

Father, this morning, we just come to You. We just surrender before Thee, Lord. Plead the Blood of Jesus over ourselves, over this place, over our homes, over our ministries. O the blood that cleanses, the blood that sanctifies, the blood that gives victory. We come under that blood. Sanctify us this day, Lord, by Your blood, by Your Spirit. Cleanse our ears, cleanse our hearts, cleanse our minds that we may receive what is from You. Give us strength in our physical bodies, give us strength. We want to serve You with this body, Lord. By faith, we offer our bodies as a living sacrifice. Your Word says, "The body for the Lord, the Lord for the body." We give our bodies to You, Lord. Use us, Lord, this year more than You have ever used any one of us. We just surrender ourselves, Lord. Speak to us this morning, sanctify us with Your Word, strengthen us with Your Word, correct us through Your Word, wash us clean through Your Word. Speak to us, Father. For in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

So, we look to 2018. Today is the sixth day. God finished His work in the sixth day; our work is still there. I believe 2018 is going to be an incredible year for the Church, when God is going to move for His people in a way He's never done in the recent history. And it's interesting that yesterday, we had a public prayer meeting in Telangana after so many years because permission was not being given for years and suddenly, it opened with prayers. So, God will open every door. It is God who opens; the door God opens, no man can shut. So, believe this year, it's going to be an incredible year of harvest. Believe for your ministries, for your Churches. Believe this year is a year of destiny – 2018.

First, we will turn today to *Genesis 37:5-8*,

### **Genesis 37:5-8**

***<sup>5</sup>Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more. <sup>6</sup>So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: <sup>7</sup>There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf." <sup>8</sup>And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.***

Amen. We all know the story of Joseph. Joseph is a type of the overcomer in the Old Testament. He is the eleventh son; the son under grace. Ten are under the law; this is the son of grace. So, remember all the others will hate those who are under grace. But here, Scripture says, "When he spoke about the dream and the words connected with the dream, they hated him even more." He didn't understand the dream very much, but his brothers understood what that dream was. It was a dream of reigning. It was a dream of overcoming and they were mad at him and they hated him for that. So, Joseph is a type in the Old Testament, we learn about our own lives. What God spoke to Joseph in a dream, He has spoken to us in His Word in *Romans 8:37*,

### **Romans 8:37**

***<sup>37</sup>Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.***

God has spoken it that we will reign, we will overcome. We know by now, eight times in the *Book of Revelation*, God to the seven Churches He will keep saying, "He who overcomes." And then, in *Revelation 21:7*, He finally concludes with this,

### **Revelation 21:7**

***<sup>7</sup>He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.***

So, there is God's declaration. It was declared over Joseph and we will see years later, it will come to pass through. But remember this, when Joseph told this dream to his brothers, he was just a 17-year-old boy. They were not upset about who he was; they were upset about who he was going to be. The devil is not afraid of our present; the devil is afraid of our future. They wanted to stop Joseph from becoming what God said he would become. From going to where God said he would go, they wanted to stop Joseph from entering God's destiny for him. If anything the devil wants to do with God's

children; first, he tries to see the whole world doesn't get saved. But once they get saved, the next thing he tries to see, they don't reach their destiny. This is our destiny; God has spoken even to the weakest Church in *Revelation 3:21*, He speaks this,

**Revelation 3:21**

***<sup>21</sup>To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.***

He says, "He will reign with Me." That is what Joseph will do at the end. This is what is promised to us too. He says, "If you overcome." Joseph has to overcome all the trails on the way; before the Word would come true. So, God has promised this to us too and there is a pathway to this fulfilment. *Romans 8:16-17*, shows the path,

**Romans 8:16-17**

***<sup>16</sup>The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup>and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.***

So, there is a way there. The first thing is – we need to be very sure that we are children, very sure, something that a child knows about his father. No child, if you know has ever seen his birth certificate but he knows his father. We should know our Father very well. But some people, to be very sure, to be safe, will quote Scripture. It is true but more than that, there is a Spirit within which calls Him Father. Then, if we are children, then we are heirs; joint heirs with Christ Jesus, destined to rule one day. Condition – if we suffer with Him. Joseph had to suffer; he came through that victorious. That's why I said 2018 is going to be a great year but the greater the year more testing, more trials. So, be prepared for that. So, believe, just don't take only one part of the promise. There is a way to the fulfilment to the promise. So, only six days into the New Year and it's only the sixth day morning.

Look back at 2017. How was the year? How did I make use of the time? You see the greatest hindrance to fulfilling God's destiny in my life, in your life is nobody else, it's not even the devil; it's me myself. Our greatest hindrance is 'we'. We always think it is somebody else. No, it's not anybody else. If we know ourselves, even the devil, God will use to help us to push up. Our greatest hindrance is self. So, address yourself. Most of the problems are not outside; most of the problems are inside. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, Scripture says, if you read *Luke 15:17-20*,

**Luke 15:17**

***<sup>17</sup>"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!***

Ah! One second. The beginning was this – 'He spoke to himself'. He came to himself and he spoke to himself. He analyzed his situation honestly. If 2017 was not a good year for you, was a bad year for you and you were stuck in a position, talk to yourself, be honest with yourself. This is the first time this man is becoming honest to himself. He's sitting in a pig pen, taking care of pigs, hungry, dirty, miserable; for the first time, he's honest. He's talking to himself and he finds a solution, "I will arise, go to my father." Not only that he analyzed, he also found an answer, this is where the solution lies, "I will go to my father." And *verse 20* will say, "He arose and he went."

**Luke 15:18-20**

***<sup>18</sup>I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, <sup>19</sup>and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."<sup>20</sup> "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.***

Three thing –: he came to himself, analyzed himself, he arose and he went. Many people make decisions on the 31<sup>st</sup> and by 1<sup>st</sup>, it's forgotten. It doesn't even last one week. Many people make good decisions like him – analyzed 2017. This is the solution, "I'm going back to my God, I'm going back to my Father," but they don't arise, they don't go. Analyze session is good, analyzing is good, self-evaluation is good, solution is also good but action is very important. That is where our redemption lies. If you don't want 2018 to be like 2017, then move, arise.

See, there is something about God – God is love; God is also light, God is also truth, God is also holy, God is also righteous so God will never do anything that goes against His character. If we choose to lie in the pig pen and die, the loving Father will allow us to die. He will be still love and in His love, He will let us die. He will allow us to die. God cannot contradict Himself. That's why we constantly come for the meditation of the Word because ignorance can be a very dangerous thing. See, satan doesn't care if you live in the past; he's not very much bothered about your present also. What he's worried about is our future and he is after all those who believe our God ordained future. So, 2018, have you got a grip of God's vision for us? This is how Paul will put it in Philippians 3,

**Philippians 3:13-14**

***<sup>13</sup> Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.***

He said, "I'm forgetting the past." 2017 is over; it is behind us. Many people live either in the mistakes of the past or the victories of the past. Both are traps. If you ask people their testimony. Testimonies are from the past but God is in the present. Anyone who comes to God must believe that He is. You cannot live in 2017's testimonies. That's what he is saying, "I forget these things of the past. I'm not even living in the present." I will tell you what it means. If you don't have the problems of 2017, we will be happy and content in 2018. They don't want to move into the future. He says, "No I am pressing into my future." When you press on, there will be new challenges. There are two kinds of peace that Jesus talks about. Jesus says, "I give you peace not the way the world gives." That means there is a peace in the world.

How does the peace of the world come? Basically, by compromise; by appeasement. In every religion, peace is through appeasement. That is why in many, many religions, if you notice – the face of god looks terrible. You have to appease it with something and in the world, peace can be bought until you meet a righteous man. If you go to government, there are no righteous people; you can buy peace. If you get into a train, even if you have no berth, if you have a T.T. who is not righteous, you can buy peace and sleep peacefully. Anywhere in the world, as long as you don't meet righteous people, from the police station up to Delhi you can buy peace; that is the peace the world gives. Jesus doesn't offer that peace. He says, "In Me, you will have peace. In this world, you will have tribulation. Which peace do you want?" That would mean you will face tribulation. That peace is in Him and Paul is pushing forwards and the more he pushes more tribulation he faces but he says, "It's okay." So, don't be complacent in your present. Paul was so dangerous to the devil's kingdom because he kept on pressing on. You and I have to learn to see everything through the eyes of God's Word. In *Hosea 4:6*, Scripture says, "*My people perish because of lack of knowledge.*"

**Hosea 4:6**

***<sup>6</sup> My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.***

Prodigal son's restoration began when he started asking questions; when he started evaluating his own life. Sometimes, we need to ask ourselves questions. If I am going to stay in this road, where am I going to reach at the end of twelve months? Every road reaches somewhere. We need to ask ourselves questions. If I stay in this road, where am I going to end? Prodigal son evaluated his life and he got the answers. Paul had a very severe issue in his life. He also asked questions and he got the answer. In *2 Corinthians 12:7*,

**2 Corinthians 12:7**

***<sup>7</sup> And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.***

He had a problem, he addressed the issue. Did he get an answer? Do you have any issues left over from 2017 for which you haven't got an answer? We should be willing to receive the answer. When he came to his senses, the prodigal son understood, "I am the reason for my trouble." When Paul reached a terrible situation, he realized, "I am the reason. God sees something in me which I don't see. I can become proud. I have the tendency to be proud. He knows me from the beginning. He sees in me what I am not able to see. I may think I am humble but God says, 'Paul you are very capable of

becoming proud and losing your destiny. Therefore, I allowed this. I am allowing the devil to attack you. He will cling on to you for the rest of your life. I am not going to deliver you from that but I will give you grace every day because that will keep you humble because every day you have to come to Me, seek mercy and grace for this need. I know you.” So, when he questioned, he got an answer. So, if we have issues still unresolved from 2017, remember, God is a Father; if we go to Him He will speak.

In David’s life, he always dealt with the issues and God could speak to him. You see you should be a person; a man or a woman or a child with whom God can speak. Most people God cannot speak; either they will justify themselves or they will get mad. You will see so many people like that in the Bible. David was a man with whom God could speak and he took God’s correction well. But once there was a major issue in his kingdom and he’s looking at his kingdom, “Why is this problem?” 2 Samuel 21:1,

**2 Samuel 21:1**

***<sup>1</sup> Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David inquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, “It is because of Saul and his bloodthirsty house, because he killed the Gibeonites.”***

Three years – first year famine, second year famine, third year famine and he stopped because he knows His Word very well because God is a God who comes at the end of the third year for harvest. How can you have harvest when you have famine? So, he is asking, “Lord, what is the problem?” Are you going through famine? Year after year after year, God says, “No, I am a God of harvest.” The Holy Spirit is called the Lord of harvest. God is a Gardener and it is to His glory that we bear much fruit. So, if it is continuing in our life, in our ministry then we have to enquire. God said, “David the problem is not yours. The problem is with the earlier king.” But he got an answer and he got a solution and he dealt with the situation; famine is gone. So, remember, don’t continue in your mess because we serve a living God. That living God is our Father, and as a Father He has spoken over His children, “If you overcome as My Son overcame, you shall sit on My Son’s throne and reign with Him.” We always have to evaluate our lives.

The prodigal son’s problems were because of his rebellion. Joseph’s troubles were because of his destiny. When you have trouble in your life, go before God. “Lord, is it because of my destiny or is it because of my rebellion?” God has to speak to us. Imagine Joseph crying out and repenting and forgiving without knowing, “Why am I going through this?” Imagine the prodigal son sitting in the pig pen saying, “I’m going through this. This is my destiny.” Both would be wrong. So, we need to look at ourselves. Some of the things we may be going through are because of our destiny. If it is so, we don’t have to fight it. We just have to stand firm. But if it is because of our rebellion, because of our sin, we need to repent, we need to forsake. Only God can show us. So, we will always see men of God enquiring of God. So, there are all kinds of sinners, new sinners also, which weren’t there in the old days; these are called IT sinners, because old days, there were no computers. So, there are academic sinners, intellectual sinners, IT sinners, ordinary sinners – all kinds of sinners. But all sins are old. New sinners, old sins. That’s why Solomon says, “There is nothing new under heaven.” And the problem is – it doesn’t matter how new a sinner you are, the wages of sin has never changed; it has never changed. From the beginning till today, the wages of sin are still the same.

Most costly item on earth is sin because for the purpose of sin, God allowed His Son to die. Sin couldn’t be handled with anything else; nothing, only through the life of His Son. So, sin is not cheap; sin is expensive. And also, the Bible talks about other things about sin. In *Proverbs 11:21*, Scripture says,

**Proverbs 11:21**

***<sup>21</sup> Though they join forces, the wicked will not go unpunished; But the posterity of the righteous will be delivered.***

It doesn’t matter how smart you are, how many things you do to hide it, to secure it; God says, “The sinner will not go unpunished,” the wicked will not go unpunished. In God’s court, nobody goes unpunished. When big people try to do murder, they will have many, many people in between, so that it is never traced to them but still it stops there. God will catch them; no sinner will go unpunished. That is why Scripture says, “*It is appointed unto every man to die once and then, judgment.*” One man, I heard a real story, raped a woman and killed her. When he killed her, during that struggle, one button from his coat came off. It was somewhere in the jungle, he did this. He killed her, hid her body in the bushes and he came back home. Everything is normal. His wife just said, “One button is missing.” That’s when he noticed. He couldn’t

sleep. One week, two weeks, one month, two months; he didn't realize, the police went there, they checked everything. One officer saw the button and put it in his pocket and then, he waited there for months. Two months later, this man went there, looked for his button and they caught him. They said, "We know what you are looking for. You lost your button?"

David concealed his sin so well. God sent one prophet and said, "You are that man," nothing is hidden. You see, we all have the power to choose our sins; nobody has the power to choose the consequences of that sin. Prodigal son had the power to rebel against his father, "Give me my inheritance." Sell it all, make it into money and go but he had no power over the consequences. David, the king had the power to sin in ways others couldn't but he had no power to choose the consequences. Why? Because sometimes, when we evaluate, God will say, "This famine in your life is because of something unresolved. Until that is resolved, famine is not going to depart." So, famine itself is an act of kindness of God. If the famine hadn't happened, you would have gone with this and one day died and stood before the Day of Judgment. So please remember, we have a God who is kind and He is merciful. So, like the prodigal son, like David, do honest evaluation; ask of God. In *Ecclesiastes 9:18*, this is what Scripture says,

**Ecclesiastes 9:18**

***<sup>18</sup> Wisdom is better than weapons of war; But one sinner destroys much good."***

One sinner; he can do that. Jonah hadn't come out of the ship; the whole ship would have gone down. One rebel would have taken the whole ship down. One Achan brought defeat for Israel though Israel had no clue what he did. So, Scripture says, "One sinner can destroy much good." The good done so far can be lost. Great joy, great encouragement; they had got into the Promised Land, they walked around for seven days, the walls had fallen down, they had destroyed their enemies, they had taken the plunder, gave it all to the Lord; they were all on a high. The next day, they were defeated by a small town because of one man. That's what Scripture says, "One sinner can destroy much good." So, we need to be honest because God is love, God is righteous, God is light, God is truth; God is all this. You see for the past six thousand years, prices of commodities have gone up and down. In 2017, prices of many things went up, many things came down. Price of one thing alone has remained stable for six thousand years; wages of sin is death. Price never comes down and in *Numbers 32:23*, Scripture says,

**Numbers 32:23**

***<sup>23</sup> But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out.***

Be sure your sin will find you. So, before our sins find us, we should find our sin. Now, we have the opportunity to go before God and find our sin or that day, books will be opened and our sins will find us. We have two choices: one, we can find our sin now; deal with it, get rid of it, allow the blood of Jesus to cleanse it and walk free into a new year. Or Scripture says, "Be sure." It's always better to go like David to our King, our Lord. Find out our sin before our sin finds us out. The problem is – many people including believers think that sin is judged the way we look at it; how we look at it. Sin is not judged the way we look at it. Sin is looked at as how God looks at it. If you don't know God, we don't know how he looks at sin. Look at one example in the Bible, *Numbers 12:1*,

**Numbers 12:1**

***Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman.***

They didn't fight with him, they didn't rebel against him, they didn't scream at him; they only spoke against him. Normally, we take it okay. "I'm the eldest sister, Moses is my chinna (small) brother. Aaron is three years older and we are discussing his marriage; it's a family matter." But that's not how God looked at it. In their eyes, it was a small matter but in God's eyes, it was a big matter. So, never look at sin the way we see it. Always ask God, "Lord, how do You look at it?" It may look small in our eyes, maybe big in God's eyes. In *verse 9*, Scripture says,

**Numbers 12:9**

***<sup>9</sup> So the anger of the LORD was aroused against them, and He departed.***

He departed, He left their presence, He's angry. When He's talking to them, it is interesting; God never discusses the issue. Their issue is this – he has married an Ethiopian. He never discussed that issue. He says, "Why did you speak against My servant?" Sometimes, we try to justify the issue. "I've never discussed the issue." So, we have to look at things how God looks and he disciplined Miriam. It's an example – seven days outside the camp as a leper. Seven days Israel is stuck – one person is a leper. Outside the camp; the whole nation is stuck, unable to move forward all because of what? They didn't see sin the way God saw it. Our problem is – we don't see sin the way God sees it. That's why we need to go to God and ask God, "I know but I don't know. I think this is big, this is small. I'm not going to grade them. You show me."

Once in a Pastors' Conference, after the conference, two Pastors fought. They fought, they argued, they started shouting. They had their Bibles with them and they are shouting. People who saw from far away thought they were preaching but they were fighting. One Pastor told the other, "If you continue like this, I will drop my Bible and beat you up." They departed; Pastor got into a bus, they are going, the bus got into an accident. Everybody came out of the bus without any problems except him; he broke both his legs. He's in the hospital after the surgery, lying on the bed, he asked the Lord, "Lord, why did this happen?" He said, "Didn't you say, 'I will drop my Bible and beat you'? All these years, you said, 'I'm standing on it,' and you were ready to drop it." If we ask God, He will tell and he said, "Lord, I ask for forgiveness," and He said, "That's why only your legs broke. Otherwise, you would have died." It's mercy! Because after we have read the whole Bible, God finally says in *Revelation 22:11*,

**Revelation 22:11**

***<sup>11</sup> He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still."***

God says, "If you want to continue in your sin, you are free. Nobody is stopping you but you cannot choose the consequences. You can only choose your sin." You and I cannot choose the consequences. Consequences are not in our hands. God may forgive but the discipline may continue. When Moses cried out, God forgave Miriam; let her go through seven days discipline. Samson got his strength back, never got his sight back. Getting the picture? *3 John 7*,

**3 John 1:7**

***<sup>7</sup> because they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles.***

How many of you believe this? O that's a small sin. First, people don't even know this verse and if they know they don't take it seriously. Let us go back to the Old Testament. *2 Kings 5:27*,

**2 Kings 5:27**

***<sup>27</sup> Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants forever." And he went out from his presence leprous, as white as snow.***

Let me ask you this question: if Gehazi had ever thought taking an offering from an unbeliever would affect his entire generation, would he have taken it? Did you see the consequences? We can sin, we cannot choose the consequences. God's Word is very clear. God has never changed. The God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament. He has never changed and God has always said, "I called you, I set you apart, I anointed you, I sent you. Don't take anything from the Gentiles." Why? "Because you have started in My Name sake." If Gehazi had known, he would have not. Gehazi could only choose his sin and he thought that the sin was very small; consequences were very terrible. Understand that; learn how God works. That's why ignorance is a terrible thing; ignorance can kill us. If you go to a doctor; doctor gives you medicines and you don't know how to read the prescription; you buy the medicines, you get twenty capsules which should be eaten in seven days, but if you eat it all in one gulp, you are gone! Why did you die? Because of ignorance. Ignorance is a terrible thing and we know that in the world, even more in the Kingdom because the Kingdom of God is real. Spiritual Kingdom is real; God's Kingdom is real; devil's kingdom is real. The problem is this – we don't know God's Kingdom; the devil knows very well. He knows our God is righteous, he knows our God is holy, he knows our God is truth. So, he is waiting to use God's law against us. So, the only way out that can eliminate sometimes the consequences of sin is the mercy of God. Only problem with mercy is it's not guaranteed. For mercy, there is no guarantee. *Romans 9:15*,

**Romans 9:15**

**<sup>15</sup> For He says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.”**

No guarantee, it is in His hands. Who can read the mind of God? What is the guarantee, you will get mercy next time? David received mercy, Saul didn't receive mercy, Balaam didn't receive mercy, Judas didn't receive mercy, Pharaoh didn't receive mercy. All of them, their words were the same. Everybody said the same, “I have sinned.” Balaam said, “I have sinned.” Pharaoh said, “I have sinned.” Saul said, “I have sinned.” Judas said, “I have sinned.” David said, “I have sinned.” One got mercy, four didn't get. No guarantee; only God knows. *2 Samuel 12:13*, understand this difference, okay,

**2 Samuel 12:13**

**<sup>13</sup> So David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” And Nathan said to David, “The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.**

I will show you something else. David received forgiveness, he didn't receive mercy. Another side of mercy, where the consequences of your sin is taken away; he didn't receive that. *Verse 14*, God says,

**2 Samuel 12:14**

**<sup>14</sup> However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die.”**

Did he receive mercy? No. Did he receive forgiveness? Yes. Now, go look again in *Proverbs 11:21*,

**Proverbs 11:21**

**<sup>21</sup> Though they join forces, the wicked will not go unpunished; But the posterity of the righteous will be delivered.**

It doesn't say, “He will go unforgiven.” It says, “He will not go unpunished.” It doesn't say, “He will go unpunished.” That's why we need mercy. Put things right with God. Do not give the enemy a toe hold. Because we have a God give destiny and the devil hates our destiny. Devil wants to stop us from our destiny and he knows he cannot take our destiny away but he knows we can lose our destiny. So, he's forever planning and plotting and tempting and doing everything to see that we fall short of our destiny. What Joseph went through was not because of sin; because of destiny. What Job went through was not because of sin; was because of destiny. Both were tested, both lost everything but at the end Scripture will say, “They fulfilled their destiny.” So, if you are going through something because of God's destiny, His call upon your life; stand still, don't give up. The devil won't prevail.

Scripture is very clear, both Old and New, in *Isaiah 54:17*, Scripture says, “No weapon formed against you shall prosper.” It will not. It may seem for a season but it will not prosper. “Every tongue that rises against you in judgment, you shall condemn.” Many tongues rose against Joseph. First it looked as if his brothers' tongues were prevailing. Then, it looked like Potiphar's wife's tongue was prevailing. Many tongues, it looked like as prevailing over him. But one day, he condemned it all; he prevailed over every tongue that condemned him. Reason – because we are the servants of the Lord and our righteousness is of God. What we are going through should be because of God not because we went against God. In *Romans 8:28*, Scripture will say something almost similar.

**Romans 8:28**

**<sup>28</sup> And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.**

Everything – all things, nothing will prosper. Ultimately, we will triumph. Every attack against your ministry, your family, your children, your finances will all back fire. You stand firm, don't do what the devil wants you to do. Stand there. Scripture will say, “Stand still and see the deliverance of God,” because what is the devil doing? What is God allowing the devil to do? The devil cannot kill us. He is trying to see whether we will kill ourselves. The devil cannot curse us. The devil is trying to see whether we will open our mouths and curse ourselves. That is what he is trying. So, he is trying to build pressure upon us to see that under pressure we will sin. Scripture says, “As pressure increased over Job, finally one voice left.” That's his wife. What did she say? “Curse God and die.” Even there, he was careful. Scripture says, “All the things he did, he did not sin.”

The devil is bringing pressure to see that he will sin. God says, “You don’t have to. Stand there firm. This will pass.” We are one people with hope. Come through, glory is promised. If you suffer with Christ, you will reign with Christ. If you suffer with Christ, you can be glorified together with Him. So be very sure, whatever went through 2017, had nothing to do with sin, had all to do with God. There was sin, there is mercy. If it is God, stand firm because the battle will only increase. Also remember, though all have battles, everybody’s battle is not the same; depends upon the promise of God and the call of God upon your life. Everybody has, all should have a promise and you can be very sure about the God who promised.  
*Numbers 23:19,*

**Numbers 23:19**

***<sup>19</sup> “God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”***

One word of God is enough; one promise of God is enough. That is the power of God’s word. That’s the power of God’s promise: “Let there be light,” and light; still happening. When did He speak this? We don’t know. What does science say? Universe is still expanding, still going on. What He spoke then, is still happening. God says, “I have spoken something to your life. Stand there.” For all you have is a promise. In 2018, I have good news – all you need is a promise because the One who has promised is true and faithful. All Abraham had, was a promise. He held on to that promise and when he was hundred years old, wife was ninety years old, promise came true. It had nothing to do with him. If he looked at himself, “I cannot make this promise happen.” He looks at his wife; she cannot make this promise happen. Promise of God is not dependent over our strength. It’s dependent upon whether we believe or not and he believed. All Joseph had was the promise. For thirty years; one promise – “One day, you will reign.” Everything he went through was looking against that promise. First, your brothers sell you; then, you are sold in the market, then, you are thrown into prison; everything that you see and experience with this physical body looks against the promise. But God is not a man that He should lie. God is not somebody who speaks and then repents. And he held on to that promise and that promise came to pass. Maybe you are wondering, “How long, O Lord? You gave me this promise many years ago.” Hold on to your promise; just keep putting your life right with God. Do what God tells you to do. Whatever your situation; promise will come to pass. When Moses went to Egypt, all he had was a promise. If you look with it, very strange promise. “You shall take this rod in your hands with which you shall do the signs.” For forty years, he had a rod. That’s all he had. But over that rod there was a promise spoken, “Take this rod. With this rod, I’ll bring My people out. With this rod, I’ll take care of My sheep.” Everywhere he went in Egypt, when the rod rose, there was a sign. When the Pharaoh was behind them, sea was in front of them, when the rod rose, the sea split. When they had no water and the rock was struck, they had water. When Amalek was attacking them, when the rod went up, Joshua won. When he started, did anybody believe that a rod can do all those things? Why could he do? Because it had a promise. Don’t ever take the promises of God lightly. We all need a promise.

Jesus had a promise and He spoke about it for three years. Nobody believed it; His disciples, His family didn’t believe, His mother didn’t believe, His brothers didn’t believe but He believed. What was the promise? “Three days; on the third day, I will rise. I will go down and I will rise: three days.” Three days; He had a promise, only He believed. Nobody believed. Maybe you have a promise; nobody believes, not even your family believes; doesn’t matter. Was it spoken by God? Do you believe? Jesus had a promise; only He believed. You know what that promise was? *Psalm 16:10,*

**Psalm 16:10**

***<sup>10</sup> For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.***

He had a promise and He held on to that promise and He went to the Cross and He died because He knew there was a promise. That promise was stronger than the fear of death. So, on the Day of Pentecost, when Peter stands before the crowd, do you know what Peter will say?

**Acts 2:24**

***<sup>24</sup> whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.***

Why? Next verse,

**Acts 2:27**



***27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.***

He goes straight back to the promise. If you have a promise, even Sheol's, Hades' grave cannot hold you because the promises of God are stronger than anything else and lot of people are there who do not have any promise. That's why I said you have at least one promise; one promise from God to hold on to. These are all promises; every promise is 'yes' and 'amen'. But for those who are Pastors, those who are in ministry; your life and ministry should be based on one promise and when everything is tested, you will be able to hold on to it. You should be able to say, "I see all this but there is something truer than this. You spoke to me. Therefore, it will come to pass," because there is nothing more powerful than the promise of God. Hold on to your promise; stand firm on your promise. Like I said, it doesn't matter. Nobody may believe you; even your spouse or your family may not believe you, your Church may not believe you. The question is: Did you believe? In *Genesis 37:10-11*,

**Genesis 37:10-11**

***10 When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" 11 His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.***

When he told his dream, nobody was excited. When you go and tell, "God has given me this promise," nobody is going to get excited. So, sometimes, it is very good to keep your mouth shut. Even his father was not excited. If I had told my mother, 34 years ago, "One day, you will sit in my class," she would have laughed at me because I always sat in her class, because she was my teacher. That's what Jacob is saying, "Every day, you come and say, 'Aiyya!' You are saying that one day, I will bow before you?" But Jacob kept in his mind as he also was used to dreams. He knew the God of Jacob spoke in dreams. So even if nobody believes, it doesn't matter. The promise; if it is the Word of God, Heaven and earth will pass away, not even a dot from that promise will pass away. The only one who can lose that promise is you. Nobody can take it away.

When I began my ministry, I did not know my Word. I don't have a diploma also in the Bible, no Bible College degree. Yet, what did He tell me? My promise was from the *Book of Acts* that, "I will use you to strengthen believers." Not evangelism; evangelism is easy – Two verse, jump a few times, call the people; evangelism over. Teach people, that too believers and I know nothing. But when I knew nothing, that was the promise given to me. Last year alone, I think I have taught in around three or four houses of Pastors. That's the promise. When He gave it; you looked at it, you are like Abraham; impossible! But it is not dependent upon you, it is dependent on Him. Do you believe and will you walk in obedience to that faith? See, you have a promise and then, you go according to that promise; "Lord, if You have called me to teach, then I have to study. But if you have a promise, when I study, You will open my eyes. You will teach me."

Second thing, because of the faithfulness of God, He taught me one thing from the Bible. You know this thing? If you are not faithful with this, I will never open this for you. From that day till today, no issues with this. Therefore, this opens. See, the promise is there; obedience is required from us and then, you walk in it. How many doors, he opens, we believe and we leave it to Him. So, I believe in 2018, He will open even more doors. We believe but we have to do our part. That's why you need a promise because the promise is connected with your destiny. So, be very sure that what you are going through is connected with your destiny not because of your sin. So, don't get upset, when you see others' lives trouble free, trial free; while you are battling every day. Don't get upset because everybody is not going where you are going. If you look at Reuben; simple life, no problems, goes sleeps with his father's concubines also; no problem. Judah goes, sleeps with his son's wife; no problem. Joseph has done nothing, only problems, "Why, Lord? They have no problems, I problem?" "Because they are not going where you are going." Don't get upset when you see other lives having no problem because the hand of God's correction may not be upon them. So, they have no problem, they have no destiny. If you are a child of God, if you are a servant of God, you have a destiny, you have a promise. God will hold you with a tight grip to see the promise comes to pass. When Joseph's brothers sat on the well and ate, Joseph was dragged crying as a slave. They must have laughed, "Look at that fellow screaming!" You know he screamed; you know he cried? It's written in the Bible. Many, many years later when they were coming back from Egypt and they find that silver and they are frightened and they say, "I can hear his cries in my ears still." They were sitting and laughing. He was being dragged and crying; they laughed because they didn't see the end of the rope. At the end of the rope was a throne. They only saw this end of the rope; they didn't see

the other end where the rope was tied to the throne. If you ask Jesus, “Scripture says, ‘You are in the highest place; You have been given a Name above every other name;’ how do you reach there?” He’ll say, “Look at My hands, look at My feet. That’s how I reached there.” When they nailed Him to the Cross, when they nailed His feet to the Cross; they didn’t realize that was the pathway to the highest place. So, if you ask Joseph, “How did you reach there?” All his brothers are standing, Joseph is sitting. But if you ask him, “Can you show us your hands? Can you show us your neck? Can you show us your feet?” It’s written in the Bible, *Psalms 105:17-20*,

**Psalms 105:17-20**

***<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. <sup>20</sup> The king sent and released him, The ruler of the people let him go free.***

Until the Word of the Lord came true, He tested him. Chains in the hand, chains in the feet, chains in the neck; the Telugu translation is very good – until the iron entered his soul. Can you imagine in the prison? How many years he was in the prison? We don’t know. Ten years. Have you seen prisoners? That too, three thousand years ago. When I was small, I lived in a kingdom; not in India; kingdom. So, I’ve seen the kings’ prisoners then. Once I saw one batch of prisoners going; they had chains and this is how they walked. – One year, two years, five years, ten years; we don’t know. That’s what Scripture says, “Until the Word of God proved him.” Do you believe? Or when you look at your circumstances, will you give up? Do you believe? “What is true for you, Joseph – My Word which I spoke to you in a dream or the irons around your neck?” And he will tell, “Lord, the iron has entered into my soul but your Word is still there in my heart. I believe in your Word, I believe in Your promise and will not give up on Your promise.” So, you have a promise. If you have a promise, you are going somewhere. Thank God you are going somewhere because some people are in the same place, where they were ten years ago in time; spiritually, they haven’t moved at all. There’s no new anointing, no new revelation, they don’t understand the truth, nothing is opening. Why? Because they are not going anywhere with God. That shouldn’t be our life. With God, always onward progress and God always wants to bring us to a higher place. Especially spiritually to a more prosperous place. Because He is a God who loves increase. He is the one who says, “Stretch your tent.” He doesn’t want us to shrink; He wants us to stretch. Believe! Israel went through the fire and water because they had a promise and they had a destiny. You know what Scripture says in *Psalms 66:10-12*,

**Psalms 66:10-12**

***<sup>10</sup> For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined. <sup>11</sup> You brought us into the net; You laid affliction on our backs. <sup>12</sup> You have caused men to ride over our heads; We went through fire and through water; But You brought us out to rich fulfilment.***

It didn’t end like that. You made all this but You brought us to a rich fulfilment. God doesn’t abandon His children in the fire. God doesn’t let them drown in the water. He won’t let the Gentiles ride over them always. He says, “Stand there. You have a destiny. That’s why you are going through this so that you may be refined and then when I bring to your rich fulfilment, you can enjoy it without it destroying you.” They went through all of that and God brought them to a wealthy place. Paul went through suffering like no apostle. You name it, he’s gone through it. He gives a list of whatever he’s gone through in life but at the end, God brings him to a rich fulfilment. In 2 *Timothy 4:8*, he says,

**2 Timothy 4:8**

***<sup>8</sup> Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.***

He says, “I can see. All this was not in vain.” While living, he saw his crown. He says, “I hung in there for the righteousness of God. I believed in the righteousness of God. For all this I stood firm and I see the crown.” Only one who has seen the crown can encourage the others saying, “Don’t give up; you also will get.” He saw and he says, “You also stand in there.” You don’t know when your and my battle will end and when one battle ends another will begin. But don’t worry we don’t have to fight the same battle again. Joseph never went back to the pit. He never went back to Potiphar’s house; he never went back to the prison. Battles were different. Some people are fighting the same battle over and they are in the pit. They have never gone to Potiphar’s house; they are still in the pit because they haven’t learnt the lesson of the pit. Every place there is a lesson. Once the lesson is learnt, the battle is won, you go to the next level. You’ll see Joseph learnt and he ended up in the

palace. Don't stay in the same place all your life. The three Hebrew boys never went back to the fire. Daniel never went back to the lion's den. He brings out for other battles and when God brings us out, brings us out stronger; prepared for the next battle. In *Nahum 1:9*, this is what Scripture says,

**Nahum 1:9**

**<sup>9</sup> *What do you conspire against the LORD? He will make an utter end of it. Affliction will not rise up a second time.***

You don't have to go through affliction twice. Once you have learnt the first time, you have own your battle; God says, "You don't have to go back to the same battle. Next battle will be different." 2018 battles should be different. It shouldn't be the same battle of 2017 because our battles should be our battles of our destiny, not battles of rebellion. Joseph had not been promised the throne; he wouldn't have had to go through anything. Joseph went to the prison because he had the throne in his mind. That was his destiny. Simeon also will go to prison, not because he had any destiny. Prison was his destiny because of his sin. Two brothers went to prison. Joseph went to prison, Simeon went to prison. Joseph went to prison because his destiny was the throne. Simeon went to prison because of his sin. Please know that. That is not part of our destiny.

If David had not been destined to be king, he wouldn't have had to go through all those years of trouble in his life. Your destiny will define your live. Solomon was destined to be king though he was one of the youngest of David's son. The minute God told, through the prophet, "Tell his father, I'm naming him Jedidiah," he was chosen. That was his destiny. There are many sons David has; big, big sons and he had this baby and God has chosen him. After God has chosen him, he doesn't have to do anything; just love God, honor his father. Nothing else, he didn't do anything. Other sons tried to take the throne; they all died. Many tried. Solomon didn't have to do one thing to get his throne; all he had to do was to remain faithful to his father. We don't have to fight for our throne; we just have to remain faithful to our Father. Look at David's life; look at how many sons David had. Maybe Solomon is one of the youngest when he was chosen, when he was born. Once God has chosen, that's your destiny. If God has put a promise in you, that's your destiny. You don't have to fight for that promise; you just have to remain faithful to God because our throne will come to us because of a promise. Amen.

So, we are in the beginning of a new year and I believe it's going to be an incredible year and also it's going to be incredible battles ahead because remember, when God moves you to the next level, all hell will break loose. Hell doesn't remain silent. Satan and his hosts won't remain silent. They are not afraid of people; they are afraid of God's people. They are afraid of God's people who have a promise who believe in their promise. When they see them moving on, they will oppose them with everything. Go through the Bible, go through anybody's life; from the time Jesus was born, troubles started. When He stepped into ministry, as soon He's proclaimed to the world, the devil came after Him. And then, He's moved to the next level, Scripture says in *John 6:66*,

**John 6:66**

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

Why? He had to move to the next and He's preaching. Many Pastors will not move to the next preaching for they are afraid their disciples will leave. You know why you don't move to the next level? Because you are more afraid of the people leaving than God moving you to the next level. You can't keep them always in kindergarten. Jesus moved to the next level, most of the disciples left and then the next level, *John 7*,

**John 7:3**

**<sup>3</sup> *His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing.***

You know what they are saying? They say, the disciples had left, "Where are Your disciples? Earlier crowds were there, now only twelve? We will tell You. Idea! Go to Jerusalem, go to the temple, do two big miracles; all the disciples will come back." That's the brothers' idea; His own brothers. Isn't that how we gather disciples? That is not Jesus' idea; that is Jesus' brothers' idea. What does a Pastor do when he wants increase in his Church? He calls somebody from outside and puts a poster: 'Miracle Service'. Whose idea was this? Not Jesus; Jesus' unbelieving brothers. I'll show you. Come to *verse 5*,

**John 7:5**

**<sup>5</sup> For even His brothers did not believe in Him.**

Their advice; we are still following their advice. That's why we don't have disciples; we have crowds in our Churches but we don't have disciples. So, when Jesus moved to the next level, disciples are leaving, brothers are rejecting, Judas will betray Him, Peter will deny Him, others will forsake Him but He stood alone because if the promise you have from God is from God; you can stand alone. Everybody left Him and He stood alone. So, remember, we need to take that stand first. We have to stand alone. I will stand alone. Stand firm, guard your heart from the spirit of discouragement. Pastors be very careful. When God sometimes moves you to the next level, others may not be willing to follow you there but with God, you can only go forward, you cannot go backward. So, you will have to choose – am I going to stay with the crowd or am I going to move ahead of the crowd with God? Ultimately, if you stick with the crowd; the crowd will destroy your destiny also. Finally, because of the crowd, Moses will lose his temper and lose his destiny. Move ahead with God; keep on moving with God. So, guard your heart; don't get discouraged. In *1 Corinthians 15:19*,

**1 Corinthians 15:19**

**<sup>19</sup> If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.**

Many Christians are like, many Pastors are like that. "I have no house, I have no car, I have no Church building, I have no people, I have no offering, no hope." God says, "If only in this life you have hope, you are the most hopeless people, most pitiable." As our hope is here; our hope is in the next place. "*Eyes haven't seen, no ears have heard what God is preparing for those who love Him.*" Don't get discouraged. Preachers know this very well. They know people's hearts are rooted to the hope in this life and they talk only about material things. That's not what God is talking about. Don't get discouraged. In *Proverbs 13:12*, Scripture says,

**Proverbs 13:12**

**<sup>12</sup> Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But when the desire comes, it is a tree of life.**

So, let your hope be real. Your life; what will happen? It will become a tree of life. Paul's desire was very clear; his desire was in Christ. His desire was in the next world. Therefore, wherever he went, he was a tree of life. If our hope is in this world, if our desire is in this world; we also will be a tree: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which will make people fall over and over again and keep them in their sin. What is our desire; our desire is Christ; our desire is the Kingdom. Paul will say, "*For me to live or die is gain. If I live; good for you. If I die; good for me.*" We don't look at death as 'good for me'. Reason is – we are not prepared to die because we do not have the hope of glory, we haven't. The hope of glory; when you see death approaching, you see the crown also very clear as God hasn't changed; He is the same God. Don't get discouraged; even mighty men of God got discouraged. If your hope is in something that is temporal, when that doesn't happen, you'll get discouraged; be very clear that is your hope is in what God wants you to do.

Elijah went through great suffering. Sitting in the wilderness alone; eating what the raven brings, living in a poor widow's house for years. Then, alone fighting four hundred prophets of Baal and then. killing them all in the valley. Then, the anointing comes and he runs faster than Ahab's chariot and he reaches the city gate; he reaches Jezebel's gate and he stops. He thought, I'll wait here. Ahab goes in. He must have thought, "Ahab will go and he will tell today what happened; how I killed all the prophets, sin is gone, rain has come, now Jezebel and Ahab will call me in, give me a chair, 'Be our prophet.'" Didn't happen. Jezebel sends word, "Like you killed my prophets, tomorrow I will kill you!" So, he turned around and ran; sitting under a tree, utterly discouraged, "I am no better than my fathers, I want to die." Why? Because your hope was misplaced. Don't get upset.

If you were there in the Parade Ground yesterday, I was not there, if you were there, "O' one day, I also want to sit on the stage with the CM," no, that is not our hope. Because if you have that hope, you will do all kinds of things to get over there, so there is another stage and another role reserved. That is very narrow. I believe in prayer, enjoy praying people but I have my issues. If Jesus were to conduct a prayer meeting, he will not invite Herod and Pilate. "*If two of you agree in My Name,*" I respect them because they are leaders but not for prayer meetings because there is no agreement. That is my view and I look into the Word, every time a prophet before a king, the king wasn't walking with God, they told him what he needed to hear; but we don't have to invite them. It's a prayer meeting, this is not a public meeting: "If two or three gather in My

name,” calling upon His name, agreeing upon His name. How is that possible with unbelievers? It’s not possible. You have to think. If your hope is in those things, you’ll be discouraged. But our hope is not in any one of these things; our hope is in Christ. Don’t get discouraged because discouragement is a huge killer in ministry. John the Baptist got so discouraged in the prison that he forgot the Messiah. So, don’t get discouraged. If you have no one to pray for you, pray yourself. If you have no one to prophesy over you, prophesy yourself.

I remember many years ago, it was a very difficult period in my time. I didn’t know whether to move to the right or to the left. I had to make a decision; I didn’t know how to make the decision. There was nobody I could go to. Nobody would speak to me what the Lord was trying to tell. At midnight, I walked back and forth in the kitchen and then, I started speaking in tongues and then, the interpretation came from my own mom. “This is what I want you to do.” It was very clear. Even if nobody is there to prophesy over you, prophesy over yourself; He’s willing. You don’t turn to the left or to the right because we have destiny; God given destiny. If you have nobody to encourage yourself; encourage yourself. Nobody will say a word of encouragement; you can encourage yourself. *1 Samuel 30:6*, look at this man,

**1 Samuel 30:6**

***<sup>6</sup>Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.***

Are you getting me? Nobody. These are his six hundred faithful soldiers. Everybody’s hand is against him. They all picked up stones. Nobody to encourage, all are throwing stones at him. You can still encourage yourself because if you are not encouraged, God cannot speak to a depressed heart. In Churches, it’s not that God doesn’t speak, people come with so much depression. Even if God were to come and shout in their ears, they won’t hear. That’s why we have to encourage ourselves in the Word of God as things get more and more difficult. If people are discouraged, people are depressed; it doesn’t matter what you have experienced of God, you will still doubt.

John the Baptist had baptized Jesus, the Son of God; heard the voice of the Father, seen the Holy Spirit rest like a dove, but when he’s discouraged, he calls his disciples, “Go ask Him, ‘Are You the One to come or should we wait for somebody else?’” When you are discouraged, the devil will make you doubt your own salvation. That’s why if there is nobody to encourage you, encourage yourself. Encourage yourself by the Word of the Lord. That’s why this man writes the Psalms and in many of the Psalms, he’s speaking to himself – “O my soul, why are you downcast? Look at the Lord, rejoice in the Lord,” the man who learnt to encourage himself because he had nobody to encourage him. Nobody believed in his destiny. Nobody may believe in your destiny but God believes in your destiny. You need to believe in your destiny and if you are encouraged, you will hear God speak. It will be very clear. He was encouraged, he spoke, “Abiathar, bring the ephod! Ask the Lord. What does the Lord say?” Very quick, “Pursue, overtake, recover.” Did you get the word? Just like that because God can speak to and encourage souls. He has lost everything; within minutes, he gets the Word of the Lord. “How many people do you have?” “Six hundred.” “How are they?” “Tired; they have been walking for three days. They are all depressed.” “Doesn’t matter.” What did God say? “You pursue. If you obey Me, even with this tired people you can overtake and if you overtake, you will recover. So, David your victory is not dependent upon the strength of your people, do you believe what I said or not?” He receives a word and they are going now. Two hundred fellows say, “We are too tired. O’ we cannot go.” David said, “It’s okay. You guys sit here. You guys put your baggage with them. If I have the Word of God, I can still overtake with four hundred because strength and victories are not on the numbers they’re on the promise of God. That’s why this year, you need to hear, we need a Word from the Lord. Whatever the devil stole on 2017, we need to pursue, we need to overtake, we need to recover, all because the devil is a thief and all who have joined hands with him have the same spirit and they are all thieves and our God is a giver. We have the Spirit of the Father; others have the spirit of the devil. We will pursue, we will overtake, we will recover. Be encouraged because God cannot speak to discouraged people, depressed people because discouragement is like a disease; it spreads. Whole problem for Israel started with a few people. Scripture says, “When Israel left, they left with abundant wealth. Among them there was this mixed multitude; not pure Israelites. Not those, because they saw the blood; not because they heard the word, the fellows because they saw the signs and they also followed. When the journey got a little difficult, it is the mixed multitude which started the murmuring. It didn’t start with Israel; it started with the mixed multitude. That’s why we have to guard our heart. Do not get discouraged; watch out for the spirit of discouragement because so many Pastors get discouraged. It’s because they don’t know the Word or they don’t believe what the Word says. If the Word says something and it happens; why are you discouraged? You should be encouraged, right? If God says, “If you are persecuted for righteousness sake, rejoice and be

exceedingly glad.” Last month, I was in another country to teach Pastors where the Church is under great persecution. One by one, Pastors are giving testimony, “I was this many months in prison,” “I was this many months in prison”; one senior Pastor was saying, “When I was beaten, I was not beaten by a policeman, I was beaten by the judge,” and they are all happy. I have a video of them all dancing in worship. Why? But this is true. Didn’t He already tell, “The world will hate you because of Me. In Me peace, in this world tribulation.”? They will arrest you, they will put you in prison, they will beat you up; but when you do all these things, the Word is coming true; the Word of God is coming true. When you see the Word of God coming true in your life, rejoice and be exceedingly glad. That’s where power comes. So, persecution shouldn’t discourage us, persecution should encourage us. If you have no trouble in your life and there is no trouble in your Church; first go and ask whether you are saved. Second, whether your Church has any destiny. For two thousand years, every true Church has been persecuted. So, you don’t get discouraged. We encourage ourselves in the Lord.

David went through because of his sin, not because of his destiny. He had sinned and he had lost everything. Everybody’s hand is against him; yet that man knew his God and he knew his God was a God of mercy. I believe he went on his knees and encouraged himself in the mercy of God. He is not saying, “Lord, I have all this Amalekites, all because of your name sake.” He’s says, “No, Lord. Because of my sin; I have sinned against You. I didn’t believe You, I went into the Philistine camp, I lived there for sixteen months, I did abominable things but I look unto You; merciful God. Have mercy on me; I believe my promise is still there. You will forgive me; have mercy on me. Continue my journey.” The Lord told him, “Arise, pursue, overtake, recover all. My promise is still over your life. Your destiny is still intact. Come on.” Same God, merciful God. That’s where we get our encouragement from. When you read *1 Samuel 30:6*, you know this is the end of sixteen months, when David had sold himself to the king of the Philistines and told Achish, “I am your servant,” and he raided towns, killed everybody; women and children so that nobody will speak what he is doing, took all their wealth, built a city; that city was called Ziklag; sixteen months, living with the devil, doing the work of the devil, killing innocent women and children. God said, “You are a man of destiny. I am going to burn it all down.” Everything was burnt down. Then he gets on his knees, “Lord, restore me.” God begins restoration.

If till 2017, everything you built is built by serving the God of this world, let it burn down. Start afresh with God because He’s a merciful God, He’s a holy God, He’s a righteous God, He’s a powerful God; you cannot serve two Gods. You cannot serve king Achish and become the king of Jerusalem one day. So, if you are a man of destiny, things will happen in your life that doesn’t happen to others. Thank God because whom He loves, He rebukes. Whom He loves, He disciplines; that itself is a sign that you and I are sons of God.

So, this afternoon, as we close the first session, we break for lunch, we come back, put our hearts before God, our ministries before God; and we say: Lord, speak to me. Another year; we are six days into this year. Tomorrow is Sunday, new week is beginning, we want to start fresh with You. I see your ways; receive you’re a people of destiny. Prodigal son came to his senses, he spoke to himself; that was the beginning. While with yourself; check your ministry, check your life. How is it God? Put it before God because we have merciful God because it is not over until God says, “It is over.” If God tells, “It is over,” it is over; till then we are still on the road. Fulfil our destiny. Shall we pray?

**Closing Prayer:**

*Father, we just thank You, Lord. As we break for lunch now, I pray You would bless us, You would bless the food. As we go, we believe for Your provision for the rest of the year for everyone here, Lord. There will be bread on every table, in every house, there will be clothes on their back, their children will not go hungry and their Churches will not be empty as we have sought You. You are our desire and You are our provision. Thank You, Father. We praise You and we worship You. In Jesus’ Name we pray, Amen.*