

If I Am Living Am I Still Among The Dead? Pastor Vijay

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Father, we just want to thank You for this morning once again. Your Word says, the entrance of Your Word brings light. Lord bring light into our lives that we may see ourselves in the light of who You truly are, the perfect law of liberty and even as we behold ourselves and obey what You have to speak to us in these last days, transform us a little more into Your likeness, impart unto us faith this morning, stir up O Lord Jesus love and faith and good works for You said O Lord, nothing matters, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision. It is faith that is expressed through love that matters and therefore this morning, anoint us. It is the anointing that teaches us, the anointing of the Holy Spirit which is able to open up and unpack Your Word and take us to the depths of who You truly are in revelation and knowledge and understanding so that we may grow in the knowledge and in the grace of God, even in these last days and prepare ourselves O Lord continuously through the ministry of the Word, by the leading of Your Spirit and by the obedience that comes from faith for that day. To that end I pray that You'd bless us and anoint us even in the speaking and hearing of today's Word. We thank You, we praise You, in Jesus name, Amen, Hallelujah.

Arise from the dead. Hallelujah. So, last Sunday we heard resurrection is for the dead. What a statement! Resurrection is for the dead. So, I just posit today's teaching in the light of one verse as to what the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead has afforded to us even as we believed in Him, and we know this familiar passage. Let's look at that. In *Ephesians 2:4* onwards.

Ephesians 2:4

⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His not ordinary love, great love, great mercy all is great. Everything about God is great. In fact, Paul runs out of superlatives to explain as to who God is, what he really feels to express, he runs out of words. That is the reason why it is joy inexpressible, full of glory. But God who is rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us even when we were dead in our trespasses. That is what our condition was. Made us alive together with Christ is when Jesus was raised from the dead. By grace you have been saved and not only did He cause us to be raised from the dead, He gave us new birth of course through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. But what did he do?

Ephesians 2:6

⁶ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

This is what has been given to us, in new birth. So, if the resurrection is for the dead and if I'm made alive with Christ the obvious question that I need to ask myself because I don't want to ask you, I want to ask myself this question. Let's read this together. If I am living, am I still among the dead. That is the question that I would attempt to answer through today's meditation. Hopefully by the end of the service, you are able to answer it for yourself. If I am living, am I still among the dead and where did I get this question from and I'm going to just again introduce a few more verses to you.

I just want to thank God the thank God for the opportunity that I had to go and minister in North India, Jharkhand, visit our two churches. One in Ranchi and one in Jamshedpur. I mean I had a fantastic time really. It was one amazing experience to be among God's people who are hungry; most of them young believers, really, really on fire for God, God is doing a great work and I am really proud of the pastors and my brother, especially my brother with whom I was ordained together. We had an amazing opportunity to minister together, it was really remarkable. I think even our Pastor should have been

proud of both of us because we were like the first batch of students who graduated from GTC and who were ordained for the ministry. So, it was a unique experience to be able to minister together.

During the first meeting in the church I already mentioned this in some of my teaching. There are four kinds of loyalties I was talking about. We're talking about four kinds of loyalties; people who are fiercely loyal to God and those are the kinds of David's mighty men including Uriah the Hittite, it was remarkable, isn't it? Uriah the Hittite fiercely loyal. Now, he's not just loyal to David, he's actually loyal to God and in fact he admonishes David and kind of, he doesn't directly speak to him, with all meekness and with honor and respect he rebukes David through the decisions that he made for himself. That's interesting. This is Uriah the Hittite. Obviously, he's not a Jew by birth and of course if you have been following the teachings. He is Uriah the Hittite and Hittite means the one who's been gripped by the spirit of fear and shame and terror and he is not a Jew but now he's been delivered from the spirit of terror, spirit of shame and even though he is uncircumcised in the flesh, he is definitely uncircumcised in the spirit and therefore Romans 2 applies to him. It says, if an uncircumcised person keeps the requirements of the law will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision and will he not condemn you, David, who waxed eloquent when he saw Goliath and said, 'Who is this uncircumcised Philistine who dares defy the armies of the living God?' and finally, you are going to be rebuked by an uncircumcised Hittite.

I was telling them the four kinds of loyalty. Those people are fiercely loyal to God and who can be entrusted with the purposes of God and God can entrust something to them and will finish it till their last breath. They will not give up and run. So, those are the kinds of fiercely loyal people. Second is of course people who are loyal but they are not fiercely loyal not because they don't want to be loyal but they are like the Mephibosheth kind. I mean it's interesting names that Saul gives his children; Mephibosheth, Ishbosheth. You have to go and lookup the names, real ridiculous names. How can you as a father give such names to your children. Mephibosheth, Ishbosheth. Anyways, they are the Mephibosheth kind who love David, who want to please David, who sit at David's table. David a picture of Christ and who are feeding from off David's table, but David can't trust him because they cannot prove their loyalty to him because they are lame in the spirit. They cannot be trusted not because they are not loyal per se but they don't have the ability to be entrusted with any kind of responsibility.

So those are the second kind of course and there are the third kind of people who are dangerous. They are what we call as perpendicular in the Kingdom of God. They are neither obtuse or acute, they are right angled. So, we don't not know where they fall. So suddenly all the BJP guys who do get a ticket suddenly they became Jai Ghandi, Zindabad. Suddenly they changed, you see. How come these convictions have changed over a period of time. They will say Ambedkar Jai ho etc. So, these are the aloyal people. They are neither loyal nor disloyal. They are people who will change with times, like Joab. One day he was for David, when Absalom took over the throne and the next time he's against David when Adonijah took over the throne. So, these are the dangerous people.

And therefore, David warns him, son of Zeruah, especially Mr. Joab please be careful with him and of course those people who are the fiercely loyal, they are also not very harmful because we know them. These are people who are fiercely disloyal to God and you know one of the brothers after the service was over he came up to me, he said, 'Pastor I want to be fiercely loyal, what do I do?' And I said. 'Okay fine, I will answer your question in the next meeting.' Look at what it says in *Matthew 8*. If I am living, am I still among the dead? Look at the question that Jesus admonishes.

Matthew 8:18-20

¹⁸ And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side. ¹⁹ Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go."

²⁰ And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him. Jesus us not interested in multitudes, twitter followers, YouTube subscribers, Facebook friends. What friends? Facebook friends, when you suddenly face a problem, you know who to go to, not Facebook people. So, when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command. Where should we go? Let's go on to the other side. This other side is dangerous. Who is there on the other side we know. Who is there? Two people completely possessed by the demons, fierce, the Bible says in *Matthew 8*, the very end of the chapter. And the

Bible says of course in the last days perilous times, fierce times will come, so we have to face these last days, perilous times, face incredible times, unprecedented times we are looking in our own generation of course.

I remember Babu Khan estate, how many of you know Babu Khan estate, that rugged building next to LB stadium? That was the day I remembered very vividly somebody told us that internet came to Hyderabad. So, we were all students in college and we wanted to know what internet was. So, there was some office in Babu Khan estate where somebody had a new connection of internet and with the dial up connection with all those super stupid sounds it used to make, remember and we went fascinated. First time, that was like, I'm not that old, not very old and then couple of decades later how things have changed, radically things have transformed. Now a generation is supposed to be five years now, it's two and a half years, now it's six months, now it's actually days, fifteen days a new generation is coming.

So, fierce times are coming. Now we are not talking about generations why because it says people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of pleasure and in the middle, you have all kinds of other behavioral issues or character issues. That is the reason why you have fierce time and they no longer inventions, the people, they become inventors of evil. Invention is not a problem; the inventor is the problem. So, He gave a command to depart unto the other side. So, on the other side you have to face the coming days are going to be perilous before the rapture takes place we have to go to these processes of being purged through perilous times and to keep our selves guarded and not those times touch us, those attitudes touch us. So, then what happened? Then a certain Scribe came and said to me, teacher I will follow You wherever you go and Jesus said to him, foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nest but the Son of man has nowhere to lay His head.

Of course, if you want to understand this, it is already there in GTC Jharkhand. You can possibly look at it, as to how I dealt with this particular verse but I want to look at the next one. This the multitudes and one certain scribe came. So, scribe may be just a graduate from a top school. All excited about Jesus but Jesus looked at him and He said, foxes have holes, birds of the air have nest but the Son of man has no place. But then the next question, so, there is a next verse which I wanted you to look at this morning. This is what it says,

Matthew 8:21-22

²¹ And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. ²² But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

Then another of His disciples said to Him. Who is this? We don't know who that disciple is. It could be any of the twelve because obviously only twelve people went with Jesus. One of His disciples, another of His disciples said to Him. He said, 'Lord, let me first.' That's where the priority comes. *Let me first go and bury my father* but Jesus said to him, *'Follow me and let the dead bury their own dead.'* See, the way God looks at it, how God looks at people. There are two classifications only in as far as God is concerned. The spiritually dead and the spiritually alive. Those who have been resurrected like Lazarus, they are the people who have been made alive in Christ Jesus. So, these are the people who are alive in as far as God is concerned and all the other people are people who are spiritually dead, these are the two categories. So, the question therefore is, He is telling His disciples, He says, let the dead bury their own dead. In *Luke 9* He says,

Luke 9:60

⁶⁰ . . . but you go and preach the kingdom of God."

but you go and preach the kingdom. Let the dead bury their own dead, you follow me. So, the question again, if I'm living am I still among the dead. Another place, this is post resurrection, Jesus is already risen from the dead and the ladies want to go and embalm Jesus' body. So they go early in the morning and this what happens in *Luke 24*

Luke 24:3-7

³Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. ⁵ Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, ⁷ saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.' "

Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth they said to them, what did they say? Why do you seek, again the question, why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but He's risen. Remember how He spoke unto you when He was still in Galilee, saying, the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of the sinful men and be crucified and raised on the third day. So, am I living, if I'm living, am I still among the dead?

- See, I want to look at how to test this. The seven things which I want to look at today, as to how I would know I'm either among the living or among the dead. I want to show you seven things this morning.
- First there is the God of the living and therefore there is a God of the dead. Understand that first thing.
- Second, there is a Father of the living, and therefore there is a father of the dead.
- Third, there is a covenant of the living and therefore there is a covenant of the dead.
- Forth, there is a counsel of the living and therefore there is a counsel of the dead.
- Fifth based upon this counsel, there are the choices of the living and there are also choices of the dead.
- Sixth, based upon these choices you have a company that is living or the company which is among the dead
- and finally, there is a church of the living and there is a church of the dead.

I want to explain this in the light of what we heard last time. If we are raised with Christ, the first thing that happens to us, there is a change of God. There are God's that we were worshipping before, now we become people who worship the true God. Let me prove this to you from Scripture. This is Matthew 22 remember the Sadducees who do not believe that there is a resurrection. They come to Jesus and pose a hypothetical question. After posing the question, they think that they trapped Jesus and look at how Jesus answers. Incredible wisdom of God. *Matthew 22:29* onwards.

Matthew 22:29-33

²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. ³⁰ For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. ³¹ But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, ³² I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." ³³ And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching.

*Jesus answered and said to them, you are mistaken. KJV uses the word, in error. Other translations will use the word, deceived. Other translations will use the word astray. You are going astray, you are deceived, you are in error, why? Because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God. I mean what an indictment. These people who have literally studied the Torah over and over again. He says, 'You do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God.' The Sadducees are the people who only believe in the first five Books of Moses by the way. They don't believe the other parts of the Old Testament were inspired by God. They only believe in the first five Books of Moses and you know Jesus does? Therefore, He only goes into the first five Books of Moses and answers them the question. Look at what He says, *for in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like the angels of God or the Sons of God but concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac the God of Jacob, God is not the God of the dead but the God of the living.'**

You see, let me tell you something. There are people who are dead in trespasses and sins, they have a god, they have actually gods, of course there is one god Lucifer under whom there are many gods and the people who have been raised from the dead, they have only one God. That is the reason why Jesus tells the Pharisees, how can you believe who seek honor from everybody else except from the only God. That is in *John 5, verse 40* onwards you will see that, how He confronts the Pharisees.

John 5:44

⁴⁴How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God

And look at what the Scripture says, when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching. Loved that and you know obviously where He is quoting from, He is quoting from the passage in the burning bush. He is quoting Moses which is in the first five Books of the Law. So He says, God is not the God of the dead but of the living. So, if you are

the sons and daughters of the living God or if God is your God, what should your response be, but before I show your response, I want to show you the other side. In *Ephesians 2*, people who are dead, who is their God. Look at what it says in *Ephesians 2*

Ephesians 2:1-3

¹And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, who is that? Satan himself. the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

The first thing therefore that happens when you are born again, first of all you should be sure that you are born again. Unless one is born from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. Unless one is born of the water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. Therefore, there is a change of God. First thing, there is a change of God. You serve the living God and He becomes now the God of the living. So, if He is the living God, if God has changed, what do you do to God? So, the first thing that we do when we come on Sunday morning, what do we do? We worship. The highest act, the highest thing that you can ever give to anybody is worship. What we call as fellowship with men when it comes to God, it is worship. Look at what it says in *Psalms 95* we know this verse very well.

Psalms 95:6-7

⁶ Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. ⁷ For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand.

O come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our God, our Maker. For He is our God. God has changed. And we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand. Therefore what, our allegiance is therefore only to the living God, nobody else and how do we express this allegiance? In worship and in service. You see there are two words for worship, one is Proskuneo – which means to fall flat, prostrate before God and the other word is Latreia – which means to serve God. So, when devil comes and say, you know what, bow down and worship me, I will give you all this because it's been given to me. You know how Jesus counters that, He says, '*You should worship the Lord your God and Him only you shall serve.*'

So, the question therefore, this morning is, first whom are you worship and therefore, whom are you serving? It's very important. See, there are only two people whom you can serve. Either you serve God or the next one, option B, self, or yourself. That is fundamental question that we need to answer. If we have been raised from the dead, our allegiance because this is incredible mercy of God that is the reason why *1 Peter 1* says,

1 Kings 1:3

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

because God in His great mercy has caused us to be born again into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and therefore, as living people or as resurrected people, our allegiance and our worship is only to God. Understand this. So, what do we serve? It is a powerful passage in *2 Kings 17:33*,

2 Kings 17:33

³³They feared the LORD, yet served their own gods . . .

I read that passage or rather was introduced to that verse. They feared God but they served their own gods. Incredible isn't it. So what did they do? They fear God on Sunday or rather worship God on Sunday, from Monday to Saturday, they serving their own gods and again Sunday morning they come, they fear God, you also will give your tithes, don't ask me too many questions and then they continued their lifestyle of serving their own gods. I mean I looked at that statement, I said boy! What a powerful statement. Is it not true in the last days? The people fear God but they serve their own idols. Isn't that our religions? Why is this important in the last days? Because there is going to be a test. See, faith has three aspects, first of all faith has to be proclaimed, second faith has to be worked out, third faith has to be tested. You have to

profess your faith, you have workout your faith otherwise it is dead faith and the third thing, it has to be tested and what is faith?

Actually, I really want to replace sometimes for myself, I'm not going to do this to you but that's how I replace it. Faith I want to replace with the word, faithfulness because the just shall live by their loyalty. Understand that. So, there was a dream, Nebuchadnezzar a type of the Anti-Christ in the Last Days. He had a terrible dream: head of gold, chest of silver, brass and then iron and iron mixed with clay. He had this dream and then it said, he gave them as test for promotion. If you want to get promoted, 'Tell me the dream and its interpretation.' By this time the sorcerers have got an upgrade. First of all when Joseph had a dream, Pharaoh told him the dream. So, when Pharaoh told him the dream and Joseph gave the interpretation.

You know what all the sorcerers did? This is interesting, so, let us have a catalogue of dreams and let us have a catalogue of peoples experiences. So, statistically we will interpret them using artificial intelligence. What is that? Statistical, we have some statistical probability within this range of error we will come to this conclusion. That is sorcery 2.0 from 1.0 to 2.0 but Nebuchadnezzar was 3.0. Nebuchadnezzar said, 'Ok, I know you fellows. You have to tell me one thing, you have to tell me the dream and now its interpretation. I'm one step ahead of you,' and they said, 'this is too much, no man living is able to do this except the gods who does not have their habitation with mortal men.' Nebuchadnezzar said, 'Okay fine, there is only other option. I will cut you into pieces and I will make your house into a dung hill,' and Daniel of course interprets the dream and he says, 'The head of gold Nebuchadnezzar is you, silver is the kingdom which comes after you and then of course Greek and Romans and of course the last days ten kingdoms iron mixed with clay.'

But of course you know all the sorcerers are also listening to this interpretation and they are jealous of Daniel and his friends of course, right? They are jealous of Daniel and his friends but it is interesting what happens. They go and they do what we call as a Sycophant symphony. 'O King live forever,' and they started interpreting the dream and Nebuchadnezzar says, you know what, 'I don't like the fact that after me somebody else is going to come. I want to live forever.' So, he says, 'Make the whole statue gold and let them all worship me. And at the sound of music, if you do not fall and worship me, gone!' It is interesting isn't it, the three Jewish friends are there in this test. Where is Daniel? I mean I interpretation is rapture, just a type of the raptured church, just my interpretation don't take it and make it into a doctrine. So, look at what happens in Daniel 3.

Daniel 3:13-14

¹³Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So, they brought these men before the king. ¹⁴Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? In other words, worship me. Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?"

What a question to this people whose identity has been changed, they have been given new names for logging in, I mean you swipe right, new names, Babylonian numbers.

Daniel 3:16-18

¹⁶Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. ¹⁸But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

These guys know *Hebrews 11:35* isn't it.

Hebrews 11:35

³⁵Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

Some got their dead back to life, some refused, seeking a better deliverance. They refused, we will not worship. You know why, because we are not people among the dead, we are people who have been raised from the dead and we have allegiance only to the living God and our God is living and we are alive. So, we worship only the living God and not your gods. This is going to happen. There is going to be a confrontation in the last days, slowly things will change. I mean it's already changed, not slowly any more, I mean it's not slow any more my dear brothers. Not slow anymore. I'm telling you, you fill up an application form to a university in Canada, gender, preferred pronoun. Are you comfortable being called Mr. or Mrs. or you choose. Never in the history. We are equal opportunity working center, I mean whatever, working center, hiring people, we give opportunity to all people. It's going to come in the last day. Bend or bow or burn and then you know what happens. They choose the other part. Look at what happens, next verse.

Daniel 13:25

²⁵"Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

Look He answered, I see four men loose walking in the midst of the fire and they are not hurt and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. You know why, my God is living. You know what he says, in all their affliction, he was afflicted with them. Which God are you worshipping this morning? Who is your God? Children, who is your God? Babylon, you know what it says, it has become a habitation of every unclean birds, and habitation of demons. In Hindi it is very interesting, "Adda bhangya", whose unclean house? Base for Unclean birds. Whenever that word 'adda' came to my mind I was thinking of Kistamma enclave, 'apna adda', Loyola academy. It is the apna adda of the Loyola academy people. You know what happens there? Very interesting things happen there. Some people are laughing, what do you say? Hari. It's apna adda and what happens in apna adda, very interesting thing happens. It is the adda of every unclean bird, a habitation of every demon and you know what, we are people who serve the living God and we are people who have been risen from the dead, our God is a God we will serve and worship. If He may choose to deliver us, well and good but you know what, on the other side, there is only glory and no shame.

Daniel 13:28-29

²⁸ Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God! ²⁹ Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this."

So, whom do you worship this morning? Therefore, I make a decree, you know this guy you can't stop him, either this side or that side. He is so excited. He says, now if you touch this God, gone. So, what are the principles that we need to learn from this? If you are truly people who are resurrected, there is only one God who you'll fear. And who is that God who you will fear? *Matthew 10.*

Matthew 10:28

²⁸ And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul but rather fear Him who is able to deliver both soul and body in hell and what is hell? The realm of the dead. So, what are you doing? If you are living, what are you doing among the dead? Who is your God, do you fear Him? Do you have the fear of God? Do you really have the fear of God? God is called the called the God of Abraham, the God of Jacob and in the middle, there is Isaac. What is He called? The fear of Isaac. Do you fear God? Children, do you fear God? Do you really fear Him? You know one of the things that marked the first century church, the first church when they submitted themselves to the apostle's doctrine and to fellowship and to the breaking of bread and to prayers, you know what happened? Great fear came upon all of them and what happened? Signs and wonders and miracles happened among them. You want signs and wonders and miracles? Bring back the fear of God into the church. So, how do you know that you fear God? The day that God tells you, you do not obey slowly, you obey immediately. *Genesis 22.*

Genesis 22:4-5

⁴ Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. ⁵ And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."

Worship. Whom do you fear? That is the person you will end up worshipping. So, after the test is over, what does God tell about Abraham? Next verse 12

Genesis 22:12

¹² And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

So, the first thing, He's a God of the living. So, there is a change of God that means you do not fear anybody else, you only fear God, you respect Him and you honor Him. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. You don't not stay at any place where there is no fear of God. The first thing when Abraham comes to that place where Abimelech is, he looks at that place and he says there's no what here? There's no fear of God in this place and the Bible says, he will make Him quick in the fear of God. Who? Jesus Christ, the seven-fold anointings of the Holy Spirit. The final is the spirit of the fear of the Lord. So, if you are truly, truly born again, one of the things that you will have to inculcate over and over is the fear of the Lord. So, there is a God of the living, second thing, there is a Father of the living. Who is there? There is a change of fatherhood. He tells the Pharisees, you are of your father the devil. He talks about Cain who was of the evil one. Now, what are we? We are people who are born of the Spirit, we are children of God, born of the Spirit. So, if God is our Father, what will he do to us? Yes, the answer is, *Hebrews 12*

Hebrews 12:5-6

⁵ And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; ⁶ For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives."

And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons. We are sons of God means God is our Father. My son, do not despise the what of the Lord? The chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked. So, what are the two things that He will do to us, if we are His sons? Chastening and rebuking. For whom the Lord loves He chastens and when does He do? Scourges. I mean yesterday Pastor was talking about it during Q and A. God will not leave us because He is our Father but you know what He is going to do? He is going to discipline us all the way to heaven. I like that. Thank God. And that is the reason why David says, 'before I was afflicted I went astray,' and then the next verse he says, 'Good Lord, it is in your mercy and in your faithfulness you afflicted me and it was good that I was afflicted that I might learn your law and your judgments.

So, what does God do? Everybody say scourges, how many of you receive the scourgings of your parents? How do they look? Let me show you? By twenty-thirty they want to end the world, there's what is called vision 2030. God also has got a vision, I call it vision 2030, from Proverbs 20:30. Easy to remember. What is this vision 2030 that God has?

Proverbs 20:30

³⁰ Blows and wounds scrub away evil, and beatings purge the inmost being.

Blows and wounds, what do they do? Scrub, have you seen a scrubber? In Telugu, 'Thomuta', you know what Thomming is? Lot of grease is there, oil is there and what is there? The black marks because you extra-fried it. So, what is He going to do? He is going to take a steel scrubber and the green scrubber, put soap and nicely scrub. Why, blows and wounds, scrubbing and beatings, what do they do? They purge, where? The inmost being. Jesus is not looking at the outward. The ESV, let's look at it in another translation interesting.

Blows that wound. I like the word, blows that wound. Not all blows wound. As an illustration: Abigail come here. Don't do it next time okay. It's not wounding her. 'Ah, daddy, he doesn't mean anything.' You know what is going to happen next? There is going to be a wooden spatula and after that treatment what comes? Marks. These are blows that have wounded. What has happened? They've wounded. Actually, KJV uses the word, ***the blueness of the wound.*** It has to

become what? That means blood has clotted over there. Nice clotting has happened. So, whenever you look at it, you know. Blows that wound, what do they do? They cleanse away evil, stroke make clean, the innermost part. And you know what David says, in the innermost part you want me to make me know truth and in the inward parts you want to make me know wisdom. You want to become wise inside? Another translation, this is the NKJV our holy translation. Lashes and wounds scour evil and beatings cleanse the innermost parts. So, if you are a child of God what will He do? He's got twenty-three vision what is that, by twenty-three. If twenty-three is what they are saying, what He wants to do, He wants to cleanse us all in the inward parts because He is our what? Father. That is how we know He is our Father. The way we know that He is our Father, He is interested in our inward reality, than our outward conformity.

Hebrews 12:7-8

⁷If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ⁸ But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

Then you are what kind of sons? actually, Telugu uses a very powerful word, it says, you are of the wrong seed. Why? *Proverbs 13:24.*

Proverbs 13:24.

²⁴ He who spares his rod hates his son. . .

Whoever spare the rod, everybody say that, hates their children. How many of you parents hate your children? So, if do not hate your children, if you love your children, what should we do? Don't spare the rod. God did not spare His Son. What do we do to our children? Spare them. He had to learn obedience through the things that He suffered and we want to give comfort to our children. Whoever spares the rod hates their children. I mean I like what they do in India, mother loves the child, but if he's going on the road and suddenly some car comes what does the mother do, first drag the child like that and after that, O spank the daylights out of that child. Both is love. 'No dear, you should not do it next time,' she doesn't say that. I have seen all mothers irrespective of their emotional inclination, they will either use this or they will say something else. They will pull and then. Pulling, Jesus also does the same thing. First, He pulls you out and then spank you. That what He did to David. I put away your sin but, the sword shall not depart from your house because you are My son. There's a change of Father. He's a loving Father, because as a father, I am interested in all my three daughters. So, what do I do? I don't want to make things easy for them. Use discipline in different ways, I am not talking about physical abuse, that is extremes. I'm talking about really disciplining them for their own good. *Isaiah 54:13,*

Isaiah 54:13

¹³All your children shall be taught by the LORD, and great shall be the peace of your children.

We all like this verse very much. What does it say? All our children will be taught of Lord. You know what the word for taught of the Lord, the word for taught is Limudt from which we get the word disciple, discipline. All our children will be disciplined, disciple and taught of the Lord. Once they are disciplined by God, once they are taught of God, once they have come under the chastisement of God, they will have what, great shall be the peace of our children, you know why? Because they have come under discipline. They will have peace and they will give us peace. Otherwise, they will be piece-piece and we will also be piece-piece.

So, what is the end result of this?

Hebrews 12:10

¹⁰For indeed for a few days they chasten us as seemed best for them but He for our profit that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now, now chastening seems to be joyful for the present but painful, nevertheless, afterwards it yields a what, (all our children will be taught of the Lord and great will be the peace of our children) **peaceable fruit of righteousness by those whose have been trained by it.**

That word for train is very interesting from which we get the word gymnasium. They have gone to the gymnasium of God's discipline – gymmatzio. Nicely disciplined. The number of weights has increased, the number of Books to study has increased, it's not going to reduce.

1 Timothy 4:7-8

⁷But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. ⁸ For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

2 Timothy 3:12

¹²Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise, train yourself onto godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable therefore all those who desire to live godly lives in Christ Jesus will be felicitated. No, will suffer persecution. Not felicitated. That is 2 Timothy 3:12. Okay, understand this.

Proverbs 23:13-14

¹³Do not withhold correction from a child, for if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. ¹⁴ You shall beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from hell.

Do not withhold correction from a child, for if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. If you strike him with the rod you will save his soul from sheol of hell, which is nothing but the realm of the dead. Sheol means both, eternal separation and also the realm of the dead. In other words, if they are children of God they might be taken before their time, not fulfilling God's purpose. They are saved but they have gone before they finished God's purpose. I wrote this down. The devil flatters and then condemns. What does he do? He flatters. You will be like God. That is flattery, you deserve it and after you sin, what does he do? He condemns but what does Jesus do? Exhorts, edifies, corrects and then comforts. First, He exhorts, this is what He does first. He will exhort meaning, He will warn and He will edify also, He will praise you if there are certain things which are good about you. He will call it and say, there are the things which are good about you, strengthen then. He will warn us, He will exhort us, He will also correct us and then also He will comfort us. Look at what it says in Amos 3:2

Amos 3:2

²"You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities."

You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore, what will I do? I will visit you or punish you for your iniquities. All the iniquities inside of you. Your formulas are wrong, your equations are wrong. So, what will I do? Make them all right, make them all straight. How by visiting you, or punishing you or chastising you. So, if you are living, first of all, you have a God whom you worship. You fear Him. Second, you have a Father who corrects you. You know why He corrects you? because He has made a covenant through His Son. He is absolutely faithful to that covenant, and therefore He visits you. Understand this, this is a New Covenant. Abraham was childless and God visited Abraham and He says, "You know what Abraham, I am your shield, I am your exceedingly great reward." Abraham says, "What is the use Lord, I don't have a child." He says, "Come out, look at the stars, you know what, this is how your children are going to be." Abraham believed in God and it was credited to him for righteousness and then He says, "You know what I'm going to do? I'm going to do one thing to prove to you that I'm going to bring this promise to pass, I'm going to make a covenant with you." So, how does He make the covenant? He puts Abraham to sleep and passes between those animals which he slaughters and make a covenant with Abraham. He enters into a covenant with Abraham. He is a God of the Covenant. Now, Abraham on his path what should he do? He also has to enter into a covenant with God. He has to have a seal, that is what we call as circumcision. It was proof that you have entered into God's covenant, a seal that you have already believed in what He has already spoken into your life. This is something which you are doing from your side. *Roman 7* look at what it says, the New Covenant, how He looks at it and we are talking about it in terms of resurrection

Roman 7:4

⁴Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another. What is this marriage? It's a covenant. To Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. This is the new Covenant. Now you are no longer married to the law, flesh and the law were unhappy marriage not because the law was bad but the flesh was unable to keep the law and it hated the law, so what did God do? He put the flesh to

death in His Son. The old was crucified in His Son and when you are risen from the dead what happened to you? You, the resurrected new person is married to Jesus. The one who is being raised from the dead. You have entered into a Covenant with Jesus. So, if you have entered into a covenant with Jesus, there are several part of the covenant we have to keep. First of all we have to keep the Covenant with His servants. Let us look at that verse in 2 Kings 2 I'm going to look at it in several passages. 2 Kings 2:1 onwards

2 Kings 2:1

¹And it came to pass, when the LORD was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. ² Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So, they went down to Bethel.

And it came to pass, when the LORD was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" This is a covenant. I'm not going to leave you because I have made a covenant with you. Covenant with those people who have been entrusted or put over your life, that is spiritual heads. It is a covenant. Covenant with the men of God, the spiritual leaders who have invested themselves into your lives. Elijah, invested himself in Elisha and now he understands it and he says, 'Lord I am not going to let you go. Wherever you go, I am going to come.'

Ruth 1:14-18

¹⁴ Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. ¹⁵ And she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." ¹⁶ But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. ¹⁷ Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me." ¹⁸ When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her.

You know there is a saying in Telugu, the woman who doesn't have a daughter in-law is an excellent woman. And a woman who doesn't have a mother in-law is an excellent woman or excellent daughter in-law. Why? There is no mother in-law, there is no daughter in-law. In Telugu it is very interesting, it is a Telugu saying. Why is the mother in-law such a fantastic lady? Because she doesn't have a daughter in-law. The lady who doesn't have a daughter in-law is a fantastic lady because she doesn't have any testing in her life. The true nature of a woman is shown with her in-laws. With her own mother, 'Yes mother, I'm coming, I will serve you, I will clean you up,' etc. Mother in-law, 'Hey, your mother!?!'

But look at one of the two daughters in-law one, daughter in-law said, 'I want to come with you. Mama, mama, mama,' she started crying. This 'Ma' business is dangerous. Okay. Kissed and she went away. In turning away what did she do? In turning away what did she do my dear brothers? Look at what it says, Naomi says, "Look, your sister in-law has gone back to her people, to her gods." The only hope for you for eternal life is this one defeated believer, Naomi. And she says, "Return after her." You know what she says, this is a covenant with her spiritual head. What is her covenant with her spiritual head? Look at what she said. But Ruth said, "Do not entreat me to leave you please." I don't want to go back to those dead gods, those dead relationships. I made a covenant with you. I do not know about your God. I know only about you, I've seen a glimmer of hope in you. There is something inside of you, even when you lived in Moab. Somehow it felt as if you didn't belong here. Albeit, it was a defeated testimony; regardless of the fact that it was a defeated testimony, it was a testimony. "***Entreat me not to leave you therefore or turn back from following after you.***" Why? ***Your God, my God, your people, my people, where you die, I will die, where you're buried, I will be buried, till death do us part.*** You know what the Bible says, when she saw that she was determined. Did you make a covenant? There is a covenant of the living, if it is not the covenant of the living, what is there on the other side? Covenant of the dead. Look at what it says in *Isaiah 28*,

Isaiah 28:18

¹⁸ Your covenant with death will be annulled . . .

Your covenant with death will be annulled. There is a covenant on the other side too. There is a covenant because you're not completely cut off. Let me tell you something. This is what I have learned in all these years walking with the Lord, for a limited time in the ministry, this is what I have learnt. There are certain covenants that you make with the other side before you come to the Lord. What is it, it's a covenant. Unless and until you confess and renounce it, you know what is going to happen? Those covenant will have a hold over your life. It is a covenant with death. I mean I remember Pastor James telling us, "You know what Vijay. I baptized these believers, I baptized these brothers, they were excellent precious brothers but everything they told me, they told me about the money that they stole, they told me about the library books they stole, they told me about everything that they stole but they did not tell me about the fact that they were freemasons. I baptized them." A covenant, a covenant with death, they have not renounced it my dear brothers. You what is going to happen? It is going to haunt you. It's called the long arm of Satan, it is going to come after you. It is a curse. Therefore, enter into covenant with men of God. When you enter into a covenant with people, honestly, there is no other way to do this, who will mentor you and teach you. Look at what it says in Nehemiah 13

Nehemiah 13:1-3

¹On that day they read from the Book of Moses in the hearing of the people, and in it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever come into the assembly of God, ² because they had not met the children of Israel with bread and water, but hired Balaam against them to curse them. However, our God turned the curse into a blessing. ³ So it was, when they had heard the Law, that they separated all the mixed multitude from Israel.

In other words they cut it off, all those covenants, they broke it off. But you know what happened?

Nehemiah 13:23-24

²³ In those days I also saw Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. ²⁴ And half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and could not speak the language of Judah, in other words they can sing all the movie songs but no song of zion is coming out of their mouths, but spoke according to the language of one or the other people. And he was really upset with them and you know Nehemiah, he's not going to hold back right. He just plucked their beard and slapped them and he cursed them etc. I mean I'm not going to recommend they kind of solution but I would like to be the Ezra the Scribe kind, who wept when things like this happened. But the point is this. The worst thing happened. Look at what it says, goes on.

Nehemiah 13:28-29

²⁸ And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was a son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite; therefore, I drove him from me. ²⁹ Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites.

And one of the sons of Joiada. Who is this Joiada? The son of Eliashib. And who is this Eliashib? The high priest, was a son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite; therefore, I drove him from me. Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites, they defiled.

So, my dear brothers and sister, be very careful when you get into covenants especially marriage covenants, dangerous. Lamb of God, if He is the Lamb of God, He's going to marry a who? Whom is He going to marry? Lamb. Lamb with marry Lamb. Fox will marry vixen. So, Herod will marry Herodias. That is very, very absolute, it is very straight forward. So, even if he doesn't find a Herodias, he will pull from somebody else and says, you take it easy, I will marry her. So, that is exactly what happens. Like I was telling the church in Jharkhand, they will come to the Pastor and say, 'Pastor, Pastor, I found this girl, prefect Pastor. Good family, educated, traditional.' Traditional, we know what traditional is, but, and that but is a different thing. In Hindi there is a word, 'kintu'(but), 'parantu'(but). That 'kintu', 'parantu' is dangerous. So, what will happen? Ok Pastor, this girl is ok. Fine, just bring her to church. Now, who is this lady? She wears skimpy outfits on normal days and this guy will tell the lady, 'You know what, I have to introduce you to my Pastor, next time you come to church, you have to dress well.' So, he dresses her up and this time she wears long clothes, flowing robes etc. She almost looks like a curtain. In Hindi it is called Pardha or veil. So, she's put on a veil and she comes to church but you know what, man who has discernment is able to look through the pardha (veil) and is able to see the vixen and you enter into a covenant with this person, gone. That is the reason why we warn young people, protective. I'll tell you, if your father is a godly man, what did I say? If your father is a godly man, until and unless your father approves don't marry that person. There are two men in your life; your father and your pastor. That is very important, young children, girl or boy. In the multitude of counselors what is there? Safety.

2 Corinthians 6:14-16

¹⁴ ***Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? I told you right, there are only two kinds of people; spiritually alive or spiritually dead. And what communion has light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what accord has Christ with Belial? Can you play the accordion with Christ and belial at the same time? It is going to be a cacophony. Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God.***

So what is the living doing among the dead? Do you have a covenant? Break those covenants. Make covenants with the men of God. It is so important, enter into covenants with your spiritual leaders. Like Joshua was never going to let go of Moses. God has to kill him so that Joshua can move to the next level. I like that. Elisha is not going to let go of Elijah, God had to take him. Enter into covenants.

Another covenant that you need to make,

Psalms 50:5

⁵ ***“Gather My saints together to Me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.”***

Why are they sanctified? It is because they have made a covenant with God by sacrifice. That is the reason why in *Psalms 16* it says *the saints who are in the land they are the excellent ones in whom is all My delight*. ‘You know brother; I am a Christian but I don’t like to fellowship with other brothers. I don’t have spiritual friends, no Christian friends.’ Whom do you have brother? I mean it is interesting that you are living but you have dead friends, spiritually. In other words what is the reason for your friendship with dead friends? It is because you have things in common; you are exchanging ideas, you are taking their ideas, you are taking their suggestions and opinions and you are giving them suggestions. There is an interaction with between that is going on. There is a transaction going on. What are you doing there? It is a covenant.

You make a covenant with the Body. There are people who have made a covenant with sacrifice. You know what? You want to stick to one another. They are saints, they are sanctified ones. It is the covenant of the living.

Another covenant,

Job 31:1

“I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?”

Who is this? This man is the one who is in the Old Testament. Look at this man! I like the exhortation that Paul gives Timothy, he says – *elder men, treat them as fathers. Young men, treat them as brothers. Elder women, treat them as mothers. Young women, treat them as sisters. With all purity*. I mean, I like that. Sometimes I wonder, if I was Timothy and I read that I would ask, ‘Paul, why did you write this to me? I was with you all these days. Don’t you know me? Is this essential? Is it important for you to mention this?’

It is an exhortation; it is a warning. Give yourself ear. It is a warning. You see, it is very interesting – *if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. If your ear or hand causes you to sin, cut it off*. And He says, - *it is written that thou shalt not commit adultery, but if anyone lusts after a woman in his heart has already committed adultery with her. Therefore, if your eye causes... so what is the problem? Is your eye the problem? Is your hand the problem? Is your neck the problem? The heart is the problem. The heart. Otherwise in the church everybody will be without eyes and hands, just the torsos. Everybody would be amputated. No. the heart is the problem. That is the reason why the Law of the Lord has to be written in your heart.*

Romans 6:12-14

¹² ***Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. ¹³ And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. ¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.***

Understand this. So this is a covenant that you are making with God. Lord, I want to make a covenant with my spiritual leaders. I want to make a covenant with my saints. I want to make a covenant with my body. It is a covenant of the living. This is the New Covenant. The proof that I have made a covenant with you is that I am joint to the Body. That is the reason God tells Hagar, 'Hagar, where are you coming from? And where are you going?' Oh! You do not know my mistresses. She troubles me too much. 'You do one thing. There is only one place of faith and you are running away from that? Go back and submit yourself to your mistress.'

These are all principles my dear brothers and sisters. Understand this. So, whether you are living or dead, how do you know? You fear God, you come under the discipline of God and you enter into a covenant with God. So once you enter into the covenant with God what you receive from God is counsel. The counsel of the living. You see unless and until people were baptized in the 1st century church. They repented of their sins and then they were baptized. How were they baptized? Peter said, 'Save yourself from this untoward and perverse generation. Those who gladly received the Word were baptized. In other words, they entered into a covenant and once they entered into a covenant they continued steadfastly for the apostles' doctrine, for fellowship, for breaking of bread and for prayers.

You see that? The instruction comes later. First you have to enter into a covenant. Unless and until you enter into a covenant you will not understand anything. You will not have any revelation about God. You will have good ideas about God but you will truly not know Him, because you have to understand God and it is possible only through a covenant. So break off all the covenants that you have made with the dead. Enter into a covenant with your spiritual head. Enter into a covenant with the Body that you are part of. Enter into a covenant with your own body, so that not only will you live a life of purity, but you will also be an example to others and you will not cause others to stumble. Then, once you enter into a covenant you have what you call the counsel or direction from God. Now God is able to write His law on the tables of your heart through the ministry of the Word. What is He able to do? He is able to write His law on the tables of your heart through the ministry of the Word.

2 Corinthians 3:2-4

²You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; ³clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart. ⁴And we have such trust through Christ toward God.

So what does God do? He starts to write His Law; He starts to change your heart. I'll tell you something, it is very important. You see, there are two things in a computer; the hardware and a software. What is a hardware? It is the mother board, the chips and everything. But what is the most important for the computer? It is not just the hardware but also the software. Can you see the software? No. the hardware is your brain; everybody can see your brain. The software is your mind. What is that? Mind is something which is mass-less, it is shapeless. So God has to install what we call as the operating system. Change your default settings. You know there are two kinds of settings; the ROM and the RAM. What is ROM? Read only memory. It is permanent. It is the default settings of your computer. It is burnt into your computer, in the hardware. So what does God have to do? First take the ROM out, the heart of stone and give you a new heart and burn new default settings. He will give you a new heart which is inclined towards God and loves God, which has inclinations towards God and His Word, inclinations to the leading of the Holy Spirit. He has to give you that. And then He has to write His software; His own ideas, His own words on the tables of our minds. So what does He do? Through the ministry of the Word, He begins to transform our mind, so that you may know that which is good, that which is acceptable and that which is the perfect will of God.

Three things are important; the good, the pleasing and the perfect will of God. But unless your mind is transformed you will not know that this is good. Unless your mind is transformed you will not know that this is perfect or even acceptable. Your mind has to be transformed and what happens in the computer after you have installed the software? You also install something else to protect your compute, what we call as Anti-virus. Why antivirus? It is because there are doctrines to demons and deceitful spirits going around. So you have to protect your system against this. It is like this; your body is there are there are germs all around. Your immune system has to be strong, (that is what is called as antivirus inside of you) to reject all these viruses outside. Sometimes you have viruses in your system and you don't even know the symptoms. That is what is called as asymptomatic diseases. You don't even show the symptoms but it is there. So right from childhood what do they do? They give you vaccination (antivirus) to boost up your immune system so that you can

fight away all these viruses. And then you don't have to keep on worrying about sickness, but walk in health. Don't be worried about sickness but walk in health. If you keep on worrying about sickness you become a hypochondriac, you are always anxious about what will happen if you touch this and touch that. Don't worry, walk in health; wash your hands, clean yourself, exercise well, keep your body healthy, eat healthy, don't eat too much of oil, don't eat too much of red meat etc. eat a lot of greens.

So many of you must be with long faces already, 'How can we do without oil? (telugus) oil has to flow, one layer of oil has to be there. How can we live without non-veg? It has to be red, extremely red.' We have all our choices, but if you really, really want to enjoy good health, eat well, exercise well, you don't have to worry about diseases. Similarly, it says, cleanse your hands you sinner, purify your hearts you double-minded. Walk in purity and all these things will not touch you. Walk in health. Exercise yourself unto godliness. Think on what I have already said. Change your mind, so that when all these ideas and all these demonic thoughts are coming to you you are able to reject them because you have a standard which is the Word of God inside of your heart. This is what we call as counsel. I want to be free from sin. You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. God has to burn that truth inside of your heart and He does that in the New Covenant if you believe. That is the reason why He says, 'If I, by the finger of God, drive out demons the Kingdom of God has come upon you.' And what is the finger of God? The Spirit of God. In the Gospel according to Matthew, He says, 'If I, through the Spirit of God, drive out demons, truly the Kingdom of God has come upon you.' So there are so many negative ideas all around the world. How do you resist them? By filling yourself with the truth of the Word of God. Not only filling yourself but also obeying and writing them.

See, if you hear you get something. If you hear and write a little more has gotten into you. But if you hear, write and practice you know what happens? It becomes a part of you. That is what is called as burning, that becomes your default setting. Otherwise what happens? You hear the Word of God and you deceive yourself because you forget what you already heard. You have to put into practice so that it becomes a part of you. Practice it over. He who practices righteousness is righteous. So make it a practice.

Romans 6:16

¹⁶Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

Yes, I made a covenant with God and I offered the instruments of my body as instruments of righteousness, but how do I overcome sin?

Romans 6:17-18

¹⁷But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. ¹⁸And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

That is what has happened now. Doctrine has become a part of you, you have started to think the way God wants you to think. You have what we called the mind of Christ. That is why the Bible says, 'Arm yourself with the same mind for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, because Christ also suffered in the flesh.' Arm yourself with the same way of thinking, make this a part of your thinking process. Let the Word of God be burnt in your systems to become a part of the way you think, your default settings. That is how you become free. Set free from sin and you become a slave of righteousness.

So first you have,

1. The God of the living, the God whom you fear.
2. The Father of the living; the Father who chastises and corrects you
3. The Covenant of the living; you have made a covenant with Him
4. The Counsel of the living; you have received the counsel from Him
5. The Choices of the living; based upon this counsel you begin to make choices.

The choices that you make will determine whether you are living or whether you are dead. The choices.

Deuteronomy 30:14-16

¹⁴ **But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.**

¹⁵ **“See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, ¹⁶ in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess.**

So what should you do? You choose, you make a choice. How do you make your choice? Depending upon the counsel that you receive. Understand this. Therefore, don't leave the place of counsel, don't leave the place of warning. There is a covering, and covering is essentially the counsel that you have received. It is a protection that God has placed around you. Don't leave that place.

Genesis 13:10-11

¹⁰ **And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar.** I remember that statement pastor made – you look at the land but you forget the people. You forgot so conveniently. You look at the land and you forget the people; you do not consider what kind of people are there. What do you have in Sodom? Fullness of bread, abundance of idleness, but you do not strengthen the arm of the needy and there is full of pride. They are only interested in making a merry and living a comfortable life. ¹¹ **Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east.** This is the deadly part. **And they separated from each other.**

He separated from the very source of life. How many have we not seen, people making those choices. You are making choices my dear brothers and sisters. Why are you making that choice? What has inspired you to make those choices? Why? ‘How long should I be like this? Can't I have anything of my own?’ That is what happened to the prodigal son and ultimately what has happened? *My son is dead.* Here I always have to be under Abraham, there I will get promotion; I will be at the gates of Sodom. Promotion? Let me tell you, if you are being sent let the elders lay their hands on you and send you. That will be one of the most incredible scenes I have seen.

I went to Jharkhand and I have seen Eric. I am really, really proud of that guy. Honestly, my heart is over-joyed when I see the kind of work he is doing. The kind of fruit he has got in the mission field. Do you know how he was sent? Pastor laid hands and sent him. Ofcourse he is a part of us. That is how you should be sent. The Church fasted and prayed in Antioch and they got a word of knowledge, it said, ‘*Through the Holy Spirit separate unto Me Paul and Barnabas.*’ You know what they did? They fasted and prayed, they laid their hands upon them and they sent them. That is how you should be sent. There are so many people who just go; they went; they are not sent. It is interesting, it is like this, when you go away like that without being sent, for a season you will run, like Lot ran. He was successful, he was close to Sodom, then he was in Sodom and God sent him a warning. What was the warning? The attack of the 5 kings. He was taken as captive, he was taken away and then who has to come and rescue him? The man who was living in the Promise Land. He came and rescued him. Did he not learn his lesson? No, look how strong the world is inside of him. And where does he go back to? He goes back to Sodom. It is dangerous.

I mean at least madam Lot should have said something, right? At least she should have said, ‘We should not leave our lord, let us be a part of him. We learnt our lessons, let's go back.’ No. ‘No, I should follow my husband wherever he goes.’ Not in such stupid circumstances, you can actually talk to him and put some sense into his mind. You don't have to be like that. You can talk to him and ask, ‘Why are you doing like this? We made these choices and look at where these choices have taken us. Now we have got our hands burnt and we have lost everything and if it were not for your uncle who is a spiritual man we would not have been rescued.’ But then again they go back like the dog goes back to its vomit. Think about that, it is so dangerous. Now he gets a promotion, he becomes an elder in Sodom at the gates before judgement, because of the choices that you make.

If you stay in the Promise Land there might be a lot of testing and trial, but you know what happens through it all? You are able to train some people. 318 trained soldiers who were born in his own household who are at his command. How many people do you have, Lot? Were you at least able to save your sons-in-law? No. think about it, Esther goes into a palace, by the time she spends six months in the palace and she gets a word from Mordecai and Mordecai gives her a warning, she says, ‘You fast, my maidens and I will fast.’ Within 6 months you have a bunch of maidens who are fasting

and praying with you? Already you have mentored them? You see, that is what happens when you are sent. You will just go and you will have fruit. I looked at Eric and I saw the kind of fruit he has birthed through his ministry. It is amazing. People are hungry for the Word, those who take correction, you can call them anything and they will not get offended, especially the young team that he has got. Do you know why? It is because he was sent. Do just go without being sent.

I heard a minister from a different country, we were having lunch together. He was telling me, 'How difficult it is to find loyal, faithful servants of God. You invest into their lives, you spend a lot of time with them and after a while they will come and say, you know what, 'my season with your ministry is over,' what? 'God is changing my course,'.' You know what? These are hirelings. They are not ministers. It is like this, do you want to be a priest of one family? Or you want to be the priest of a whole tribe? Pastor of one church? Or a Bishop of 10 churches? You see that? Be sent! Come under authority, I mean I can't emphasize that enough. Just don't go, be loyal wherever you are, otherwise you will pay a terrible price like Lot. Look at what happened to his family.

You need to understand something, think about it, I have done my B.Tech in Osmania University, after graduating from OU my parents were really, really ambitious (I was also ambitious), they said, 'You know what, go to the next stage.' So it is like, if I have graduated from OU I don't want to go back to Zilah parishad. So next stage God sent me to IIT. My father came to drop me. From one academic level to the next. After my Masters, from Masters to a Canadian University, not any Indian University. So he came to the visa office with me and he sent me, 'My son has become something great.' So from one academic stage to the next level, so even when you are moving how should you move? From a place where they are preaching and teaching you fantastic stuff to a lower place? No. You have to go from one spiritual level to the next spiritual level which is higher.

Think about it. This is how I evaluate – if a person has really grown and I am not able to handle his anointing, you know what I will say? If that person says, 'Pastor, the Lord is leading me to another place.' I would ask, 'Where are you going? Which church do you want to be a part of?' this particular church. 'Okay, that man of God? Powerful man of God, he is much more anointed than I am. It is a good church that you will be a part of. You will grow in the Lord more.' So what I will do is, if it possible for me, I will hire a Mercedes Bens and take you and drop you there, because I am not able to handle your anointing, I would gladly send you to that church whose pastor is much more anointed than I am.

Not from Jerusalem to Jericho. I mean lot of people make these choices. Are you going to a higher level or a lower level? I mean, do you know Jacob's ladder? Who is the ladder? Christ is the ladder. And what is there on the ladder? Angels of God, the servants of God who bring you the Word of God. What should they do? They should take you from one spiritual level to the next. So where are you going madam? Back to Sodom. The choices people make. I cannot reiterate this enough. After a while the results may not be instantaneous, the choices that you make they will have its effects, not only for your generation but for the generations to come. In the process you are going to be a person who is responsible for birthing Moab and Ammon who are going to be a thorn on Israel's side for the rest of their generations. Why do you want to be like that?

Choices, my dear brothers, they have eternal consequences. Once you have made a choice be very careful where you are going. Because it is not just you who are responsible now, God has given you a family, you should be very careful. That is just an admonition as an elder brother.

Genesis 13:12-13

¹²Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom. ¹³But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD.

You see that? Choices. So one of the things that you learn to do is to say No to so many things. I would rather stay with this man in the Promise Land and I will handle all these struggles, because through these struggles I will grow. Rather than leaving him and destroying my life.

Living or Dead?

1. The God of the living
2. The Father of the living

3. The Covenant of the living
4. The Counsel of the living
5. The Choices of the living
6. The Company of the living

Based on the counsel you have the choices of the living and finally the choices define the company of the living or of the dead, depending of the choices that you make. Look at what happened to Lot, the choices that he made, what happened to him,

2 Peter 2:7-8

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

Why do you need this torment? Why? Are you able to influence them? No, on the contrary they may not have influenced you so much but they have influenced the next generation. You probably had the spiritual strength to ward off this, but not your children. This is how the Lord responds to Jeremiah,

Jeremiah 15:19

¹⁹ This is how the LORD responds: "If you return to me, I will restore you so you can continue to serve me. If you speak good words rather than worthless ones, you will be my spokesman. You must influence them; do not let them influence you!"

Don't be deceived.

1 Corinthians 15:33-34

³³ Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits." ³⁴ Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

So understand this, there are choices. Let me tell you something, in the Kingdom of God you make the choices and as a result of your choices you are where you are and what you are. You cannot fool yourself. What you are today and your spiritual state are the result of the choices that you have made. Nothing is random in the Kingdom of God. You go to Sodom, you make a choice like that, you go to a place where there is no challenge for you to live a godly life, no support, no Word of God to propel you, no faith to back you up, no counsel to warn you or to exhort you. What happens? It is a natural consequence that you will go into captivity. And you will lose your next generation.

My dear brothers and sisters, let us not be deceived. There is a price to be paid. We are parents, elders in the church. So we have to make a choice, not only for our sakes but for our children's sake. That is the reason, you know what Jesus says? *Sanctify them by your truth, Your Word is truth and for their sake I sanctify Myself.* Does He have to sanctify Himself? Absolutely not. It is not necessary, He is already Sanctified, but for their (our) sakes he was sanctified. It is very interesting if you read the Gospel according to Matthew, chapter 6, it says – *if your eye causes you to sin pluck it off* etc, remember? He is talking in the context of adultery. In *Matthew 18* He says – *children, if anyone causes one of these little children to stumble. Let a milestone be around his neck and let him be drowned.* And in that context He says, *if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. If your hand causes you to sin cut it off.* In other words your choices should not become a reason for your children to stumble. T.V. may not affect you but it will definitely affect your children. So what should you do? Throw out the television out of your house. Make a choice for your children. Make godly choices for your children's sake. For ultimately we, as parents, will be held accountable, not only for our decisions, but also how those decisions impacted our children's lives. ***³⁴ Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; "Evil company corrupts good habits."*** Not the other way round. There is no reverse osmosis that is happening. This is not RO.

Living or Dead?

1. The God of the living – you fear Him
2. The Father of the living – you come under His chastisement

3. The Covenant of the living – enter into a covenant with this living God
4. The Counsel of the living – take the counsel of the living
5. The Choices of the living – make choices of the living
6. The Company of the living – choose the company based on those choices
7. The Church of the living – be a part of the church

What is this? It is a support structure which enables you to live this life.

1 Timothy 3:14-15

¹⁴These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; ¹⁵but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

this is a structure, this is the environment on which you build so that you can support this life; the pillar and the ground of truth, where God's Word is exalted, where God's Word is preached. Not their own ideas, my dear brothers. Not the fantastic ideas that come to our mind, not to titillate our senses. Because in the last days people will be there who will not endure sound doctrine, they will heap for themselves teachers. That is the reason Paul says, *You have many teachers but you have only one father.* And you know what he says? *I go through labour pains again so that I may birth Christ inside of you.*

One thing that you can't tell your wife when she is going through labour, 'Honey, I completely understand what you are going through.' She will slap you. This is an advice I gave to one of my co-brothers, 'Vijay, any advice? I am having twins.' I said, 'Don't tell your wife, 'honey I completely understand what you are going through.' On the contrary Paul is a bachelor, and he completely understands what a woman is going through. Do you know what he says? *'I go through labour to birth Christ.'* And therefore he has the authority to write to sisters and to brothers. He says, 'I birthed you in Christ Jesus.'

It is an environment my dear brothers and sisters. It is the pillar and ground of truth. Not ours, not our prejudices, but the pure Word of God. That is the reason why we compare Scripture with Scripture, spiritual things with spiritual things. So that you know what we are indeed speaking. In letter and in Spirit is the Word of God. And if you are a spiritual man you will be able to understand all these things. You will be able to judge it. So what happens when you prepare the structure? Let's see a contrast,

Revelation 3:1

¹And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, I like the word 'Sardis' do you know what it means? 'The red ones' they have two connotations. Who is the red fellow in the Bible? Edon, means who? Esau. And who else is the red one in the Bible? The person who gets red with anger. Who is that person? Cain. The red ones. Look at what God has to warn this church,

'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars (seven stands for perfection or completeness): ***"I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.*** Why are you dead? What is the reason God is saying that they are dead? What is the evaluation? ***²Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.***

That is the reason why. Why are you dead? It is because there is nothing which is complete. What is the problem with the pastor in Sardis? He starts something and he says, 'I am changing, God is changing my season. God is taking me somewhere else.' He leaves it and starts something else. Everything is half done. There is no completeness, there is no maturity.

Hebrews 6:1-3

¹Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, (in other words this is a church which is propelling people towards greater levels of spiritual maturity) ***not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ²of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. ³And this we will do if God permits.***

Notice this – ***and this we will do if God permits.*** In other words, to go to the next stage God has to permit. I'll give you an example: I have three daughters. Let's say I teach them and then I test them. 'Can I go to the next level?' No. You must first go through the test, if you fail you have to repeat the entire thing until you are perfect and then you go to the next level. That is a church which will teach you and teach you the same things over and over again until you go to the next level. 'Pastor, you have taught this so many times, in so many contexts.' Yes, absolutely, why am I teaching you again? Because God is not permitting us. Understand that – this we will do if God permits us.

1 Corinthians 2:6-7

⁶ However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. ⁷ But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,

If you want to understand the wisdom of God, you have to be mature. Understand that. You go from a soulish condition to a spiritual state. Now you are not only intellectually analyzing the Word of God but now you are able to discern what the God is wanting to speaking to you and you are able to discern the will of God.

Hebrews 5:12-13

¹² For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. ¹³ For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. ¹⁴ But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

They have come to that point. They are endeavoring. They are cooperating with God until they are coming to a point of full age. God can entrust something into their hands.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.

This is perfection. When we are talking about works, we are not talking about sinless-ness. No, we are talking about being blameless. An increased sensitivity to the will of God and to the sin in your own heart. Understand that, that is maturity. Otherwise you will be half constructed houses and that will not bring glory to God.

Luke 14:29-30

²⁹ lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, ³⁰ saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish'?

So what should we do? We should be people who will finish and not just begin. It is important how we finish. Finish the task that God has entrusted into our hands. Be mature.

So this morning we have looked at seven things.

Living or Dead?

1. The God of the living – so we serve Him and we fear Him
2. The Father of the living – so we come under His correction and His discipline
3. The Covenant of the living – we enter into a covenant and we covenant ourselves to living a life that is pleasing to Him
4. The Counsel of the living – we come under His counsel
5. The Choices of the living – and based upon the counsel we make choices
6. The Company of the living – and based upon those choices we choose our company
7. The Church of the living – and finally we become a part of the church or a structure which enables us to complete what God has started in our lives.

Otherwise we will have a reputation that we are alive but we are dead. We are not complete. We have to finish; everybody has a race. The moment you have entered into a Christian life you have entered into a race. It is not important how you

begin that race. But it is important how you finish the race and therefore we have to finish what God has started in our lives. Therefore, the Bible says – *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling* (it doesn't stop there) *because it is God who works in you to will and to do His good pleasure*. It is both ways. *Take hold unto that which Christ has already taken hold of you*. Finish what God has started. Young brothers and young sisters don't just start something and not finish it. Count the cost before you start anything and finish it. Whatever has been entrusted into your hands. Otherwise there will be full of half constructed houses, half constructed lives and those will not bring glory to us nor to our heavenly Father.

So this morning let's stand and make a covenant with God. You see, the choices that we all make, but once we make those choices (we are free to make those choices) but we are not free to choose the consequences. Every choice will have a consequence. But God in His Word already warns us, He preempts us, He shows us and He says, 'Don't oppose yourself. In opposing Me (God) you are not opposing Me but you are opposing yourself.' It is remarkable, that if you don't receive the counsel there could come a point in your life, where the Lord will not speak to you. The Bible says that the Lord did not speak to Saul neither through prophets, nor through the urim, nor through dreams. And then the very next moment, seeing that God is not speaking to him he did not humble himself. He immediately started consulting mediums. And the Bible says in *Isaiah 28:18* – *should not my people seek God? Why do they seek mediums and spirits and wizards, the dead on behalf of the living?* A man who was solemnly warned, a man who was given chance after chance but he never came under the discipline of God. The Bible says, he who is disciplined many times and does not learn his lesson will be suddenly cut off and that without remedy. This morning we are free to make choices but we are not free to choose the consequences of our choices. Therefore, let us ask God wisdom. The Bible says – do not trust in yourself. Trust in the Lord with all of your heart and do not lean to your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths.

The Bible says – *you will hear a voice behind you directing you, take this way and that way, because you have obeyed Him*. You have honored Him and in every decision you have consulted Him and you never made a choice without counsel.

Closing prayer

Lord, this morning, You are warning us and You are teaching us. Lord I pray that we will not be like Lot, we choose foolishly, we do not want to choose without understanding, we do not want to choose with our emotions. We do not want to choose because there is prosperity, temporal gain. We want to make choices Lord, for ourselves and for our children. We can only make choices for ourselves Lord, individually, and to a point for our families. Like Joshua, he said – 'As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.' And he made this statement – *choose for yourselves whom you will serve this day. Choices matter. And let our choices be determined by the counsel that we have received. The eternal counsel of God, the old ancient paths which have been proven to be true. Generation after generation, He Himself said in His Word – heaven and earth shall pass away but My Word will abide forever and He who does the will of God will abide forever. And may it be said about us, like David fulfilled the intentions and the purposes of God in his generation before he rested with his fathers, because he was a man who took counsel. Yes, he made mistakes. Yes, there were times that he fell, but he came under the chastisement of God and he said, 'Lord, I thank You for Your chastisement.'*

Some of us are going through it, but do not lose heart. The Lord loves you and if you endure chastening it will yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness if you are trained by it. So let the Lord train us through this process of discipline. It is the man who was in the wilderness who was trained through a life-style of discipline. John the Baptist, for thirty years in the wilderness. He was disciplined by God, the Bible says. The Word of God circumvented everybody and reached him in the wilderness and everybody came to him to hear as to what God has to speak to that generation. This morning Lord, we want to make a covenant to the best that we know how, with You, because we do not want to be among the dead anymore. You have raised us up together and seated us together with You in Christ Jesus. Therefore, O Lord, we do not want to put our minds and our hearts on earthly things, on temporal things, but on heaven and eternal things. We want to be truly sons of the resurrection, sons of God. We want to serve You, we want to fear You. We do not want to run away when You correct us. We want to draw towards You. We want to receive Your counsel. We want to make choices based upon the counsel that we receive and choose a company that we will be a part of and be in a place where You will propel us to finish that which You have started in our lives. In a place, O Lord, which will help us finish that which has been started in our lives. Let not that job be half done. We will finish Lord, like David fulfilled God's purpose in his generation. To that end I pray that You would bless our church, us as a church, especially here that You would anoint us even as we go about into a new week that we will truly be extensions of You O Lord, in our work places. That we will be truly witnesses in our work places.

Witnesses of God, the witnesses of the resurrection. A people who have life, yes we may be an aroma of death to those who are perishing. But an aroma of life who are being saved. But who is sufficient for these things O Lord, except You make us sufficient O Lord.

Therefore, Lord empower us with Your Spirit, fill us with Your Holy Spirit O Lord. Anoint us afresh this morning. And send us O Lord into this world so that we will truly be an aroma of Christ, a letter, an epistle that people will read and they will ask for the hope that is in us. And we will be able to give them an answer with meekness, with gentleness and with fear. Bless us O Lord as a church. Equip us, give us a heart for souls, O Lord. Give us a heart O Lord Jesus to reach out to people even in our own homes, in our own spheres of influence. That we will not hide this treasure that You have given to us. Treasure in earthen vessels. That we will be able to share these words. Your Word says O lord, how beautiful are the feet of those who bring the Gospel of peace. I pray Father that each one of us will be those feet which are able to take the Gospel into our work places. And Lord, to bring forth the aroma of Christ in the places of our influence. Bless us to that end I pray. Anoint us as a Church this morning. Thank You Father, we praise You, we worship You, we give You glory. For in Jesus' mighty name we pray. Amen.

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

God bless you.