

# The Offence of the Cross!

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*Father, this morning, we just come to You, Lord. We just come to You because we need You. We come to You, because we know, Father, without You, we are empty. Without You, we are weak. Without You, we are powerless. Above all, without You, we are nothing. We need You, Father. Each passing day, we only realize how much we need You. Today, Father, I pray once again, You would speak to us. Your Word is light. Your Word is a hammer that can break down age old strongholds. Your Word is life. Your Word is Spirit. Your Word is truth that can set us free. Your Word is healing. There are so many sick in the Body of Christ. Your Word says, O Lord, in Psalm 107:20 – I sent forth My word and healed you of your infirmities. Today, I pray, Father, that somebody would be healed. Somebody would be delivered even as they hear Your Word. Your Word creates. I pray Father, as we hear and believe, Your Word would create something new in us. We just surrender ourselves before the majesty of Your Word. Speak to us. And continue to work in that new creation in us through Your Word, Lord. Be with us, Father. Speak. For in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.*

It's not part of the message. But the reference is *Romans 14:5*. One man considers one day more sacred than another. Another man considers everyday alike. So, each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. The one who considers one day as special does it to the Lord. Meaning – today is Palm Sunday. You know, we do not observe so many things which is part of a tradition. Somebody does. God bless them. We don't judge anybody. We just judge ourselves. The only reason we do not do certain things is because rituals are connected with a religion. Faith is connected with a relationship. Now, if you use your logic and your mind a little, do you think the first age Church after one year, the apostles all gathered with palm leaves? No. God has given us only two things to observe – One is called baptism; the other is communion, that He died for us and He rose again and He said, "These two are fundamentals." The rest, if you're walking in faith, these things don't matter anymore, because it is a living reality. Because one day, emotions can be very high and you bring all the palm leaves and throw down your cloak for Him to walk right through. And a few days later, you say, "Crucify him! Release Barabbas!" So, emotions and perceptions can change within minutes and within days if we try to approach God with idols in our heart. So, we will see one day "Hosanna! Hosanna! Son of David!" A few days later, "Crucify him!" When Pilate asks that incredible question— "What shall I do with Jesus?" Do you also see, if you go through? Because we are in this final week before resurrection Sunday; that's next Sunday.

If you go through any culture, even cultures that have vanished – Egyptian culture, the Babylonian culture, the Greek, the Roman, the Indian, any culture you look, you will see their gods are portrayed as men and women of power, of glamour, and regal appearance and all that and chariots and horses and elephants, and whatever, whatever and the sun behind them and the halo and all that. Islam, of course, doesn't allow pictures. So, there is no representation. Buddhism represents Buddha always in that serene lotus position. So, we have all these pictures. Every culture has these pictures of God and then comes this picture, the picture of a bleeding, broken, naked Man hanging on the Cross and the claim of those who follow Him is that He is the Saviour of mankind. That picture doesn't fit with anyone's picture of God. It's an offence to the rational mind. When I read an article on a site, I also read all the comments written by people. So, there is all these comments written in the newspapers and a comment written by one Indian in one of the newspapers was that, "Jesus Christ was the first terrorist to be executed publicly by the Roman empire." I mean, we don't judge. We are not mad. Don't even get mad when you hear these things and you see this video of persecution, don't ever get mad. If you get mad, then don't watch, because it's a wrong reaction. Keep yourself in their shoes and what would we think. Okay? So, this picture – what kind of a Saviour is this? It's a Cross and a Man broken, bleeding is an offence to the sensible mind. When you say He is the Saviour of mankind outside of Him, it is not possible. No one can be saved outside of Him. Then, it is very offensive. Think about of a scene like this. I corrected that English and put a little music terms where it would rhyme and made it into a poem for a 21<sup>st</sup> century rational mind. Imagine a man called Carlos. He's from Brazil and he claims to be the Saviour of mankind. This is how the poem goes –

"They tied him down with iron bolts  
They zapped him with 40,000 volts.  
It was for you and me that Carlos died  
Though on the (electric) chair his body was fried

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The wisdom of the world was refuted  
Because on the chair Carlos was electrocuted.  
He's my saviour and my lamp  
Because he absorbed every deadly amp.  
Now I know God does care  
Because He sent Carlos to the chair."

Now, how come nobody is crying? How come everybody is laughing? This is exactly what happened down the centuries when they were told the Man hanging on the cross and died is the Saviour. Of course, connected with that, I will have a few hymns like, "On the chair, on the chair, my Saviour died," or something like – "I cling to the electric chair". Instead of red cross, we have red chair. Instead of hot cross buns, we have hot chair buns. See. Now you realize? That's why I said, put yourself in the feet of somebody else and say, "How do we see this?" How would an average man respond? Most stupid religion I have ever heard and ever invented. You see, the cross is offensive. It is offensive. It divides humanity. All the smart ones would like to move past the cross, but there is only one way of salvation and it is because of the cross and through the cross. A crucified Saviour sounds stupid to the rational mind. Move on to something better. Let's promise people prosperity. Give them emotional highs. Provide them with a lot of talks on self-esteem. Remember, these are not people trying to destroy Christianity but they think they are trying to save Christianity by appealing to the secular mind. This was what happened in the first century also. In Rome, in Corinth, in Galatia, in all the letters that are written, what the Apostles are trying to do is, there is one set of preachers trying to go pass the cross, avoid the cross and here are the Apostles, trying to bring back the cross to the center. Why? Because in *Deuteronomy 21:23*, Scripture says about a person who hangs on a cross.

### **Deuteronomy 21:23**

***<sup>23</sup> his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of God.***

Not everybody, not every other form of death in the Bible. In the *Book of Deuteronomy*, there are different forms of death; people can die in different ways but one form of death, that man, if he was hanged, it meant he was cursed of God. How do you reconcile this with the Jewish mind – the one who hanged is cursed of God and He is the Savior of mankind and the gentile mind where every god doesn't die, he kills? And the Romans knew this was the most wicked death ever invented by man. So, you will see the temptation of the Churches even then to try to abandon the cross. But Jesus talked about the centrality of the Cross in His life. We know He has to go onto the Cross, He has to go to Jerusalem, suffer, insulted, beaten, crucified and on the third day, He will rise and that is when all of them started getting upset. When the Cross was brought to the center of His life and His mission, people got upset. In *1 Corinthians 2:2*,

### **1 Corinthians 2:2**

***<sup>2</sup> For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.***

He brings Christ back to the center. In *Galatians 2:20*, to the Church in Galatia, he will say,

### **Galatians 2:20**

***<sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.***

The Apostles knew, you take the Cross away, the message loses its power and the power of the message is in the Cross and the Cross divides and unites humanity but first it divides. In *1 Corinthians 1:18*, this is how it says.

### **1 Corinthians 1:18**

***<sup>18</sup> For the message of the cross (What is the Gospel? The Gospel is the message of the cross. The message of the cross) is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.***

The cross divides humanity into two, those who are perishing and those who are being saved. For those who are perishing, they don't like to hear any message on the Cross. The message of the Cross is foolishness but to those who are being saved,

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the message of the cross is not foolishness, it is the wisdom of God. We talk about the Gospel of grace, we talk about the Gospel of the kingdom of God. What is the Gospel of grace? What is the Gospel of the kingdom of God? It is the Gospel of the cross. It is the message that comes from the cross. So, the message of the cross divides mankind into two. It continuously keeps dividing us. It is the power of God unto salvation. The Jews want a sign because their entire history is of the living God doing incredible signs in their midst. So, they expect every sermon of God to come and do a sign. The Greeks are used to philosophers because they are used to wisdom and rationalizing everything but Scripture turns around and Paul will say in *1 Corinthians 1:22*

### **1 Corinthians 1:22**

***<sup>22</sup> For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; <sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness,***

to the Jews, it's a stumbling block: how can a man, when our Scripture says, "Cursed is the man who hangs on the tree," be the savior of mankind and for the Greeks who are used to wisdom and power and all that of their god says, "That's foolishness!" So, you know what happens? For two thousand years, it has happened in every age and so much more in the last age, under pressure, men have changed the Gospel. We offer signs and we offer wisdom and we put away the message of the Cross. The problem is – as soon as we put away the message of the Cross, Christianity has lost its saving power, loses its saving power. In Galatia, what they try to do was add to the work of the Cross. That's what the Catholic Church try to do for thousands of years. What did they do? You want to be saved? Then, go regularly for confession and after that, do these Novenas and after that, light these candles and after that, do this and do this. So, you feel good. Why? I know I am saved. How did you know? Because I did this, this, this. But that is adding to the work of the Cross and to the Church in Galatia, that is what happened and Paul will write to them in *Galatians 5*,

### **Galatians 5:11**

***<sup>11</sup> And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased.***

What is happening here? The Jews are coming and saying, "Hang on, let's do this. Are you all believers of Jesus Christ?" "Yes." To be very sure that you are saved, get circumcised, have the Jewish sign also. Adding the works of the Old Testament to the work of Christ on the cross because then he says, "The offense of the cross has ceased." There is an offense that comes from the cross. In *Galatians 6:12* he will say.

### **Galatians 6:12**

***<sup>12</sup> As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.***

So, if you are a Jew or if you are a gentile and you accept Christ, all the others with whom you are gathering to worship are all who? Jews, and the meetings are usually taking place in Jewish communities. So, what do you do? Get circumcised and if you get circumcised, you become like one of them. The offense of the cross ceases. Now apply this in different ways, the offense of the Cross. Can the cross stand on its own in your life? Do I have to add something so that people are not offended? That's what he's talking about. False teachers, he says, what do they do? They try to make Christianity less offensive by talking away the cross. The offense that comes from the Cross. Now, we are not talking about offending people by being nasty, uncharitable and rude, we are not talking about that. We are talking about the offense that comes from the Cross. Why does the Cross offend? Ask yourself, why does the Cross offend? See, we like to hear, "O look at the cross!" we Indians of course have added an Indian touch to that pictures we have of the cross, with a dupatta hanging on it, right? O, look at the cross, He stretched forth His arms and said, "This is how much I love you." Add all these sentimental words, they are true. He loves us, He loves us beyond anybody can ever loves us and we are so sentimental about it and we say, "Look at Him, He loves me so much." But the problem is – that is not the offense of the Cross. The offense of the Cross is the other picture. If that one who is hanging on the Cross is God's only begotten, holy, pure, sinless Son and if He died for my sin, what does it say about me? What does it say about you and me? We were absolutely rotten to the core, nothing in the universe except the blood of Jesus could save us. That is the offense of the cross. It is not who He is, but who He is and what He does, what did it say about me? The cross points to my depravity. It also means apart from God, I can do nothing. I am absolutely helpless to do anything for my salvation. I am depraved, I am evil and I am helpless. That is what *Romans 7:18* says.

**Romans 7:18**

**<sup>18</sup> For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.**

Even if you memorize it and repeat it, it's very difficult to believe it. That is the offense of the Cross because we all believe there is something good in me. We struggle, did God really mean this in *Isaiah 64:6*, when He said,

**Isaiah 64:6**

**<sup>6</sup> But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags;**

We wouldn't mind if He says, our unrighteousness but that's not what He says, "All our righteousness is like..." You know what the actual word is, right? The actual Hebrew word is mensural rags. That's the actual Hebrew word. What is our righteousness like? Filthy rags, our righteousness, our good deeds, all the good we have done, God says, "It's worth nothing." So, six hundred years before He came, God through the prophet Isaiah had said in *Isaiah 8*,

**Isaiah 8:14**

**<sup>14</sup> He will be as a sanctuary, but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, as a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.**

A stumbling stone and a rock of offense, that's what He is. Why? How does He become a stumbling stone and a rock of offense? Because of the cross. It's very, very difficult honestly. You have to confess it, confess it until it enters into the deepest part of your spirit that there is nothing good in me, that there is no power in me apart from God that can save me from hell. There's nothing I can do, meaning – when it comes to heaven and eternity, if God doesn't move, I am finished. I could be the best man on earth like our Indian modern history, I could be as good as Gandhi, pointless. If God doesn't move, I'm done. That's what Jesus will say in His Gospels. He will say in John. "No one can come to Me unless the Father who send Me, draws him." You can't. O Lord, I see the cross, I see you hanging on the cross. Still, it makes no difference, the Father has to draw me to Him. Otherwise, I am undone. I can intellectually appreciate it, I can read books on it, I can memorize all of Scripture. It is of no avail unless the Father draws me, I am done because salvation is not in the power of man. Unless God draws me, I am gone. So, suddenly, it is offensive. When He is saying this, the Jews are getting offended because for them, they are getting saved because they are keeping the law. We have kept the law. Remember the young ruler also coming, "I've kept it from my youth, all of them." There is no point, "You can't even make one step towards Me unless My Father starts moving you. Without God, you can't do anything and it's very offensive to the pride of man. All your religion is worth nothing. Like children who never go to Church, the people who don't go to Church, it doesn't bother you. But imagine you have been going to Church all your life, regularly, all your life, you've been faithful at every activity of your Church. After fifty years of faithfully going to Church, suddenly, here a man coming and saying, "Your religion is worth nothing." You want to be saved, you have to believe only in the work of Jesus and Jesus alone, nothing else. You will get mad. I remember long time back, a person telling me; "All teachers and doctors will go to heaven." A practicing Christian, very faithful to the Church, "All teachers and doctors will go to heaven." I said, "Why?" "Because we only do good. Can you imagine how offensive the cross becomes because the offensive part of the cross is not that God loved me so much and He died for me, the offensive part is that, I am so wicked that without Him dying for me, there is no redemption possible. That is offensive. He goes on to say in *John 6:53*.

**John 6:53**

**<sup>53</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.**

It goes on more step. they are getting offended. What are you talking about? Eating Your flesh, drinking Your blood. It doesn't stop there, He goes farther.

**John 6:61**

**<sup>61</sup> When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you?"**

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I'm talking to you about the Cross. You don't understand but is the cross already starting to offend you. Are you offended? Are we offended. You have heard about the 666, the Antichrist in the *Book of Revelation*, right? There is another six, six, six which is called *John 6:66*,

### **John 6:66**

<sup>66</sup> ***From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.***

Because they were offended by the cross. Now, there weren't followers; these were not those who were listening to His messages standing in the crowd. These were disciples who followed Him till then, got so offended at the message of the cross and they walked away. You take the cross away, there is no salvation, Christianity has lost its power. That is why God will use Paul to come to the centrality of the cross. Over and over, we have to come. The reason is, you see, the message of the Cross hurts man's pride. It is opposed to all and every notions of man's ability. Last thing man wants is to be stripped of any little righteousness he has. We will allow God to strip us of all unrighteousness but we will not allow God to strip us of our righteousness. My wife was listening to some testimony, a girl giving a testimony and a background music. I don't know why you need background music for testimonies. "I was born of a first generation, second generation Brahmins, my parents were priest, my grand-parents. . ." So, what? Does it make your salvation any different? So, what? As such, Brahminism is an abuse of the society, injustice. Now, you come out of injustice and you're proclaiming your salvation was different. You don't know where I came from. See, even when they are testifying about the work He did on the cross, they want to put their robe of righteousness and, you see, this is who I was, that's why He died for me. People can't. That's what I said, "If you allow Him to strip everything that you know is wrong with you, you are fine. But if He starts touching what is good with you, we get offended," and the problem of the cross is, it strips everything of us, absolutely everything of us. Whether you are a new believer or an ancient believer, it doesn't matter. The only way you and I will be able to stand before God even at the end of our life is because of the work of the cross and the work of the cross alone and it is an extremely offensive message to the fallen man. The offense of the cross, it will not accept any distinction between mankind. There is no distinction before the cross. Like this is moral, this is immoral, this is rich, this is poor. This one is powerful, this is powerless. Everybody has to come through the same door. It's a level ground, at the foot of the Cross. It doesn't matter if you are old – no senior citizen, whether you are young – no half ticket; the king and the thief, the queen and the prostitute comes through the same ground – the foot of the Cross. It's level ground. Now, you ask me – is it easier for a thief or a prostitute to get into heaven or the king and the queen? That's why Jesus said that the tax collectors and prostitutes are all getting in, you guys are outside. Why? Because the message of the Cross is offending you. It doesn't offend the prostitute, because she looks at herself and says, "I have nothing good." It doesn't offend the thief because he says, "There is nothing good in me."

Even My Son says, "Thank you, Father, for the bread because I feel guilty because I know where I got the bread from." You see that's what the Cross does. It offends you to the human righteousness, the human soul, to the human pride; we call it the Gospel of grace. In *Ephesians 2:8-9*,

### **Ephesians 2:8-9**

<sup>8</sup> ***For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—*** <sup>9</sup> ***not by works, so that no one can boast.***

How are we saved? Through grace. It is not mine or yours. We didn't do anything. It is the gift of God. Then, *Romans 1:17* will say,

### **Romans 1:17**

<sup>17</sup> ***For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."***

Meaning – I received grace by faith from the beginning of my salvation till the end of my salvation. So, no man, when he stands before God, even if he says, "I was a believer for fifty years, I had forty-five years of ministry, I have preached to the ends of the world," God says, "You stand on grace alone. On the work of the Cross, nothing else."

Now, it's a little hurting to the pride because that means I have no faith in myself, I have no faith in my abilities, I have no faith in my works, and I have entirely dependent upon Christ and Christ alone. We sing that song "In Christ alone" but how

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many of us really believe in Christ alone? From the beginning to the end, it is God alone; it is grace alone. That is the offense of the Cross. Nothing of self can be added. A person who understands the message of the Cross, who understood the message of the Cross, not many messages are flaunting around but the Gospel of the message of the Cross and He has understood and received it, he does not have to be told to pray, he does not have to be told to read your Bible. He does not have to be told obey the voice of God. He does not have to say, "Walk in repentance." He does not have to tell never miss fellowship. Why? Because he is always aware that he is empty and he is weak. And without God, he can do nothing. All these things – pray, read your Bible, obey God, walk in repentance, never miss fellowship. To use modern term is, these are God's hotspots. You know, in the city, there are hotspots where you can get free Wifi? You don't have to pay for it. It is free. But if you want to get that free Wifi, you have to follow your sensor and follow that you are in that hotspot. These are God's hotspots. Man knows that I am empty. The man knows, "Without Christ, I can do nothing; I am absolutely useless without God's grace," and he knows that it comes from prayer, it comes from studying the Bible, it's by hearing the voice of God, it's from reading the Word of God, it's from repentance. It's from never missing the fellowship. He knows it because he has received the message of the Cross. Cross is the death sentence to the dependence upon self. If you take the Cross off, on the other hand, you can gather crowds. If you bring in the Cross, the crowds may go, often goes, Jesus and all the apostles.

The 18<sup>th</sup> century great preacher Spurgeon once asked this question that if Cross of Christ is an offense and always was an offense, why is it that so many professing Christians go so easily from January to December and have no trouble about? See, the Cross Jesus died on, definitely was an incredible, crude two pieces of wood nailed together or tied together. Incredibly rough, crude pieces of wood! But today, we have very nice crosses; you see the shapes have been made, so nice and it doesn't even hurt us even we move a little. You feel so good. You see our modern crosses have no rough edges at all. It's nicely being smoothened. Preachers do alter the shape of the Cross, by adding a little, by subtracting a little. Change the shape of the Cross. That's why Paul will say in,

### **Galatians 1:6-9**

***<sup>6</sup> I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different Gospel, <sup>7</sup> which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the Gospel of Christ. <sup>8</sup> But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. <sup>9</sup> As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other Gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.***

The Gospel of grace is the Gospel of grace only if it is the message of the Cross. You are moving to another Gospel so fast. He says even an angel or even it's me, if they come and bring you any other Gospel let them be condemned because no other Gospel has the power to save except the Gospel of the message of the Cross. In,

### **Galatians 3:1-4**

***<sup>1</sup> O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?***

Who has bewitched you? What has happened to you? You are turning away from the Cross. You are turning away from the work on the Cross, you have turned away.

***<sup>2</sup> This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?***

How did you receive the Spirit? How are you born again? When you looked at the Cross or because you did something? When you looked at the Cross, you realized His work and you realize your unworthiness and by believing and pleading on the mercy of God you receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. How come you have shifted now? Now, you are moving into your own works. Now, you are putting your trust on "Okay, as I do this, I get more of the Spirit." God says, "You will not. You don't get more of the Spirit by doing things; you get more of the Spirit by allowing the Cross to empty yourselves." What does it say?

***<sup>3</sup> Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? <sup>4</sup> Have you suffered so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?***

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He says, "When you first took the Gospel, you received the offense of the Cross and you were persecuted in your homes, in your relationships, in your business, in your cities, in your towns, you went through, so much persecution because you received the message of the Cross and after going through all these persecutions you are changing the Gospel. All your suffering is in vain. That's what he is talking about. Why is the Cross offensive to the average professing Christian? It's interesting, when Jesus is talking at the end of His ministry to the disciples, He asked them a question in,

### **Luke 22:35**

***<sup>35</sup> And He said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?" So they said, "Nothing."***

So, when you go for a journey, when you prepare for a journey, there are certain things, which you pack, this is what they used to pack, what did they have? They had a moneybag, knapsack and sandals in those days. They were not going by train or plane, they had to walk. So, good sandals, bags for essentials and a moneybag. He said, "When I sent, how did I send you? You had no moneybag, no backpack, no sandals. Did you lack anything?" "No."

But there was one essential every disciple of Jesus had to carry that He will say in

### **Luke 9:23**

***<sup>23</sup> Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."***

One thing everybody has to carry if you ever want to follow Jesus even one day, if you have no bag it's alright, if you have sandals or shoes like Nike, it doesn't matter. Barefoot also, no problem. No money, God says, "No problem." But He said, "You cannot follow Me where I send you without a Cross. Essential for travelling with Jesus! No Cross, you cannot go. The question is: what does it mean? It's not the cross that hangs around your neck, it is not that.

### **Galatians 2:20**

***<sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life, which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.***

What does it mean to pick up the Cross daily? It means the death to myself life. If I am dead today. the question I will ask is: what do You want me to do? If I die only, He lives and He will live only just because I do not do anything but I also hear and do what He tells me to do. Then, I am living His life or He is living through me.

Pastor: "Peter, give me your pen." Did you see Peter gave me his pen? He did a work. What is the work he did? He stood up; he came and gave me his pen. But you know what he did? He did my work. That few seconds, when he heard my voice and obeyed my command, he lived my life. The pen that he had brought for himself to write down notes, he was saying that, "It is at your disposal, at your word." He is not living his life. He is living my life or rather, I am living through him. He says, "You pick up your Cross daily." It is not that I do not do anything. But I have to learn to hear. When I hear and when I obey, you know what? I allow Him to live. You see, if we don't apply the Cross to ourselves first, we can't even read the Bible. Because if I don't apply the Cross to my life and read the Bible, it's interesting, they are stories, it's knowledge, it's wisdom, it's all that to apply, seven principles for me, for my good but it's not life. It's not His life. For His Word to become my life, the first thing I have to do is before I read the Word of God is to apply the Cross to myself. Then, suddenly, His life will start then from *Genesis 1* onwards, you will see "Oh my gosh! This is what it means!" Because so many people have read for years and years read and got lot of stuff, lot of knowledge but didn't receive life. Why? Because I put down the Cross and picked up the Bible. God says, "Do not put down the Cross. Apply the Cross, pick up your Bible."

Shall I show you a few things from the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Genesis? One is creation, second is man beginning, if I show to you,

### **Genesis 2:15**

***<sup>15</sup> Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.***

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You know what it means? Then, a little later, God will make woman and bring her to man. You know what God says? God says, "I have divided into two. You (man) will fulfil in my life in you and when you go out and do your work. You (woman) will fulfil my life in you when you stay at home and build the home. You mess this up, My life will not be portrayed." This is how it is. That is how you will rule and subdue this earth. You will go subdue, you will go subdue because we say in English "The hands that rocks the cradle rules the world." Where did all these come from? From the Bible because they knew that the mothers like Hannah, Sarah, Rebekah who stayed and mentored their babies and they went out and he subdued the world while she subdued the world from inside.

You see, unless you apply the Cross, you will not accept all these. "What are you talking about? We are living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Why can't my husband stay at home and take care of the child?" God says, "He can but you will not experience My life."

Now, I am not looking at single parents here where God will give the grace to handle both. But that's an abrasion of God's plan but He gives you a double portion to handle both. But you understand.

Let's talk about marriage. When marriage comes, everybody wakes up. In the Bible, there are three kinds of marriages. Let's get into the first one, which we all like –

Romantic marriage where boy meets girl and he falls and she falls, and for the rest of their lives, they live in the ditch. It's called romantic marriage. That's why they say in English "They fell in love."

Then, there is an arranged marriage. In arranged marriage, it is the will of the father. Hit and miss 50-50. If you are an unbeliever, they will check every star and at the end of the marriage, you have a nightmare.

Then, there is something that is called the Kingdom marriage.

Romantic marriage –

### **Genesis 29:18**

***<sup>18</sup> Now Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter."***

Romantic marriage leads to slavery. It is! Because the expectations are high, huge. You are my slave. He will be a slave for 20 years because he fell in love with a girl. And everybody washes his or her hands off in romantic marriages because you made your bed and you lie on it. That's exact thing parents will say. If we had started it, we would have helped you. You made it. Now, you lie on it. So, you are a slave. This man is a slave. It is not like you see in the movies 'happily ever after,' No, because in a romantic marriage, the person to whom the man or woman who fell in love becomes your idol and your worship is transferred from God to that person and you end up serving that person because you end up serving whom you worship. He loved Rachel. So, he served Rachel for 40 years. And Laban immediately knows this guy is a 'bakra'. "Look at him, he is madly in love with my daughter, I can use him." He knows the power of romantic love. "For seven years, for fourteen years, I will make you work."

Arranged marriage is the will of the father:

### **Genesis 29:22-25**

***<sup>23</sup> Now it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her.***

***<sup>24</sup> And Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a maid. <sup>25</sup> So it came to pass in the morning, that behold, it was Leah. And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served you? Why then have you deceived me?"***

You know what he did? "Leah, come here. Listen to me today. Jacob is getting married to Rachel. That's what he thinks but I have my plans for you. You are getting married to him tonight." This is the father's arranged marriage. Arranged marriage is usually the will of the parents. Some parents make good, wisely decisions. He is looking at the security of the girl. A rational thinking. This girl is what you say in English "Looking London, going Tokyo." Her eyes are crooked. Nobody looks at



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her, because of that every proposal faced, “No, no.” “So, what do I have to do? I have to somehow get a husband for her.” In India, what they do is that they buy a husband. Honestly! It is sad but the father says, “Before I die, I need to get my daughter married. Nobody is looking at her because of her complexion, her looks, whatever. I need to buy her a husband for her.” So, for every proposal, he will say, “How much do you want? I will give it.” He looks at her and says, “I need to pass this girl off to him.” They are looking at the security. Because every father is looking at security. You know I need to marry her off. So, that is the arranged marriage.

Then, there is something else called in the Bible; it says, “Kingdom marriage.”

### Genesis 24:50

<sup>50</sup> *Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, “The thing comes from the LORD; we cannot speak to you either bad or good.”* <sup>51</sup> *Here is Rebekah before you; take her and go, and let her be your master’s son’s wife, as the LORD has spoken.”*

This is what we say “Arranged Kingdom Marriage’ parents and everybody are back of and say, “This is from God. We don’t know. We’ve never seen you but you know what? One thing you know – this is of God, take the girl and go.” Now, unless you apply the Cross to your life, you will not be able to accept this, because you have seen the boy, you haven’t talked to the boy, you never seen what he looks like, you know nothing about him, the only thing you know is a testimony of a man who have travelled for months and come and said. Other than that, you know nothing about this boy. In the first case, you saw the boy, liked his looks; you saw the girl and say, “We are soul-mates.” Junk. In the second case, at least, your father thought it all and said, “My girl will be secure in this.” In the third case, nobody knows, only God. Every marriage, whether it was, if you are already married, whether it was a romantic marriage, or an arranged marriage, it can become a Kingdom marriage. It has to become a Kingdom marriage. It doesn’t matter how long you have been married; you have to allow the Cross to come into your life. You have to subdue the world inside and subdue the world outside and rule together. It is ‘I no longer live but Christ lives in me’. This is the pattern. Understand, “This is what I am and it doesn’t matter what people say, what culture say, what my friends say, nothing! This is what I am. I am a man and I am going to go out and I want to work.” “I am a woman and I want to stay at home and build my home. You know what? Together, we are subduing and reigning in life and what you bring is enough.” “Bring and give it to Me I can sure I will make it stretch through the month, I will manage with it, because we are in Kingdom business.

You want to see the Jesus pattern of ministry? I think in *Luke 8:1-3*. Jesus was never culturally correct, He was Scripturally correct. What was He? He never culturally correct; He was Scripturally perfect.

### Luke 8:1-3

<sup>1</sup> *Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with* (how is He going? Jesus and men are going, 12 disciples are going together) *Him,* <sup>2</sup> *and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons,* <sup>3</sup> *and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance.*

They followed Him and took care of the needs of the men. The men out and preached did you see? He is following the pattern in Genesis 2 in the beginning he said this was the way it is; and that was the way it will begin my ministry. He didn’t allowed bypassing the Cross. He didn’t, he struck to the pattern of the Cross. That’s what the Scripture is talking about – crucified with Christ; sinful flesh has to be nailed.

In *Galatians 6:14*, the second thing,

### Galatians 6:14

<sup>14</sup> *But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

What is the effect of world on the person who doesn’t pick up the Cross daily? Very strong! Did you see, anyone who water down the Gospel or dilute the message to make it more acceptable to the carnal man? Are you getting the picture? He is not willing to suffer for the sake of the Cross. So, what do they do? They bring world into the message and take the Cross

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out. They take the cross out, the world in and they take the Cross out. You know what Paul takes about those people in *Philippians 3*?

### **Philippians 3:18**

<sup>18</sup> ***For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are (what?) the enemies of the cross of Christ (enemies of the Cross of Christ!) <sup>19</sup> whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly***

They don't preach the Cross, they preach the world. There are thousands of Churches around the world gather together, what they will hear is about world – how to do well in the world? It is not about the Cross. The sermon goes exactly opposite to what Paul is saying in, *"The world is crucified to me and I am crucified to world."* What do I need to hear about the world? The reasons we do not get any life from this Book (Bible) is that God does not speak to the carnal man; He does not speak to the carnal man. We can pick the principles; the principle of the Kingdom works; it will always work, because it has got the power behind it but it doesn't mean it has Person of God behind it; it has only His power. So, the message of the Cross does not speak about the world or of the self. It speaks about the death to self and the judgment of this world.

When the Holy Spirit comes, he shall convict you the world of sin and righteousness and of judgment. The message of the Cross speaks of death to self and judgment of the world. Once you pick up Cross, you will see shadow of the Cross through the Bible. The Cross does not appear only in the New Testament, it starts appearing from the beginning. If He was the Lamb of God slain from the beginning for the foundation of the World, the Cross must be through the Bible, right? So, you will see the shadow of the Cross through the Bible. So, why did Adam and Eve fall? Because they refuse to pick up their cross and deny them. Where the great men of the Bible in the Old Testament, were they offensive people? No, they were the humblest, kindest loving man who walked on the face of the earth. They really wanted to get along with everyone. But the problem was the message they carried was offensive, because it was the message of the Cross. So, they were lonely men. Want to look at the list? Abel picked up his cross. Either he could do it in his way or he could do in God's way. God's way is – kill, take the blood, bring it. "I will die to myself and I will do it in Your way." He became offensive to his brother. Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, Elisha, and Jeremiah – you look at any man of God, they are all wonderful men of God but they are lonely men; because the message they have given, it was the same message – the denial of self-and death to the world, "Pick up your cross and follow Me." It was not another message. And the message of the cross offends people even today, even in the Church, I pray you will not get offended by the message of the Cross. The Spirit of Elijah almost gone from our midst. Elijah was the man of God. He preached an offensive message, "Repent. Judgment is here; sin is being judged." It's an offensive message. Nobody wanted to listen to that message. So, after three and half years, when he met the king, you know what the king said? In *1 Kings*,

### **1 Kings 18:17-18**

<sup>17</sup> ***Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "Is that you, O troubler of Israel?"***

How did he trouble Israel? His message was offensive. He was the troubler of Israel. What did Elijah reply? He replied,

<sup>18</sup> ***And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and have followed the Baals.***

"You are the troubler of Israel. You put down your cross, lifted yourself up, lifted up the world and judgment has come. The message I am preaching to you is the message of repentance and restoration of fellowship with the living God. It sounds offence to you because you need to pick up the cross. I am not troubler of Israel, you are the troubler of Israel."

In the New Covenant, Paul was a holy troublemaker. That's what they called him because he preached the Gospel of the cross. In *Acts 17:6*,

### **Acts 17:6**

<sup>6</sup> ***But when they did not find them...***

Because in Jason's house, when Paul and Silas was there.

***...they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.***

These troublemakers have come here!

In Acts 24:5,

**Acts 24:5**

***<sup>5</sup>For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.***

Look at the names they are calling him. Who is he? He is a plague. Avoid him like leprosy, he is a plague. He is a creator of trouble, troublemaker, and a ringleader of that sect, who follows the Nazarenes. You see what the message does to you? Accused of being a ringleader, why? Because he preached a message that was death to self. The religious crowds didn't like to hear it; they don't like it today also. There is only one true Gospel, which offends the carnal man and the devil. Like I said, we are not being purposefully offensive, okay? No, we are not; we just speak the truth in love.

You see, there are two kinds of Churches in China, one is over ground big buildings everything, it is government approved, big crowds will come there. Today, if you go to China, there will be big Churches full of people, the messages are sealed by the government. In those messages, there will be nothing of the Cross, government approved messages. Then, there will be millions and millions of people meeting in secret underground Churches, why? That message is the message of the Cross. It is offensive to the carnal man, offensive to the devil, offensive to governments because it changes the loyalty of a person from self, from the world, from the system to one man, the risen Saviour it is very offensive. You know once a man has found Christ and picked up his cross, you cannot manipulate him anymore. He may fall but he will rise and keep on following that Lord. You cannot manipulate him anymore. That message is offensive. Are we seeing?

Same in North India, in India too. North India where persecution is going. Any state you go, Gujrat, Rajasthan, North India, there are big Churches, big crowds. They have never known persecution, never known persecution. Why? Go listen to their messages, it is not offensive at all. There are Churches in those same towns where they have been hounded because their message demands a radical life change and they go after them. See, much of the persecution, when you don't get moved by these videos and all, much, you know the term they use in war called 'collateral damage'. Say, I was shooting at Ann. By mistake, I kill two others also. They were not my target; she was. In the process, two also died. Okay! There is air cover called to send a missile they hit and so many of the civilians also died. That means it is called collateral damage, okay? These mobs, when they come, the problem is – when the mobs come, they don't know anything about the message of the cross; they have been incited by the leaders and the devil. When they come, all they see is the cross. They don't realize there is cross painted outside. Inside, though, there is no message of the cross. You need to realize – inside. there is no message of the Cross. Outside, there is a Cross. So, they come break the building and chased them all away. If you are persecuted, it should not be because you painted a cross outside, it should be because you preached the message of the Cross inside; it is the message of the Cross. I mean, I've been trying for years to get the Pastors, "Come on, you don't need to do this." No, three people, four people; immediately, put a shed over there, put two speakers over there and you will start and before you know it, the guys are coming and breaking up your shed. I worked two years with the underground Church. We don't need anything. We had meetings every Sunday without the government having any clue at all. We used to tell them to keep changing and we tell them to gather in the houses, change your timings, park your vehicles far away, come in ordinary clothes, just walk in. No music. No instruments. One guitar. Keep it low. And it used to be pack. All those years, the government never found us. The Worship never stopped. There were times when I had to start in apartments and stand like this because one room is full, another room is full. I had to stand in the middle to preach. Here, we immediately need a building and two speakers and immediately, persecution comes, "Oh, pray for me. I'm being persecuted." Take your speaker off, dude. I've got only three people inside. You don't need it because the Gospel should not be stopped. You are bringing trouble for your congregation. When they came to arrest Jesus, He said, "Who do you want? Me? Leave them alone." As a Pastor, I should not be inviting trouble for my congregation. I need to have wisdom and say, "Lord, how do I see that I build them up without getting into trouble as far as possible?" When they are persecuted, let them be persecuted because they stood up, picked up their cross and the message of the cross was in their lives. Therefore, they got persecuted in their homes, in their offices and we got persecuted as a Church. Not because we painted a Cross outside. Some of the Churches should not have a Cross; they should have the bull from the stock market. Because they only

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preach money. Honestly, we are inviting trouble because the Church has to move on. People have to be strengthened. Imagine, I start a Church today; five people came; two weeks later, it's all broken and it is scattered away. Where do these people go? Everybody has these pre-set ideas, "I need two speakers. I need all these. Especially, that thing." Not this thing; the big drum. "I need that and I need a pulpit." No, we sat on the ground and taught. No pulpit. Nothing. No drums. Nothing. The Churches have gone and then, when persecution was lifted, the Church came out in the open and it is growing. Again, persecution has started now. Again, gone underground. Don't ever say, "Persecution came," unless it is because of the message. Paul was hounded it was because of what he preached. Not because he was foolish; it was because of what he preached. That's why we have to realize – the Cross divides.

We saw in *1 Corinthians 1:18*, those who are perishing, those who are being saved. The Cross divides humanity into two and then, those who had been divided, they are united. What does it say in *Colossians*?

### **Colossians 3:11**

***<sup>11</sup> where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.***

Can you come to that point? It only happens when you have allowed the Cross to do its complete work in us where everybody is one body. It doesn't matter what your background – a Jew, or a Gentile, Brahmin or Shudra – it doesn't matter. You don't even see him like that. You see – His Spirit is in him; His Spirit is in me. We are one spirit. In English, you say, "Blood is thicker than water." But in the Kingdom, "The Spirit is stronger than blood." It's stronger than blood. No difference. No barbarian, no Scythian, no slave,

***...nor free, but Christ is all and in all.***

Can we? No rich, no poor. Nothing. I've seen in this Church; not during Sunday services but in other meetings, I have seen – when somebody poor has come and sat down, somebody moves their chair. Why do you think you are different if it is the same Spirit within you? Think in a family; if a child falls in the dirt and he is dirty, when he comes, does the mother say, "Stand far away"? Then, why do you differentiate when somebody poor comes towards you and you say, "Don't get too close to me"? Read the *Book of James*. You will see the Scripture James brings about when you are dividing the Church on any issue other than the Spirit. We cannot talk about unity without the Cross because there is no unity possible without the Cross. First, through the Cross. He makes a man whole through the Cross. Then, in a daily process, He brings people who allow the Cross to work in them and bring them and make them into one body. Do you want to be one body in Christ? You have to individually allow the Cross to work in you.

Listen to Paul, after all his ministry, his final letters, listen to him saying in *1 Timothy*,

### **1 Timothy 1:2**

***<sup>2</sup> To Timothy, a true son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.***

Who is Timothy? A true son in the faith. "Timothy, isn't your father Greek?" "Paul, who are you?" "I am from the Hebrew of Hebrews, tribe of Benjamin, Pharisee by religion." "And Timothy?" "Half breed." "And what you think about him?" "One in the Spirit. He is my true son in the faith. The Cross has worked in me; the Cross has worked in him. We are one. We are not two; we are one. He is my true son in the faith.

### **Titus 1:4**

***<sup>4</sup> To Titus, a true son in our common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.***

"Titus? Your father and mother, both are Greek. You are not even Hebrew!" What does Paul say? "That's my true son." You see when the Cross works? Do you know what history says? In Ephesus, during a pagan festival, when Timothy preached later, after Paul was dead, when he preached against the carnality of the people, they clubbed him so badly that Timothy died in two days. That is the end of this true son of faith because he practiced the Gospel of the Cross, every one of them. The Gospel they preached was very offensive to the carnal man. That's why they were killed. Today, we are felicitated for

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the Gospel we preached. In those days, they were killed. So, the question is: are we offended by the message of the Cross? The question is: if we are offended, how can we receive grace? For grace is only for those in whom the Cross does its work daily. If the Cross doesn't work its work in me, why do I need grace? The Cross comes in and I look at myself and say, "Lord, You see?" "Yes, I see." "I'm useless, I'm worthless, I'm powerless in me. That's what I am." And God says, "You are true. Now, you are useful, you are worthy and powerful in My Son. Receive it." First, the Cross; then, the grace. It's not just a random confession from the mouth; it's a living reality because He said, "Pick up your cross daily and follow Me." The Cross divides but then, it unites. When it has done its complete work in a set of people, when Christ comes, He will have His Bride.

So, like I said, we are not offensive people but the message we speak is offensive. We are not offensive people. Some people, they are so offensive that they need a beating because that's not how Christ preached. That's not how the apostles preached. The message was offensive but they were not offending people. In *1 Corinthians 9:12*, Paul will say,

### **1 Corinthians 9:12**

***<sup>12</sup> If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.***

He says, "We try to see that we don't hinder the Gospel of Christ at all. We are not offensive people. We are not demanding people. We are not." There are demanding people. Oh my gosh, people in the ministry. Incredibly demanding. I've heard from the top to the bottom. People saying, "Which city in India are you calling me to come to preach? This city, does it have an airport?" "No." "Then, I'm not coming. Once the airport is done, call me." Another Pastor here, for a housewarming, he was called. "You have to send me an AC car. Otherwise, I'm not coming." A bishop of a mainline denomination, "When you are inviting me, please remember – I come by AC, Rajdhani, I'm coming. I need an AC car, AC room and I only eat fruits and nuts." I'm talking about people in the ministry. We are not offensive people. Our message may be offensive. It is not offensive; it is only offensive to the fallen man. In *1 Corinthians 9:22*,

### **1 Corinthians 9:22**

***<sup>22</sup> to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.***

He says, "I'm not an offensive person but the message is tough but I will go down to their level and speak to them. I will not be rude, offensive." He says, "No."

In *1 Corinthians 10:32*,

### **1 Corinthians 10:32**

***<sup>32</sup> Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the Church of God,***

Don't give offense. The offense of the Cross and giving offense are two different things but this one offense – the offense of the Cross – we cannot remove. We dare not remove. If we do, the Gospel loses its power and the Gospel minus the Cross is a false gospel that will ultimately kill you at the end.

So, when we pick up this book, as I come to the end, when we pick up this book, we are looking to die so that Christ might live. If we are looking to live, then Christ will die. That's what Jesus said in *Luke 9:23-24*,

### **Luke 9:23-24**

***<sup>23</sup> Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. <sup>24</sup> For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.***

He says, "If you pick your life, you will lose it. If you lose your life, you will keep it. Only one person can live at a time – either Me or you." That's why the Gospel of the Cross is an offensive Gospel to those who are perishing because the perishing man lives for himself. He lives for the world. It's me, myself and I. The saving man understands, "I live for God. I live unto God. I need to hear from Him and obey Him so that He can live through me." Because we are coming to the end of the age and it's a mess. Why is it a mess? Last Sunday, remember? For men shall be lovers of themselves, lovers of money,

lovers of pleasure. It's about self. The entire life is about the self and the Cross is an incredible offensive message. It's get the heart of the self which it hits.

Yesterday or today, thousands and thousands of children were marching in US over gun control. You see, the whole mess – socialism, communism, humanism, feminism – you have it all; none of these things have got anything to do with God. Can you ever imagine where the world has come to when you get a 14-year-old, 15-year-old, 16-year-old children to march about gun rights? What do you know about gun rights? What do you know about the first amendment and the second amendment? Andrew is 18. How many of you, children, are 18 plus? Show me your hands. What do you know about politics to vote and select a government? What do you know about ideology? What do you know about what Prime Minister Modi stands for? What do you know about what Arvind Kejriwal stands for? What do you know about what Congress stands for? What do you know of what TRS stands for? So, do you know? You see what the system is doing? Young, impressionable children, who don't even know their syllabus, are allowed to determine the future of a nation. You see, we have to read. Don't read history in hindsight. You have to read history the way it was. When were the women allowed to vote? 1920, 1918. Why? Because the women stayed at home and worked. The man went out and worked. So, the man knew what the politics was. So, he voted and selected the government. It was simple. You look at it and call it 'oppression'. Nothing. That was the order of those days. The men knew politics because that was all that they discussed. They knew every party. They listened to every message. They knew what was happening in the political sector and they decided who would rule. Because without even understanding what is happening in the world, we swallow ideologies and then, the Cross in our hearts start troubling us. We are just Christians; we have no ideology. The only ideology I have is the ideology that is in the Bible. Nothing. We are not for anybody; we are for Christ. Because we don't know the powers that are controlling this world, what their agenda is. I just gave you a portion of their agenda last week, at the end; how they control and manipulate human beings so that the message of the Cross becomes even more offensive to them.

Do you know, in the last 50 years, the birth rate in the world has come down by 50%, from 3.6 to 1.8? Does anybody know? Why? Because they don't want any more children. They want to bring it down to control the masses. The way of the road is communism, socialism, humanism, feminism – they are all sweeping the world and we don't realize – we have invited these spirits because we hear and watch movies. Movies are what they use to control our thinking. Let me ask you this question; I've never been there. The only one I've ever seen was when Hrishi and his old team, where is Hrishi? When the Ensigns team had their concert, I thought my head would go off. That's the only rock concert I've been to. The rest, I have seen here and there on TV. Do you know all the lights they use is called 'psychedelic programming of your mind'? That's how your mind is programmed. So, why do we need it in Churches? Are they programing your mind with their wrong message? It's all programming. Your minds are being programmed through the entire system. You are sitting there but there is no word inside. Your mind is being programmed to think in a particular way. The end of it is, when the message of the Cross comes, you are offended. When the message of the Cross comes, if your minds are not programmed, you should be receiving it and say – this is my Saviour who died for me. This is the message. I need to live for Him. But why are people offended? Not in the world; in the Church. Minds have been programmed. And the reigning spirit over the world is the Jezebel spirit which comes across as the feminist movement. It's a feminist movement. Everywhere. I was shocked. What the professor said in Kerala, he should be dismissed. It was absolutely unacceptable. But the reaction in a conservative... I thought it was conservative. I'm wrong. I'm out of that state. Because he mentioned rude about something about a student, the children, when they came to protest, you know, Kerala girls, actually took their clothes off and covered themselves with watermelons and came on to the roads in India! I thought these things happen only in the west. I was looking at it and said, "Oh my gosh. That spirit is ruling here too." They call it 'Me too Movement'. Can you believe? It's raging over. It is that spirit. Everybody.

Every political leader says, "I'm a feminist." Justin Trudeau, "I'm a feminist." UN Secretary General, "I'm a feminist." Macron, "I'm a feminist." Everybody is a feminist except Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump. He said, "I'm not a feminist. I'm for men and women." They are the only two alpha-males left. No, it's real. You need to understand what is happening. When the Spirit of Elijah, Jesus said, will come at the end, it's because there is a Jezebel and an Ahab spirit ruling. And when Elijah doesn't do his work, that spirit upon him is given to Elisha and he said, "Anoint Elisha. He is a man of God. Anoint Jehu." He is not a real man of God. "And Hazeal." He is a Syrian. God will anoint even wicked men to break this spirit because that's the reigning spirit. Don't underestimate what God is doing. Understand and read from Scripture what is going on because this spirit, when it takes over, will bring the end – it's the woman riding the beast. The problem is not what is happening in the world; the problem is that pulpits are being taken over by feminists and God's order is being

changed. God says, “No, you are supposed to rule and subdue together with one in to hold the home safe. That’s the castle. That’s the fort. Hold it. I’ve entrusted you to hold the fort.” You know what they have done? They have successfully taken over the entire Christian world. If I were to put a map of the world over here, what do you think about the Christian world? America? Europe? Right? Australia? That’s the Christian world. Do you know, in the Christian world, women have no more children anymore? The death rate is higher than the birth rate in the Christian world. It’s over. What does it mean? If a number of births in a year is less than the number of deaths in a year, that means – over a period of time, your population is not nil; somebody else will take over. That’s why the Muslims are absolutely sure – 50 years, Europe is ours. We will take over. Because you are not breeding; we are breeding. We will take over. Now, the entire theology is saying that the Antichrist is going to come from a Muslim ruler from the Middle East or a Jewish ruler from Europe. How did he do it? He did it through ideology because feminists; you have to read the original feminist. Every feminist is anti-marriage and anti-home and one of the first feminists who wrote; we’ve learnt all these in the universities. One of the first feminists who wrote in 1930s says, “A home for a woman is like a Nazi concentration camp.” Feminism supports and funds homosexuality because it is sexual liberty. It encourages. There are three kinds of sexualities; one is called heterosexual; then, there is bisexual and homosexual. God is heterosexual. God said, “Heterosexual – man and woman.” And then, there is bisexual – men with men and men with women. That is bisexual. And then, there is homosexual – men with men and women with women. You know what? The entire feminist movement funds the bisexual and the homosexual movement because it liberates them from the home. It’s an agenda working behind it and the problem is – the Church has just swallowed it under and have taken the Cross away. “Don’t offend anybody. Please don’t offend anybody.” Understand.

The Spirit of Elijah will be released in the last days. It will be released before the end. Jesus said, “John is the one at the end. When he comes, he will break this spirit.” God will have a remnant who have allowed the Cross to finish its work in them. He will take them out. Then, leave the rest for the Antichrist and the rule of the Antichrist will begin. Understand how ideologies begin. Don’t be just sitting there and watching TV because once this flood comes, it sweeps everybody. That is why the devil hates the message of the Cross. Because the message of the Cross hits to the heart of the human cell, “Man, what are you?” “Woman, what are you?” Home, what is it? Church, what is it? Work, what is it? Because there is a Creator; there is a creation and God has ordained ways for the creation. When I, as the creation, fall into God’s order, there is peace. Otherwise, there is conflict and there is competition and there is chaos. Slowly, turn back to the ways of God. Hold your homes together. Come back to the Kingdom. Come back to the purpose. When a man stands before God, God will ask him, “What did you do? How did you take care of what I have committed into you?” When a woman stands before God, God will ask her, “How did you take care of your family? Did you bring them in the knowledge of God?” Because a wise woman builds her home. If you are looking at it as competition and when the order is changing, we don’t understand. But if you really look at it, you will say, “God has entrusted the most difficult and the most important job to the woman – build your home.” Out of that home will come apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers. “Kings and queens will rise up from the home. I have given it to you.” That’s where it comes from. The devil comes and says, “No, that’s a concentration camp. There is no meaning in it. Go out. Be like a man.” That’s what I said – the system will make masculine to be feminine and feminine to be masculine. So, the women are all walking around like men and men don’t know what to do. Even the mainline Churches are saying that men have been emasculate. And therefore, the world can’t stand these two men. They very clearly say, “We are men; we are not feminist.” And they are not godly men but they are men. The biggest feminist came to India recently, doing all like of naatak (drama) with the garland and I don’t know what he was trying to do. He made a total ass of himself because India is not like that. They are looking at him and are like, “Iske kya ho gaya? Paagal ho gaya kya (What happened to him? Is he mad?)” Even we are not like that. Do you see what they do to you? That’s why I tell these children, “You’ve been here for 10 years. Don’t go around with these skinny things hanging around. Don’t. Walk like men.” Nonsense. You are of the Kingdom. You belong to Christ. You don’t belong to the devil or the beast or the world. You belong to Christ. Walk like a man and girls, walk like women. Imagine 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Jesus were to come and behind Him were Susanna, Mary Magdalene wearing tights, jeans and t-shirts. Even you laugh. Why do you laugh? Because you know, somehow, it doesn’t tally. Deep inside, you know, it doesn’t fit but you are still trying to be like the world. If Jesus were to come and say, “Follow Me,” what? Are you going to go run out to your wardrobe, get your jeans and t-shirt and walk with Him? You know this doesn’t fit in. Somehow, deep inside, you know – there is an issue here. It doesn’t fit in with Him but we need to fit in with the world. You know it. You know it very well. Deep inside, you know. If *Luke 8:1-3* was written about you, how would you be dressed? What would you do? How would you take care of His needs? “Oh, Lord, let me go to Youtube and find out how to cook.” And find out on Youtube about Jewish kosher cooking. “Let me learn.” That’s how 21<sup>st</sup> Century girls do. They get married and then, they give burnt offerings. “No, adjust with me yaar. I’m learning.” What were you doing all this while? Because you’ve been told – this does not fit with you. That’s not equality. You are the same as

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man. Who said? God said, "Male and female, I made them. You go out and work; you take care of the home. Together, subdue the world. Reign over life." That's where the Kingdom of God comes. That's where the Church comes back. But when things go wrong, we get a very warped picture. Children are confused. You have this short haired lady, dyed in blond and pink. Two earrings and she is standing at the pulpit and she is saying, "The Lord says..." What's wrong with her? You see, these things matter. These things do matter because if Christ is in you, ultimately, it will touch everything. It will touch your life. It will touch your food. It will touch your drinking. It will touch your clothing. Everything will be touched because you realize – what will Christ do? That's why the message of the Cross is offensive. So, take the Cross away. "You are such lovely girls. Oh my gosh, I wish all of you come next Sunday like boys. Boys, grow hair, okay? Let them cut." You see, take the Cross off and, "Eat whatever you want, drink whatever you want; it doesn't matter. Put earrings, pierce your nose also. God loves you, brother. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter if you come late. Read your Bible occasionally. If you don't, get a Good News version and read." You take the Cross away. Make it easy. Take the Cross away. What am I doing? I am feeding your self. I haven't told you – five different principles how to win the loss in your office. How? Okay. Go down to their level. Don't mention about the Cross. Don't mention 'sin'. Don't mention 'sinner'. Don't mention 'blood'. Then, what is the Gospel? Did you see how easy they made it for people, for the self to be projected? That's what happened through the Bible. That's why, in the end, there will be a sweep of the Spirit of Elijah. The Spirit that was upon Elijah; not the Spirit of Elijah; that was upon Elijah. There is going to be a shaking. God says, "Get into line, My children. Get into line." Ask, "Lord, when I open this, let the Cross be in my heart so that I know what You are telling me. I'm not a humanist reading the Bible; I'm not a socialist reading the Bible; I'm not a communist reading the Bible; I'm not a feminist reading the Bible; I'm just a surrendered child of God reading His Father's words. What do You want me to do, Abba? So, no offense. Whatever You say is okay with me. No offense." That's what the Son said on that day, "Father, take this cup away if it is possible. Not My will. Your will." Father said, "You have to drink it." "I have to drink?" "Yes." "I'm going to be beaten?" "Yes." "I'm going to be stripped naked?" "Yes." "I'm going to be hanging on the Cross?" "Yes." "All the sin of the world is going to be put on Me from Adam to the last man?" "Yes." "It's okay, Dad. I will drink of it. I'm not offended at Your word." Today, if God were to tell one thing, in today's 1 hour 30 minute message, I don't know what all things have offended you. I know from past history, when I mention something about what the Bible says about something, the next day, I get a long letter with every reference in the Bible which says about their favourite preacher who said they can drink wine as much as you want with all the references. They start sending these to me. If something offends you, if you want to justify yourself, you search the net; you will find 10 preachers who will justify it. That is why, on Mount Carmel, there is only one Elijah speaking and God had 850 on the other side. Elijah finished and Miciah, one man standing alone and four hundred on the other side. To obey God, usually, there is only one voice. To disobey God, citation not needed. Ph.D. fellows will understand it is. You have to choose. Children, you have to choose. Shall we stand up?

You must always confess what you are to God in your personal life. Lord, I am not bisexual. I am not homosexual. I am heterosexual. That's the way You made me. When my wife and I talk sometimes and when we hear about this one finding a boyfriend, we say, "Lord, please let it be a believer but thank You that she found a boyfriend and not a girlfriend." Because today, you don't know what they find! Look to the point time has come. 20 years ago, when our parents said, "What?! You have a boyfriend?!" Today, we say, "Thank You, Lord. She has a boyfriend and not a girlfriend." See how it has changed! Understand. Say, "Lord, this is the way You created me. All I want to be is what You made me for. Make me a man. Make me a good man. Make me a good son. Make me a good husband. Make me a good father. Make me a good servant. That's all." "Make me a good woman, a good daughter, a good wife, a good mother and a good servant." That's all. I don't want to be anything else. Shall we pray?

### Closing Prayer:

*Father, this afternoon, we come to You, Lord. Help us, O Lord, not to be offended. O Father, times are changing so fast, O Lord, and the victims are all children. Children are the victims everywhere, Lord. Impressionable, young teenagers, O Lord Father, who have no models, who have no mentors, who are being carried away by the tide that is sweeping the world, O Master. O Father, we pray for the children. We pray for the young ones, O Lord. O Father, touch them. Let them know, Lord, that they belong to You. Let them know, Lord, that You have fearfully and wonderfully made them. Let them know, Lord, they have been made in the image of the Living God and male and female, You have made them. There is no gender in between, O Lord. They can go through a thousand surgeries, O God, but they cannot change their chromosomes, O Lord. They cannot change what You began them with. They will always remain male or female and miserable till the end if they try to change, O Lord. Help them to see, Father. We are not in competition, O Lord. We only complete each other, O Lord. We are not striving for equality, Lord. We are striving for equity, Lord. O Father, together, only we can subdue, Lord. Divided,*



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*we will fall, O Master. Help the married couples to see. Help these young ones to see. Help even the children to see, Lord, that the mothers and the parents would bring up their sons as sons and their daughters as daughters, O Lord. We will not remove the masculinity and feminism from them, Lord; that men would be bold, respectful, courageous, and chivalrous, Lord; and the girls would be feminine, soft, tender, kind, mild and loving, O God. Help them to be, Lord, what You meant us to be, Lord. Then only, Father, the Godhead is reflected in our homes and in our lives, O Lord. Touch our young ones, O Lord. Touch them, Lord. When they go into the world, let them carry Christ in them and Christ with them. Let them daily pick their Cross. Let them not want to be anything other than what You have destined them to be, Lord. O Father, touch, Lord. Touch, Father. We are our worst enemy, Lord. The greatest deception is the deception of the self, Lord. Open our eyes that we might see how strong the self is in us, Lord. Help us to pick up that cross and die daily, Lord, that Christ can live in us and through us, Lord, so that we will be able to lift Christ up and the world will be drawn to Him. The world is not drawn to us because we do not lift Christ; we lift self, Lord. Help us to lift Christ, Lord. Bless Your children in Your Name. I bless the men. I bless the women, the married, the unmarried, the little ones, I bless them in Your Name, Lord. May the hand of the Living God rest upon them all the days of their lives, Lord. Let them grow before Thee, find favour with God and favour with man. Let them grow in grace and wisdom, Lord, and let no one enter into Your presence without fulfilling Your purpose in their lives, O Lord. For there is no greater honour, O Father, than to hear from Your lips, "Well done, My good and faithful servant. Enter into My joy." Thank You, Father. Thank You, Lord. We praise You, Father. We worship You. We glorify You, Lord. O Father, thank You for the Cross that we see Your incredible love and we see our utter rottenness, Lord. Thank You, Lord, that through the Cross, You saved us. Thank You, Lord. Let us not boast of anything else other than the Cross of Jesus Christ. Thank You, Father. As we go into another week, I pray Your presence would be with each one of us. Cover us and keep us. Thank You, Lord. We now lift up holy hands and we bless Your Holy Name. Thank You, Father. For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever, Amen*

### **Benediction:**

*Now, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the Father, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit; the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ envelop us, cover us, protect us until the hour of His Coming. Amen.*