael is born of Egypt. His mother is an Egyptian. Hagar is of Egypt, of worldly principles. Isaac is born of Sarah, the Israel of God. Sarah is a type of Israel, the Bride of Christ. To Israel, in *Isaiah 51:1-2*, God says,

**Isaiah 51:1-2**

**<sup>1</sup> "Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, You who seek the Lord: Look to the rock from which you were hewn, And to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. <sup>2</sup> Look to Abraham your father, And to Sarah who bore you; For I called him alone, And blessed him and increased him."**

There is a Sarah ministry and there is a Hagar ministry. One is your work; the other is God's work. One will mock the other. You see this Book (the Bible), this wonderful, awesome Book of Books? I've been reading this for 34 years and I've preaching from this for 25 years. I've been preaching so much from the first Book in the Bible, the beginnings. If you know your beginning, you know your end. Till last night, I still see stuff I never saw in 25 years and 34 years. Sarah was a type of Israel. Israel was captive in Egypt for 400 years. Then, God sent plagues into Egypt to let Israel go. Then, I look at *Genesis 12*; Scripture says,

**Genesis 12:17**

**<sup>17</sup> But the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.**

And God said, "Did you see that, son? Sarah was a type of Israel, taken into the Pharaoh's house and I plagued Pharaoh's house so that she could be set free so that, one day, I will plague Egypt to set her descendants free." I said, "Lord, I never saw this!" Never saw. I honestly never saw this all these years. I have read this a hundred times, a thousand times. Never saw that the types were already there. Did you see? Now, all he has left after Ishmael is thrown out; all he has left is Isaac.



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Isaac is of God but Isaac has to be bound to the altar. What does it mean? It means you cannot let emotions govern even in your God-given ministry. By faith and faith alone. Emotions are good servants. So, he will use emotions to bind Isaac unto the altar instead of disobeying God. In *Hebrews 11:17*, Scripture says,

**Hebrews 11:17**

**<sup>17</sup>By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,**

It is by faith; not by emotions; not by feelings. We know from *Romans 14:23*,

**Romans 14:23**

**<sup>23</sup>...for whatever is not from faith is sin.**

If he had allowed feelings, he would have never bound Isaac. In *2 Corinthians 10:6*, Scripture says,

**2 Corinthians 10:6**

**<sup>6</sup>and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.**

Connected with Isaac, do you know what James says in *James 2*?

**James 2:21-22**

**<sup>21</sup>Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? <sup>22</sup>Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?**

When was his obedience complete? This is the fight we fight. We are not fighting with things; we are fighting powers of darkness and we are fighting battles inside. This is a walk of faith. This is a life of faith and in this fight, some things have to die. Some things have to be allowed to leave; some things have to be thrown out; some things have to be bound to the altar and I pray God will give you the wisdom and the discernment to know which is which. Which are the things that have to die in your life? Which are the people you have to allow to leave? Which are the people or things that you have to throw out forcibly? And all these people and things are close to your heart. Terah is very close to Abraham; Lot is very close to Abraham; Ishmael is very close to Abraham; Isaac is very close to Abraham and I'm sure, at every time, he shed tears over everyone but he obeyed God. He didn't put his emotions first. I told a couple of mockers last week, "If you force my hand, I will throw you out of Church." I can understand everything else but one thing I say, "My strength doesn't come from people; my strength comes from the Word of God." If Abraham can throw Ishmael out, I can also throw. Ishmael was his first son, his only son for 25 years, 13 years, 14 years, 15 years. Learn to make tough decisions in your life because it's got to do with destiny. Learn to make tough decisions in life. This is not an emotional game; this is an eternal fight we are fighting and in this eternal fight, learn to walk like Enoch. When Enoch finished his walk, he was all alone. There was nobody. And I'm sure every step of the battle, he was wounded inside. One by one, finally, wife also said, "I'm not coming." Son said, "I'm not coming." Daughter said, "I'm not coming." One by one, it's a tough fight. And most people don't have to fight that fight but the thing is – you are prepared for any fight.

I want the Worship Team. I want you to take these things very seriously. The walk of God is the most serious thing in your life; more serious than anybody. For Abraham, his walk with God was more important than his own father, his only nephew, his first son and the only son, as God called him. It was more important than all of it and I assure the most painful hour of his life was when he bound Isaac on the altar. That was the most painful thing. Terah died on his own. Lot moved away on his own. Ishmael could be given a bag of water, some bread and be sent away. But Isaac? The last thing you thought about the best thing in your life – Isaac – bind him on the altar, take your knife and plunge it into his heart? "Lord, are You crazy? Is this the demand of faith?" God says, "Yes. By faith and by faith alone." Thank God he didn't kill him. God stopped his hand but the fact of the matter is – he lifted his knife and he was willing to kill. The only case over there, you will see is – God did not ask Abraham to offer Sarah; he did not ask Job to curse his wife; but everything else, yes. Because God, still, in His order, He sees the man and the woman as one; he doesn't see them as two. So, the only actual thing; I tell people when counselling, I tell them – the only reason in the New Covenant, God allows divorce; the only reason; I go beyond the entire commandments of the Old Testament; the only reason, He allows, He says, "If the unbelieving spouse leaves, let him go, let

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her go. Why?" His final principle – light and darkness cannot dwell together but if the unbelieving spouse wants to stay, let him stay. The only reason. I don't even accept adultery, violence – none of these. For this, if you cannot handle it, separate for a while. I don't accept divorce for any reason except that because He sees man and woman as one because Christ and Israel are one. Christ and the Church are one. And He gave Israel a bill of divorce and sent her away. He cut away that natural branch because of unbelief. Let the unbelieving spouse go. Let the unbelieving child go. Let the unbelieving member go. That's why be clear minded. Be very sober minded. Shall we stand? Yes, Peter, lead us.

### **Closing Song: Give Us Clean Hands**

This morning, even as we are here in God's house, God says, "Examine. Examine our hearts. See the actual battles. The battles are raging in every heart. Examine those battles with a sober, clear mind. Examine those battles." What are we fighting for? Whom are we fighting for? Are we fighting for Christ or are we fighting for flesh? Are we fighting for the righteousness of God? You have heard on Wednesday, the zeal of Phinehas, how he took a spear and he ran it through the man and the woman in the tent. The zeal. He was fighting for the righteousness of God; he was not fighting for flesh. What are we fighting for? We hear all these prayer requests. God sees those prayers. He answers many of them but most of them are temporal needs but the real needs are not temporal; those are eternal. The real battles are not temporal. They are not over a house or a car or a promotion or a job or studies. These are temporal. Solomon had all of it and yet, he lost the real battle. He became a miserable, bitter old man. Yet, he had everything. The real battles are inside. We look into our hearts, we know whether we are getting better or bitter, more patient or angrier, more sober-minded or more drunk; for everyone who has overcome the world has overcome first in the mind by faith; for faith comes by hearing and hearing from the Word of God. To Abraham, God said, "Leave." He struggled. He had no issues with leaving Ur as long as the father went with him and the household went with him; he had no problem leaving the place. He was not attached to the place but he was attached to people whom God wanted him to leave. We may have no problem in moving from place to place but we may have issues with moving from certain people. He was hurt; he grieved when God said, "Listen to Sarah. Let Ishmael go." Because once he had stood before and cried out, "Lord, bless Ishmael. Let Your promises all be fulfilled in Ishmael." That's how much his heart was bent on Ishmael. "Lord, I know I created this ministry but now, I pray, Lord, You come and involve Yourself in this ministry." God said, "No. I will bless him but he will never be part of that calling." Are we willing to let go of the Ishmaels in our lives, very close to us, birthed in our own strength? What is that thing that is of God in our lives? We know this is of God, by God, for God. All of this in my life is God and God's. God says, "Can you bind it to the altar, kill it?" Do you know what it means? Can you hand it over to God, allow God to hand it over to somebody else? God asked me one day, "If I take Your Church from you and give it to somebody else, will you let it go? Your Church is Isaac. Will you let it go?" Every stage is a different battle. It's not the same. In every battle, there is a promise prophesied over us by God Himself. In all these things, you are more than conquerors. In all these things, we are more than conquerors.

### **Closing Prayer:**

*Father, this morning, we just come to You. We look at Your Word; we look at Your promise. You have called us more than conquerors. So, I believe for everyone standing here, whatever they struggle may be; it's maybe with an emotion like jealousy or it may be an addiction; whatever struggle they may be facing inside today, yesterday, tomorrow, there is a promise of victory. The promise is – everyone who is born of God overcomes this world. We are born to overcome. We are born of Christ to overcome and I pray, Father, we will see the real battles are inside. Husbands, love your wives. Wives, submit to your husbands in all things. Children, obey your parents. Employees, respect and honor your employers. Employers, treat your employees with kindness. Shepherds, shepherd your sheep. Feed them in season and out of season. Bring out the good things and the old things. Sheep, honor those who minister among you, who teach you. Everywhere, Lord, it's this battle we fight – the battle to love, the battle to forgive, the battle to submit, the battle to honor, the battle to revere, the battle to respect. Above all, the battle to love God with all our heart, all our mind, all our strength and I believe, Lord, You have said it is possible, it is possible; for Your Word says, "All things are possible to him and her who believeth." Therefore, it is possible, Lord, and You have said it possible, who is man to say it is impossible? It is possible. Therefore, we fight this battle, Lord. We look at the cloud of saints who have gone before us. We look at You on the Cross saying, "It is finished." We look at Stephen dying and winning that battle. We look at Paul at his end, saying, "I have fought this good fight. I have finished this race. I have kept my faith." We have witnesses. One day, Father, we want to join that cloud of witnesses as overcomers. So, I pray, Father, once again, this morning, You will release Your anointing upon Your people. We need Your anointing. Without Your anointing, we cannot fight this battle. Even You who taught them for three years and told them go, told them to wait. For this battle, we need power. For this battle, we need Your Word. For this battle, we need*

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*strategies. For this battle, we need a sober mind. For this battle, we need to put You first in our lives. Empower us today once again. Help us to go the rest of the month fighting this good fight, winning this battle each day, that our God may have glory. Touch Your children, Lord. Bless Your children, youngest to the oldest. Deliver them from the powers of darkness. Set them free, Father. For this purpose, the Son of Man came, that He might destroy the works of the devil and I pray, Father, today, that every work of the devil with which people are struggling today be broken in Jesus' Name. Let young and old be set free, Father, to serve You, to walk with You, to worship You, to work for You, Lord. Set us free, Lord. Set us free to serve You, Father. Thank You, Lord. By faith, we lift up holy hands and we bless Your holy Name. 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.*