

*Father, we just come to You, Lord. We need Your help, Lord. We are weak but You are strong. We need Your strength to hear, to believe, to obey, to walk with You. We need You more than ever before, Lord. As the times get more and more difficult, we need You that we will continue to obey You, continue to love You, continue to serve You till the very end, O Lord. Speak to us, O Lord. For in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.*

So, we've been looking in the morning how we prepare for the most important moment in our life. It's called the Day of Judgment. The writer of Hebrews calls it 'eternal judgment' because eternity will be decided by that and every day is a preparation for that. And that's why the greatest gift that God has given us is the gift of repentance because as a Father, He doesn't want any child to fail and go to the wrong place. Remember Lazarus and the rich man crying from hell, "Father Abraham! Your son," he called himself 'kumara' (son). He was in the wrong place and he called him, "Father Abraham." See, this is something which we learn – in eternity, everybody will know everybody; nothing is hidden. These restraints of the flesh are gone. People sometimes don't understand what it means. Flesh has restrictions; you all went to eat. Food was good. It doesn't matter how good the food is; you can only eat to a limit. After that, you are full. But what happens in eternity? Restrictions are gone. If you end up in hell, you can eat as much as you want. The hunger is insatiable but there is no food. You can drink as much liquor as you want but there is no liquor. You can have as much lust as want but there are no women.

Are you getting what hell is like? Limitations of flesh are gone but there is no way you can satisfy anything. You see drunk people going for liquor? When they are in that stage, drug addicts will kill their own mother for money. Imagine ending in a place where there are no restrictions. It is lust to the end level but no way you can experience. That's what happened in Noah's time. All of them died because they were strange creatures – sons of God and daughters of men and there were Nephilim in that time; that is the Hebrew word – half human, half demonic and they all died, half-half. Those ones are around; they know what are the passions of man. They want to experience it again and they look for a human body to get in. That's why they are called demons because they want to get into human body; they want to experience the lusts of the human body which they know.

When we do deliverance, sometimes, when you ask them, they say, "My name is Nephilim." They say their name. Understand that; they cannot satisfy it in hell. So, they are always looking for a human body to enter and they come. They call it their house. That is why we live in constant judgment, repenting quickly and ejecting them out. Because we are preparing for another day. That's why God says, "I have not given you the spirit of"? So, it's an 'atma' (spirit); these are all spirit. God said, "I didn't give it," but that doesn't mean they are not there; they are there but God says, "Keep it out!" So, we prepare for that. We have all these works. *1 Corinthians 13* says, "All these works are works of nothing if it is not done in the love of God." Jesus walked in faith. All His works were works of faith but why did He do it? Because He loved His Father and He loved Him. That was the reason He did it. That should be the reason we do that. That's what Scripture says, "I have obeyed My Father and I abide in His love," and He loved people. And in loving God, it's connected with how we obey God. We should get faster and faster in obeying God; more and more complete in obeying God and cheerful in obeying God. It doesn't matter where He sends us but what He tells us to do. It should be a joyful experience. That's why it is not burdensome. That's what we saw last, *1 John 5:3*,

### **1 John 5:3**

**<sup>3</sup> For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.**

And we have this type in the Bible. Jacob loved Joseph, Joseph loved his father and Joseph loved his brothers but his brothers hated Joseph and they didn't really love the father. They pretended to love their father. That's why this entire story of Joseph is given in the Bible. Fifty chapters in the *Book of Genesis*; Abraham only begins by eleven and twelve, thirteen chapters about Abraham, three chapters about Isaac, eleven or twelve about Jacob, thirteen chapters about Joseph. Why one guy? He begins in thirty-seven, finishes at fifty, with one chapter about Judah and Tamar. Why? Because he is a type for us. He loved his father. Father loved him. He loved his brothers; his brothers hated him. God is saying, "We

should love our Father. We should love our brothers even if they hate us,” because God is going to send us to a people who may not even love us. In *Genesis 37:12-17*,

**Genesis 37:12-17**

***<sup>12</sup> Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. <sup>13</sup> And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." So he said to him, "Here I am." <sup>14</sup> Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem. <sup>15</sup> Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?" <sup>16</sup> So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding their flocks." <sup>17</sup> And the man said, "They have departed from here, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.***

Jacob and Joseph are in Hebron. The brothers are far away in Shechem. Jacob has a desire, “Go and see how your brothers are.” He says, “Here I am.” He was fast in obeying his father. It didn’t matter that the brothers didn’t love him. He loved his father and he was willing to keep his father’s command. His father’s desire was to go. We all want to stay at Hebron, That’s the place of fellowship. Who wants to go to Shechem where people don’t like us? But it is the father’s desire. We live after fellowship, we go to Shechem. What is the purpose of going? To find out how the brothers are. Joseph is willing, he is obedient and he goes. But when he reached there, the brothers are not there. That is the difference between the letter of the law and the spirit of the law. “Father sent me to Dothan,” he came back. Nobody is there. But that’s what not what the father sent you for. Father sent you to find how the brothers are. So, he asked, “Where are they?” They said, “They have gone to Dothan.” Now, he goes to Dothan.

That’s what God is talking to us. Will we obey Him fully? Will we obey Him fast? Will we do it cheerfully? He didn’t complain, he didn’t grumble. I’m sure he’s carrying a whole set packaged food for them. Because they all have mothers. He is the only one who doesn’t have a mother; his mother is dead. All of them have mothers. Leah must have said, “Take this for my children.” The other two concubines must have said, “Take this for my children.” And he is going with all of the stuff and he’s going cheerfully. That’s what God is saying, “Learn from him.” He got into trouble because he obeyed God, obeyed his father and he got into trouble. It brought him much hardship in his life. You don’t see him grumbling in Egypt. He’s cheerfully serving God, his father as a slave. And he is serving cheerfully in the prison. That’s what God is talking about. Our obedience to God, our Father is manifested in how fast we obey, how fully we obey, how cheerfully we obey. And God is bringing us to that and our growth is dependent upon this. Will we be quick to obey God? Will we obey Him completely? Not by the letter, by the spirit. What is my Father’s desire? To know the welfare of my brothers. And if they are not there at Dothan?

See, in the Church, we give the people many, many responsibilities. Two of them are here, two of them are there. Their job is to record. Okay. They can think, “My job is to record. I have recorded.” But what is the purpose of recording? So that others whom I don’t know will hear. If you say, “I have recorded,” then you won’t be careful about your recording. The purpose of the father is to see, “The recording is the best that I can give. I should never miss. It should be recorded. It should be the best I can give,” so that somebody who hears, they are not seeing, they are not watching, they are hearing two voices and they will hear. You know, I have met people years later, who heard my voice.

I was preaching in a Church in West Bengal. There was a man listening to me and after the meeting was over, he came to me. He said, “Are you that Pastor James from Hyderabad?” I said, “Yes.” He said, “I’ve heard your messages in an internet cafe. I heard your voice and I thought you are a big man. But you are a small man.” He said, “I am Telugu. I am from Vishakhapatnam and I am a Pastor.” Telugu Pastor here. Somebody told me, “There’s a man who preaches in English; it’s available in Telugu,” and he said, “See, I downloaded all your messages from there and I listen.” If they don’t do their job, will others hear? There are many places in Andhra and Telangana where people hear but they don’t know me. So, everything we can do by the letter or we can do it by the Spirit. What is the Spirit? What is the Father’s purpose? In the ministry, Father has a purpose. Do it willingly, fast, fully and cheerfully.

Can you imagine if you are a child in the house, you have all these elder brothers? Then, it is a big day in the house; biggest day in your house. A prophet has come to your house. Prophets don’t go to houses. The prophet has especially come for your house and told your father, “Get all your sons ready.” The father doesn’t tell this son, “You don’t have to get ready.

You go look after the sheep.” How will you feel? David is in the wilderness looking after the sheep. He obeyed his father fully, cheerfully. Seven others are here dressed, clean, oiled and waiting. But God’s eyes are on that boy. It may look like a small thing to look after the sheep. The Scripture says, “He who is faithful in little things, he will be put in charge of big things.” That’s the thing. Cheerfully do those little things. God was preparing this world for His Son but He had to cheerfully had to walk and minister to a Samaritan woman; one person, before He can get this harvest. See, we always have these big things in our minds. We forget those small things. Be careful about those small things. Can you imagine Joseph’s story? He went to Shechem; no brothers, then, he went back. He could have missed God’s appointment. God had an appointment for him at Dothan. “Today is your day. *My ways are not your ways; My thoughts are not your thoughts.* At Dothan, chains are waiting but these chains will lead you to the throne one day. But it will depend upon how you will obey your father. Will you obey him wholly? Will you obey him cheerfully?” And often, we don’t realise, we miss our blessings because our blessings at Dothan but we went to Shechem and went back. There are places where our blessings are waiting; that is the blessing of obedience.

We can end up disobeying God if we listen to man. We have to love God with all our hearts and not disobey Him by listening to man. Adam disobeyed God by listening to man; he listened to his wife. Scripture is very clear, “Adam was not deceived.” He disobeyed God knowingly. God says, “*If you love Me, you will keep My commands.*” Abraham disobeyed God by listening to Sarah. That’s why Ishmael came. Moses disobeyed God by not circumcising his sons because he listened to Zipporah. Saul disobeyed the voice of God by listening to the voice of the people. Many Pastors disobey the voice of God by listening to the voice of the people. A young prophet disobeyed the clear voice of God by listening to the voice of an old prophet in the *Book of Kings*. He had done the greatest miracle that time Israel had seen. At his word, the altar had broken, ashes had come out, the king’s hand was severed and the king’s hand was healed. He heard, he obeyed, miracle happened and then, he went and he disobeyed and he died.

What does it mean? It means – it doesn’t matter how greatly God has used me and you in the past, if we have disobeyed in the present, our ministry will be cut short. Because Jesus said, “*If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love.*” Sometimes, people disobey God when He speaks the Word through another man. Incredible ministry is cut short because they disobeyed God. Josiah brings reformation into Israel. Then, suddenly, he goes to war with the king of Egypt. What does Scripture say? Why did Josiah die? In *2 Chronicles 35:21-22*,

#### **2 Chronicles 35:21-22**

***<sup>21</sup> But he sent messengers to him, saying, “What have I to do with you, king of Judah? I have not come against you this day, but against the house with which I have war; for God commanded me to make haste. Refrain from meddling with God, who is with me, lest He destroy you.” <sup>22</sup> Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself so that he might fight with him, and did not heed the words of Necho from the mouth of God. So he came to fight in the Valley of Megiddo.***

Did you see this? Here is an unbelieving king making haste to obey the Living God and here is the believing king making haste to disobey God. He’s telling, “Please, your God told me. Why are you coming, king of Judah?” And he dies. So, we have to also look how many ways we can disobey God because disobedience and lack of repentance is the evidence that we really don’t know God. *1 John 2:3-4* says this,

#### **1 John 2:3-4**

***<sup>3</sup> Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. <sup>4</sup> He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.***

Okay. That’s the proof. That is why we have to look at the terms on which God will judge us. When it comes to obey God, be very, very clear how Bible puts it across. We will look at two verses; *Deuteronomy 28:1-2*,

#### **Deuteronomy 28:1-2**

***<sup>1</sup> “Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. <sup>2</sup> And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God:***

***“The commandments which I command you. Obey the voice of the Lord.”***

Listen to this carefully – every religion has commandments. We also have commandments. What is the difference between them and us? Every religion has only commandments; we have commandments and the voice of the Lord. Find any Muslim, he will tell you the commandments of his God but he will not say, “Allah spoke.” Bring any Hindu, he will tell you the commandments. He will never say, “Krishna or Rama spoke to me.” If you find the Buddhist, he will tell you what are the commandments of Buddhism. But if you ask him, he will never say, “Buddha spoke to me.” Find any genuine Christian, he will tell you the commandments of God and he will also say, “The Lord spoke to me,” because we have a Living God. We have to have the commandments of God and yet, hear and obey the voice of God. Voice of God is specific. The commandments of God are general. We have to hear the voice of God. That is why we will go back to that portion is *Hebrews 3:7-8*, Scripture says,

**Hebrews 3:7-8**

***<sup>7</sup> Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you will hear His voice, <sup>8</sup> Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness,***

Two people were talking; one was an atheist, the other was a Christian. The atheist told the Christian, “Do you know God is dead?” The other man said, “When did He die? I heard Him in the morning.” This is our confidence. Written commandments alone don’t give us confidence. Scripture says, “This is how we know we are the children of God because the spirit within us cries, ‘Abba Father!’” There are the commandments and there is the voice of God. We need both. The commandments give us the security that the voice we hear is the voice of God because the voice will not contradict the commandments. “If you eat from the tree, you will not die.” “Hey, wait for a second; that’s not my Father’s voice.” “My Father said, ‘If you eat, you’ll surely die.’” That’s why we need to know the commandments of God so that we are sure when the voice speaks. In many lives, that voice has been stilled because when we heard that voice, we hardened our hearts and “if today you hear the voice...” Because God’s desire is only to bless His children, give them victory and on the Day of Judgment to stand there without fear, with joy and with confidence. That’s why in *Deuteronomy 30:19-20*, He says,

**Deuteronomy 30:19-20**

***<sup>19</sup> I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; <sup>20</sup> that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”***

See Telugu translation misses out much; ‘**You must obey His voice, you may cling to Him for He is your life and the length of your days.**’ Telugu will make it ‘*dirghayu*’ (long life), that’s not what it is: “He is the length of your days.” It’s incredible what the actual words says, “He is your life, He is the length of your days,” like we say in Christendom, “How old are you?” You are only as old as you have known God. When you stand before God, when books are opened, it doesn’t open from the day you were born. It only opens from the day you were born again because He is your length of your days, He is your life. When you turn the pages, your life is not being seen, only what Christ did through you and me is shown. He is our life, He is the length of our days because it’s all about Him. That’s why that voice of the Lord and that voice has got nothing to do with other things we go through and *Isaiah 55:12*,

**Isaiah 55:12**

***<sup>12</sup> “For you shall go out with joy, And be led out with peace; The mountains and the hills Shall break forth into singing before you, And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.***

What is God talking about? “Are these those who hear My voice and walk in My obedience? Their circumstances don’t matter.” You can be in a palace or in a prison; you will still have a song. You can be in the fire or the lion’s den. Nothing scars you because you have heard the voice of your God. Pastor Vijay has two small girls. They are sleeping in the other room; power goes, it’s dark, it’s raining, it’s thundering, it’s lightning and the children are scared. All he has to say, “I am there.” No light, there is thunder; there is lightning, all he has to say, “Abigail, I’m there.” Here is God. Has circumstance changed? Still the dark, there is still thunder, there is still lightning; only one thing: they have heard the voice of their father.

This is exactly what God says. When Jesus said in the final, last commission, He's sending us to brothers who hate us. Last words in *Matthew 28:20*,

**Matthew 28:20**

***<sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.***

He says, "You will hear My voice." And the love of God is intimately connected with listening to His voice and obeying Him and it is more than earthly ties. *Matthew 12*, we have a situation in Jesus' life.

**Matthew 12:46-50**

***<sup>46</sup>While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. <sup>47</sup>Then one said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You." <sup>48</sup>But He answered and said to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" <sup>49</sup>And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! <sup>50</sup>For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother."***

Jesus was in a meeting. His brothers and mother was outside and they sent word to call Him. And they went and told Him, "Your mother and Your brothers are calling." He didn't stop the meeting. Somebody text me in the morning, "I cannot come because my mother has come." You know what Jesus said? He said, "These are my mothers, these are My brothers." He says, "Hearing the voice of God is the more important than anything else in the world." In *Matthew 7:21-23*,

**Matthew 7:21-23**

***<sup>21</sup>"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. <sup>22</sup>Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' <sup>23</sup>And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'***

Because many will come but they don't obey the voice of God because obeying the voice of God will stir up many things and real active Christianity keeps the commands of God and hears the voice of God. Because as trouble is increasing and persecution is rising, the Church will not survive unless it hears the voice of God. Scripture says very clearly in *Isaiah 1:19-20*,

**Isaiah 1:19-20**

***<sup>19</sup>If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land; <sup>20</sup>But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword"; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.***

Both are there. It says, "Either you can have the life of Jesus; the overcoming life of Jesus, that overcomes everything," every sword, every persecution, every trial, every tribulation; it overcomes, "or you can rebel or disobey and you will be devoured by the sword." Churches in India are caught in between these two and always for two thousand years, the Churches have been caught between these two. That is why God says, "All your works, if you do not have love, is worth nothing." That's the first thing He says, in the *Book of Revelation* to the Church, "Your works are all fantastic! But you have one problem. That one problem will take you down – you have lost your first love. If you don't come back to that, what will I take? I will take the lampstand." What will happen? You will have the commands of God without the voice of God. You will not hear the voice of God again. Every Church in the world where the voice of the God has ceased has just become an institution. They have buildings, they have programs; voice of God has ceased because God says, "Where was the problem?" Problem was not in the works; problem was, they lacked love. That's why God says, "Seek the person of God." In *Psalms 63:2*,

**Psalms 63:2**

***<sup>2</sup>So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory.***

Why did you come today? Whom are you seeking? Honestly, why are you seeking? If you have sought Him, you will see Him. He said, “I have sought You in the sanctuary.” That’s what Paul will say in *2 Corinthians 3:18*,

**2 Corinthians 3:18**

***<sup>18</sup> But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.***

When does your face unveil? Scripture says, “Whenever you read Moses, a veil covers your face.” Why? Scripture says, “Even now, when the Scripture is read, a veil covers your face.” When you open your Bible, if all you see is the commands of God and no voice of God, a veil is covering your face. When you read your Bible, you see the commandments of God; above all, you see the voice of God; the voice of God is important. If the voice of God is not there, how will I know I did wrong? Remember, I said the five things – thoughts, intentions, attitude, work and deeds. Did you see? How will I know? I thought, I did, I spoke and I felt good. The voice of God is not there. If the voice of God is there, it will tell me, “Your attitude was not right.” So, I have no chance to repent. Next time I do this, I will do it cheerfully, Lord. As I said, all these five have to meet and for that, I need the voice of God but if the veil covers, I will only see the commands and I will go do the commands and I grow older and older as a Pharisee; keeps all the little bits of the commands, knows the law so hard. When God speaks, they cannot hear and they will silence that voice of God. They are not people who didn’t know the commands of God; they knew the commands of God; they kept the commands of God; they missed the voice of God completely. But God says, “If we hear the voice, then you see with an unveiled face.” You are beholding the glory of God like in a mirror. “You hear My voice, you obey My voice, you hear My voice,” and inside, you are being changed from glory to glory in His image.

Do you remember, first time when Pastor Naveen translated for me? Do you know how he struggled? Do you see how smoothly it flows now? Why? Because he’s very familiar with my voice. Do you see? Okay. So, you see the more familiar he is with my voice, the less you miss. Be familiar with God’s voice and the more you obey, the less we miss God and the less people miss God because we are called to reflect Him and not us. That’s what God is talking about. Obeying God is always connected to loving God. There’s nothing that can be taken out of it. Obey speedily, fully and cheerfully but when it comes to obeying man, it is not the same. Loving God, loving man is not the same. Listen to what God says in *John 15:13*,

**John 15:13**

***<sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.***

**1 John 3:16**

***<sup>16</sup> By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.***

It’s completely different. When it comes to loving your neighbor, we are called to lay down our life. It is the first commandment that enables us to keep the second but the reason He kept the second is because of the first. All His work worked out of faith and it was worked out in love. When it comes to this love, *1 Corinthians 13:4-7* tells us something else,

**1 Corinthians 13:4-7**

***<sup>4</sup> Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; <sup>5</sup> does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; <sup>6</sup> does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; <sup>7</sup> bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.***

There are eight ‘nots’ and seven ‘is’; this is what love is and this is what love is not. So, we judge our love for others by looking at this. It is not like what the world talks about love. Look at this first one alone – ***love suffers long***. It doesn’t stop there, ***and is kind***. There are many people who suffer long but they are not kind. I’ve seen many Pastors in the mission field; they have suffered so long, they are so angry. If you go close to them, they will bite you. That’s what Scripture says, “Love suffers long and it’s still kind.” Joseph went, left Hebron to Shechem because he loved his father and loved his brothers. He went even further, the extra mile to Dothan. What he got was – being tied and sold. He suffered. He’s sold as a slave. We will say, “He is a slave,” but for the father’s favourite son, it is a suffering to be a slave and then, he’s thrown into prison. But you remember this –d he’s prince of Egypt now. He’s suffered for thirteen years but he is kind. Did he call, “Potiphar, Potiphar’s wife come to me”? Did he say anything? Thirteen years of suffering – nothing. When he was thrown into the

prison, wasn't he kind to the baker and the cup bearer? Do you see ever unkindness in him? No. Why did he suffer for thirteen years? Because of his brothers. One day, they are standing before him. He recognizes them, they don't recognize him and he has suffered long because of them. Outwardly, he acts rough but he is actually very kind. Why? Because he wants to bring them to repentance. When they are going, he puts the silver in their bags. He actually goes inside and he cries. Has he suffered long? Or has he lost his kindness? That's the key. Ministry is tough because God has sent to people, all kinds of people will come. They will do all kinds of things. It is not easy.

When God told the children of Israel to cross river Jordan, He gives them one instruction – "Follow the ark." The priests were carrying the Ark. There were many, many priests. During David's time, there were twenty-three thousand priests. All priests did not carry the Ark. When Israel is crossing, many priests but they were only called to follow the priests who were carrying the Ark of the testimony. And God is telling His people, "I need people, I need priests who will carry the testimony of the Living God upon themselves so that people will follow." And they were the first to step in and the last to come out. They stood in the middle, holding the Ark. People are going, cattle are going, all the crowds are going; they are still standing there. Their shoulders must be aching, their legs must be aching, they must be tired, they are hungry but they cannot take a break because people have to cross. That's what God is talking about. Ministry is not easy; it is difficult. But God says, "It is long suffering." For some Pastors, it will only end at your death. For Pastor Paul, in the Bible, his death was the end of his suffering but they never lost their kindness. Many people are not like Pastor Paul, they are like Pastor Naomi. They have suffered long but they are bitter. God says, "No, love suffers long but it will always remain kind." Our love towards God is reflected in how we obey Him. Our love towards people is how we react to the suffering in ministry. Jesus never lost His kindness. "If you are the Son of God, come down."

What today's movie maker would make – Hollywood movie, Bollywood movie maybe like '*Bahubali*' (Indian movie)? "Theeeng! And he comes down and cuts." What all thing gods of this world do? O, one chakra goes, cuts everybody's heads off. "I am the Son of God. I can come down but if I come down, how will you go up?" He still has to plead for mercy, "Dad, forgive them. They don't know what they are doing." Both thieves are shouting. One stops because he sees His kindness. *Book of Romans* in chapter 2, it says, "*it is the kindness of God that bring us to repentance.*" Last stages, three men hanging on the Cross. One looks at the kindness of this man, turns to repentance, "Lord when You come to Your Kingdom, remember me." Even on the Cross, Jesus did not lose His kindness. He's still ministering, "Yes, you will be with Me." This is what Bible is talking about. We have all these testimonies of faith; we need to have the testimony of love. Yes, we have suffered but we have not lost our kindness. Kind, not that we compromise; we don't compromise on truth. Jesus never compromised but He was never unkind and we need that. That is what Scripture is talking about, "Love suffers long," and he's kind. That's what happened during each of the judgments. That's what Jesus did. Why is God waiting? In *2 Peter 3:9-10*, Scripture says,

### **2 Peter 3:9-10**

***<sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.***

Reason? The Day of the Lord will come. God knows after the Day of the Lord, judgment is set. So, He's long suffering towards His people; very longsuffering and He is kind. Jesus will say it in this way in *Matthew 5:44-45*,

### **Matthew 5:44-45**

***<sup>44</sup>But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, <sup>45</sup>that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.***

Did you see that? When God sends the sun, it only falls on the believers? When the rain comes, it only falls on the field of the believers? Six thousand years, God is longsuffering towards us and He is also kind. One hundred and twenty years waiting during the time of Noah, till the last moment, He was long suffering and He was kind. He was kind, why? He is still kind, why? He said, "The last days will be like the days of Noah and the days of Lot." They were eating, they were drinking, they were planting, they were sowing, they were working, they were giving in marriage, getting married. Why? Because God is kind. He doesn't say, "Until you repent, no more rain, no more eating, no more drinking, no more marriage, no more work; nothing like this." God says, "Do you understand My heart?" He says, "You'll go through a lot of sufferings because I

am sending you to people Joseph was sent to.” But He says, “Don’t lose your kindness.” He really, really suffered but he always remained kind and they mistook his kindness. They said, “He is kind to us because the father is alive,” and when father died, they sent word, “O Jacob is dead. Now he will kill us,” and he wept. He said, “Who am I?” Man. You know what he really went through. *Book of Genesis* doesn’t talk, *Book of Psalms* talks. *Psalm 105:17-19*,

**Psalm 105:17-19**

<sup>17</sup> *He sent a man before them— Joseph—who was sold as a slave.* <sup>18</sup> *They hurt his feet with fetters, He was laid in irons.* <sup>19</sup> *Until the time that his word came to pass, The word of the LORD tested him.*

Who sent him? God sent. ***That His word came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him.*** What was the Word of the Lord testing him? ‘Will you remain a kind person till the end?’ ‘Will you obey the commandments of God?’ and ‘Will you love your neighbour as yourself?’ ***Until the time the word of the Lord tested him.*** Word of the Lord is testing us too; testing all of us. He says, “Even as you suffer long, will you obey the commandments of God? Will you heed the voice of God and be kind and merciful to others?” That’s what God is talking about. That is the royal law. *James 2:8*,

**James 2:8**

<sup>8</sup> *If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you do well;*

In Telugu it says, ‘*pramukhyaman*’ (main) but you see here it is called the ‘royal law’. Why? Because it is the law of the kings. Let me ask you this question: do we go to ask for mercy and kindness to king or to ordinary people? God says, “You want to act like kings? Be merciful and be kind.” That’s a royal law. That’s when you are sons of your Father. That’s why Jesus said, “Love your enemies.” When you have to love your enemies, as I close in another 5-10 minutes, first, be very sure – why are our enemies our enemies? Are they our enemies because we treated them badly? Because we spoke bad things about them? Because we cheated them and harmed them? Then, God says, “Repent and make restitution.” If that is not the reason, because many, many cases you will see, when they say, “Persecution,” it is not persecution; it was something which you did. One thing I will tell Pastors sitting here okay. Most of you will have small Churches. You could be in very close houses and all. Don’t use big speakers and dum, dum, dum and disturb everybody. You can’t do that in America; you can’t do that in Europe; you can’t do that in Dubai, anywhere. They allow you to worship, freely; don’t disturb others. For us, even if there are only five people, we need two speakers and three drums – that is worship. And then, you give an open door for the enemy. Two people and go and complain and will say, “These people are disturbing us,” they will come and say, “Shut your Church!” Be wise. I know; I have worked with underground Churches. We close the door; front door is always closed, lock is there. We only enter through the back door, windows are shut, curtains are drawn; one guitar that too very gentle. Sing softly. In China, many underground Churches, they don’t even sing. They just read the songs. Why? They want to worship; they don’t want that to stop, okay. So, don’t unnecessarily create enemies. We don’t need a loudspeaker waking up at five o’clock, “Waaaang! Wake up!” We don’t need that; that is all the letter of the law.

You know what the Spirit of the Law is? Do you want to get up at five? Get on your knees and tell, “Spirit of God, wake me up at five, I want to worship You.” At five, you will be awake, your eyes will open; we don’t need any of these things. Where it is available, where it is not a disturbance, we use it freely but none of these things will restrain our worship because God is raising up a set of people who will worship Him in Spirit and in truth. So, in every situation, you have to ask – what is the truth? What is the Spirit? And don’t say, “No, no, if I have to have, I’ll have.” Young Pastors come to my house and say, “I have taken a hall...” I said, “What are you starting?” He said, “I’m starting a service.” “So, what are you doing?” He said, “I have rented a hall, I’ve bought two speakers and I’ve bought instruments.” I said, “Do you have people?” “No, people are not there.” So, for us, worship means instruments and hall, not people. A time may come, we will not be able to gather like this. We should be able to listen.

I was in a small little Church in Darjeeling; in a Church, I was preaching. A senior Pastor told me, “Now, everywhere, there are Churches. When we have meetings, people come slowly. Bus is there, bike is there; they all come in their own time.” He said, “When I came in the Lord, there were very few Christians and preachers were few. In the night, when we had meetings, I could see all the believers coming like fire-flies. Everyone has got a lantern and is climbing up a hill to come for the meeting.” He says, “Then, there was zeal. Now, there is no zeal.” None of these things restrict worship because God will have a people who will worship in Spirit and in truth. Because we need to ask: why do people hate? Why are they enemies? *Psalm 2:1-2*,



**Psalm 2:1-2**

***<sup>1</sup> Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? <sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed,***

They gather against His anointed. Let me tell you – don't get carried away by all these things. Let me say – Bibles were burnt in Telangana. Will anybody ever take a paper from Quran? Will anybody tare a Geeta? One paper of the Punjabi Guru Granth Sahib was found somewhere on the roadside, there were riots in Punjab and the government changed. Nobody will attack these books. This book will be attacked because this is the power of God to believe. This book changes lives. There is the power of God in this. As an Indian, I get upset when they do like that because that is lawlessness but as a Christian, I am not bothered. This can't be burnt. This is the Word of the Living God. When Babylon lit up the furnace, the words stood up in the furnace and it did not burn. This can't be burnt. Heaven and earth will pass away, this can't be burnt. So, people rage against the Anointed One, but they are blinded, they are ignorant. But God has mercy on them. So, we don't get angry. Because many, many people who burnt Bible and tore Bibles are missionaries today, including Sadhu Sundar Singh and Bakh Singh and all. They all tore this but didn't realise this was fighting them all also. This is no ordinary book. So, don't get upset by all these things.

Jesus made it very clear to us in *John 15:18*,

**John 15:18**

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

Then, He says further in *John 17:14*,

**John 17:14**

***<sup>14</sup> I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.***

The minute you have the Word, the world will hate you because the Word is a constant challenge to the world. Don't ever think because you are all sitting so quietly, you'll like the Word I gave you today. The world inside you hates the Word you heard today because like the world none of us like the Word. So, if you stand up for the Word, the world will hate you. Congregation will hate you. That's why his family and congregation hated Moses. What did that poor man do? Did he hang them? All he used to do was praying, "Water, Lord; meat, Lord; clothes, Lord." That was all he was doing but they couldn't stand him. But why didn't they like him? Because he also lifted this up. That's why they didn't like him. See, everybody likes clothes and 'topi' (caps) and all that, you know? All that funny things we also make independent Bishops and all the 'topi' things. I don't know what they are doing; all kinds of things, they make. Aaron also had a nice 'topi' and all but Moses had the Word; Word was with Moses. You can have all the garments you want but it is the Word that saves. God is telling all His servants, "If you have the Word, the world will hate you." See, God loves and we are called to love. "God's love," He says, which He gives to us, "is longsuffering and it is kind." Check these things – our obedience to God and our kindness to people. We don't have to agree with people but we can still be kind to people. I struggle with unkindness of people. I don't understand why people are unkind.

Let me ask you this question – you have a baby. They have all grown but I had my babies. Every baby, except when they smile, they are a trouble. When one side is dry, the other side is wet. They are always like that. They are the cutest and the most selfish creature ever God made. "Feed me, change me, entertain me. You daddy, mummy are my personal slaves." They make you suffer. They don't need big things; one little gas moving will make you suffer for two hours. But are we unkind to them? No, because we love them. God says, "You know to suffer long and love your own. It's not that you don't know; you know. Just spread it." God says, "All are My children. I suffer long; I suffer more than you because every sin, every one of you make is against My holiness, is against My righteousness, is against My love and I suffer and I am still kind." So, God doesn't react to the sins of all the people in the same way.

There were some people in the Bible whom God loved and who loved God; it was both ways. One of them was David. When David sinned, really, a father talking to a son, "Why did you do this? Why did you take another man's wife? If it was a

woman you wanted, I would have given you all these concubines. You taking another man's wife, didn't all the kings of this world talk ill about Me, your Father?" That's what He tells. David loved God. That's why he was broken. Not because of what he did to Bathsheba; Bathsheba is okay. She's getting ready to be a mother but he knows God is not okay and he is broken because he loves God. So, God is longsuffering towards us, though every day, we sin against His holiness, His love and His righteousness and He's still kind. That's one thing we need to ask of God, "Lord, help me to suffer long. You are going to send me to a set of people who are unkind, who'll take advantage of me," who will use us; that's what we are meant to be. I always tell my Pastors, "Sheep use us; we don't use our sheep." When they use you and leave you, don't carry bitterness inside. Don't lose your kindness; never lose it. "Lord, help me to be longsuffering and still kind."

This evening, look at these two things. We have looked at faith for years but Scripture says, "Faith has to work through love." If there is no love, all this is worth nothing. The world doesn't know what love means. You want to know what love means, you have to read *1 Corinthians 13*; this is what love is. Because next week is World Love Day, Valentine's Day; they have no clue what love is. Because if the world has to love you and you have to love, the person has to look good, has to be dressed well, has to have all that. But when God loves, He will walk, He's tired and there is this woman, probably old, marred by sin, five husbands, five divorced, living with the sixth one, coming all alone and her Valentine's Day, He is waiting for her because six is the number of man. "You had five husbands, you are living with the sixth one. You are still thirsty. The water that I give, if you drink, you will thirst no more." Seventh one has come; perfect one has come. That's what God is talking about. He is the lover of our soul; there is none like Him and our job is to lead people to Him and not lead people to us. We lead people to Him so that they fall in love with Jesus. What we cry out to God is this; Lord, there be nothing in me that becomes a stumbling block to people for coming to Christ. Let people see Christ and love Christ; keep leading them to Christ. He will change people from glory to glory. This evening shall we stand? Shall we pray?

**Closing Prayer:**

*O Father, we just come to You. We just thank You, Lord. Awesome God! Merciful God! Longsuffering God! How many times we have sinned against You. How many times we have fallen short of Your glory. Yet, You have suffered long and You have always been kind. Change us, Lord. Our love is not enough; our love is empty, our love is false. We need Your love; more of Your love that we may be able to love like You love, Lord. Help us to obey. Your commandments are not burdensome. Help us to obey You and love our neighbour. Help us to be true to who You are, O God. We need more of Your Spirit, more of Your power and we cry out, O Lord, circumcise our hearts that we may love You with all our heart, all our mind, all our strength. O Father, that's what the world needs, Lord – men and women and children who love like God. Help us, Lord. I commit Your servants into Thy hands and every dear sister and child here, I pray there will be a quickening of hearts; they will be quick to repent, quick to put right any wrong. As they hear Your voice today, they will not harden their hearts, they will obey Your voice and You will lead us in peace. O, You will take us out in joy. O, the mountains will dance, the trees will clap when nature and creation sees God leading His children. Thank You, Father. Bless Your servants, empower Your servants. Heal those who are sick, strengthen those who are old and weak. Provide for those who struggle, Lord. Above all, help them to put order in their lives so that we are all prepared for our day of appointment with God. Let no one meet You unprepared, Lord. Help us to live in the light of that day; cheerfully, joyfully and confidently. We can truly say with our hearts, "Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus." Thank You, Father. Thank You for Pastor Naveen, Lord. We commit him into Thy hands. I pray You will continue to open more and more doors for him, that You will use him to the uttermost, Lord. Every servant of Yours, who is true to Your Word, You will open doors for them, Lord; that is Your Word will go forth, that the earth may be filled with the knowledge of God. Thank You, Father. We lift up holy hands and we bless Your Holy Name. Thank You, Father. For in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.*