

# Resolute Faith – Do You Have It?

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*Father in Heaven, we just want to thank You, for this privilege of coming together as Your children, on the first Sunday of this new month. 8<sup>th</sup> month of 2023 Lord You have been so faithful and I pray Father that even as we begin in Your presence this morning, the first Sabbath of this month, for many of us it will be a new beginning. Yes Lord, if any man is in Christ, old things have passed away and behold everything is made new. Therefore I pray Lord this day will be a new beginning for many of us. Touch us O Lord, speak to us through Your Word. Strengthen us in our faith, anoint us with Your Spirit, write Your Law in the deep most parts of our inner man and cause us to walk in Your ways. We praise You, we worship You, for in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

Last Sunday we heard a very powerful Word about Hell. It is a real place. Hell was never made for us, it was made for the devil and the fallen angels. But the devil, in his craftiness, caused Adam to betray God. And the same condemnation which came upon him, we all through our disobedience, through Adam became a part of that. But we thank God for the Cross. When we see Hell and when we look at what it is, the reality of it we truly understand the mercy of God. It took God to pay for those sins. It is impossible for any man to pay the debt that we owe to God, it is impossible. The psalm writer says, 'No man, in anyway, can pay a ransom for his brother that he should not see the bit, for the ransom for his soul is priceless that cannot be paid off at all. That is the reality.

But thank God for His Son, that He experienced that separation on behalf of all of us. He tasted death it says in Hebrews 2, you know what taste is right? Brother Edward Williams gives a beautiful example, he says, 'It is like our mother's home-made chicken curry. To check if the chicken is cooked or not they take a small piece of it and they taste it and after that they do not swallow it but they spit it out.' That is exactly what Jesus did; He tasted death and He spat it out. On behalf of all of us He tasted death that we could be saved from eternal, (not ordinary or temporal, but eternal) condemnation.

Praise God for the Cross. The Cross is the centre for our lives. Even as Brother John was praying, if we have unforgiveness, all the deaths that we owe to God He will put it back into our account. And I was thinking about it. In other words the Cross will have no effect over our lives, if we have unforgiveness in our lives. All the price that Jesus paid will become absolutely zero (for you) if you hold even a tiny bit of unforgiveness or decent against anybody. Notwithstanding the fact that they might have harmed us or done us wrong, we just forgive and move on. As Christians we need to forgive and move on; as Christians we need to have thick skins. Don't become emotional, 'Oh she said this and she said that.' Like pastor says, if it does not apply, let it fly. If it applies change and let it fly after that. That is how you should be smart, you should be wise in these days, you should not allow people to rent space in our mind.

I think it was Derek Prince who said, 'This lady was refusing to forgive her husband and he said, 'Why are you so unforgiving towards your husband?' she said, 'He ruined 20 years of my life.' And Derek Price looked at her and said, 'Do you want to allow him to ruined the next 20 years of your life? What are you going to do?' that is the reason why Jeremiah says, 'How long will you allow wicked thoughts to lodge in your hearts?' *Jeremiah 4*. Wicked thoughts are lodging without paying rent. I mean, NIV says – *How long will you allow wicked thoughts to harbour*; they have let down their anchor and they are staying right there in your brain and you are just not moving at all, not even an inch. You are just there where you were several years when we started. We do not want to be like that; we want to move on in the Lord. There should be progress, there should be growing in the Spirit, there should be growing in grace and truth, they should be growing in the knowledge of God.

So this morning, I titled today's' meditation as – Resolute Faith – Do You Have It? Last time we looked at Intentional Faith – Do You Have It? There is a hymn writer who sang this beautiful hymn, he said – I am resolved no longer to linger. We sing that song, right? I have resolved no longer to linger in my paths of sins, these have allured me. Things that are higher, things that are nobler, these have attracted my sight. I am going to follow my Savior all the way. So resolution is very important. See, Christian life is not an easy-chair life. If there is no resolution, if your mind is not made up. Like

pastor quoted a powerful 4 sentence quotation from one man of God. What did he say? The heart desires, the will embraces, the mind rationalizes and the conscience justifies it. That is true for spiritual things and non-spiritual things as well.

So truly there should be a desire in our heart, there should be the will. That is the reason *John 7:17* says – *If anyone wills to do the will of God then he will know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.* So this morning we want to have resolute faith. I want to look at one character from the Bible about a person who had this resolute faith. He is found in the gospel according to John. Even as we read through the Gospels we find that the Gospel according to John is different from the other Gospels, very unique in its presentation, it has got 21 chapters. Chapter divisions were never there in the Bible but it was made for our convenience. So 21 chapters and you see that in these 21 chapters you see the way John presents the Gospel, it is so unique. It is so different from the other Gospels.

It talks about Jesus as God who was the Word. *In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.* He introduces Jesus Christ as the Word that created and that very Word became tabernacle among us, it says, in *John 1*, and we beheld His glory as the glory of the only begotten Son of God. It starts off like that, it introduces the Harbinger to the New Covenant through John the Baptist. And John the Baptist prepares the way of the Lord, He introduces Jesus to His disciples and He very clearly says, 'I am not that guy. I am here to show you the way to Jesus.'

And the Bible says, when he is baptizing people Jesus is walking and he says, 'Behold the Lamb of God,' and two of his disciples heard him speak and they followed Jesus. And that is what Zac Poonen wants on his epitaph or on his tombstone. This is what he said, 'When I die write this on my epitaph 'they heard him speak and they followed Jesus.'

So what did John do? He pointed them to Jesus and he left them. They followed Jesus, one of them was John and the other was Andrew. And they dwelt with Jesus that night and they were introduced to the Messiah and they were so excited, they say, 'Eureka! We found Him!' and they start introducing the Messiah to other people and that is how John's Gospel begins; with the introduction of Jesus Christ – the Lamb of God who is going to take away the sin of the world and there of course, there are several signs, not miracles but sign, in the Gospel according to John. We see the sign at Cana, the turning of water into wine and then we see Jesus entering into Jerusalem on the day of Passover and He sees the moneychangers and He makes a whip and drives them out and the disciples look at His action and they remembered and believed the Scripture which says – *zeal for His house has consumed Him.* By the way, it says that when Jesus did the first sign He displayed His glory to the disciples and His disciples believed on Him, in *John 2*. And when He was in Jerusalem during the time of Passover He did many signs and miracles, many people saw the signs and miracles and wonders and they put their trust in Him, they believed in Jesus. The Bible says, or rather ends with this exhortation or with this challenge; it says that Jesus on His part did not entrust Himself to any man, because He knew what was in man. That is how *John 2* ends.

And then of course chapter 3 is the Nicodemus coming to Jesus by night and he asks Him, 'We know that You are from God, for nobody is able to perform these signs unless You are from God.' And Jesus says, 'You know what, Nicodemus, unless you are born again, unless you are born from above, you cannot see, unless you are born of the Spirit and of water you cannot enter.' And Nicodemus is scratching his head and saying, 'How can I, being old, enter into my mother's womb and be born again?' and Jesus asks, 'Are you a teacher in Israel?' what are you? PhD in Mathematics? Cannot teach multiplication and division? What are you teaching? Nicodemus is stunned and Jesus says, 'When We speak of earthly things and you do not believe how can you believe when we speak of heavenly things?' and then He quotes right from Scripture; He goes all the way to the Book of Numbers and says, 'You know what? As Moses lifted up the bronze serpent in the wilderness, so shall the Son of Man be lifted up so that all who see Him might believe. *For God so loved the world that He gave His Son* (that famous verse) and *John 3* ends with all the people trying to trip John the Baptist saying, 'You know what? They are going to Him,' they are going to his church. And you know what John the Baptist says, my favourite dialogue - a man should receive nothing except it is given from Him. And he says, 'I must decrease and He must increase. I am the friend of the Bridegroom. He has the Bride. This joy is fulfilled,' and then he says, 'He gives the Spirit without measure to Jesus.'

Then *John 4* is the encounter with the Samaritan woman, revival in Samaria and *John 4* ends with another sign. The first sign was in Cana, Galilee. And this man, he hears that Jesus has come back to Cana, goes and tell them, 'My son is nearing death. Please heal him.' And Jesus says, 'Except you see signs and miracles you cannot believe. Okay here! Your son lives. Go.' He takes the word and he goes and he comes to realise that his son was healed at the very hour that Jesus spoke the Word. And then comes a very interesting chapter *John 5*, there is a twist that is going to happen to the plot. *John 5* talks about this guy who is at the pool of Bethesda for 38 years. Jesus comes to him and He says, "Do you want to be made whole?" he starts giving excuses like all of us. And then He says, 'Boss, pick up your mat and walk.'

You know sometimes all of us need to do the same thing. It is enough of complaining and grumbling and pointing fingers. Pick up your mat and walk. And then there is a twist in the plot. Till then they were so happy with the signs, wonders and miracles but when sign and wonder happens of the Sabbath and they are all upset. They begin to ask Him questions – Who are You? The Bible says – they begin to persecute Him, because He healed on the Sabbath. Now what happens? The very sign that Jesus performed now makes people His enemy, they want to kill Him. You should see the number of times in the Gospel according to John it says – they tried to lay hands to Him, they tried to lay hands on Him, they wanted to kill Him etc, etc, but His time was not yet come, His time was not yet come.

*John 4* talks about the feeding of the 5000 and they see the miracle and they want to make Him king. Jesus realises that and He goes on top of the mountain and He sends His disciples away, He sends the crowd away and He goes and prays. They all come back to Him and say, 'Master, Master, Master, where are you Rabbi?' Jesus says, 'I know why you are following Me. Your stomach is satisfied with food and you want food and therefore you followed Me. *Don't labour for the food that perishes, labour for the food that gives eternal life.*' By the way do you know how *John 6* ends? '*Unless you eat My flesh and drink My blood you will have no part in Me.*' And many of His disciples said, 'This is a hard teaching who can accept it?' and they left Him and they followed Him no longer. And the Bible says, He looked at the 12 and asked, 'Do you also want to go away?' and Peter says, 'Lord, where should we go? You alone have the words of life.' And then you know what Jesus says? Did I not call 12 of you and one is the devil.

You know what happens after that? After *John 6*, in *John 7* there is a division that is happening. People are taking sides, either you are on the side of Jesus, or you are against Jesus and that is the reason why C.S. Lewis makes a powerful statement, 'There are only three options, either Jesus is a liar, or He is a lunatic or He is Lord.' And Jesus Himself says, 'He who is not for Me is against Me, He who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.' And you should see *John 7* it is a total chapter of confusion; you should see the power of unbelief by the way. They want to believe, some people believe, some people do not believe and there is a division that is taking place between the believers and the unbelievers. Peoples whose hearts have become softened and whose hearts have become hardened. It is so hardened that *John 8* starts with these people who bring a woman caught in adultery in the very act and they bring her to Jesus and they say, 'In the Law it says that we have to stone her to death. What do You say?' I like Art Katz in his exposition he says – he was reading the Bible, he was an atheist, he was a man who had a debaucherous lifestyle. He was going through the entire Gospel of John travelling on a steamer, if I'm right from Italy to Palestine. He was reading through *John 7* and he comes to *John 8* – this woman caught in adultery. He was already falling in love with Jesus. He has read through chapter 7 and he's come to chapter 8 and he is reading the 1<sup>st</sup> episode and he is reading through this person's life who is caught in adultery and that very moment the Spirit of the Lord comes to him and He convicts him and says, 'You are this woman.' And you know what he does, he is reading and they ask Jesus this question – what are you going to do to her? Are You going to stone her, because she is caught in the very act?

He closes the Bible with his heart in his mouth, 'What is Jesus going to do? What is Jesus going to do? Because that woman is me.' And you know what he does? With fear and trembling, this is an atheist, you should read his testimony it is powerful. So with fear and trembling he opens the Bible and he starts reading the next word that Jesus speaks, that comes out of His mouth – '*He who has no sin* (it is not he is has not committed sin. It is he who has no sin) *cast the first stone.*' The Bible says, all of them, from the oldest to the youngest were cut in their heart; they were pierced in their conscience. You know what Art says? He put his Bible down and he started crying and said, 'Lord, You are my Saviour. You are my Saviour.' You know what? *John 8* starts with – *they wanting to stone the woman*, you know how it ends? *They want to take stones and they want to stone Jesus.* They want to stone Jesus now.

And then chapters 9 and 10 talk about this man who was born blind, from now on every sign is going to turn against Him. You think you do good to people, they will embrace you. No, no, no, I am telling you my dear brothers and sisters this is a lesson for all those who are in Christ. *2 Timothy 3:12 – all those who desire to live godly lives in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.* Not felicitated. You desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus. That is the reason why the entire gospel according to John, by the end of the chapter you should either prostrate on the floor and say, 'Jesus is Lord' or you have to hate Him and walk away. There is no other option for you. There is no other response left. By the way, every part of the Bible is that.

Chapter 11 of course Lazarus is raised from the dead and poor man he didn't want to come back I believe but he came back regardless and now he is seated at the table in chapter 12, everybody has come now, because Jerusalem is not very far from Bethany where Lazarus' house is. And the Pharisees are so upset, in chapter 7 they have sent the soldiers or the guards to arrest Him and they came back with arresting Him and they asked them, 'Why did you come empty handed?' and you know what they said? 'No man spoke like this Man.' Now the whole world is going after Jesus. You know what they want to do now? They want to kill Lazarus too.

I mean it is interesting, in other words, you try to follow Jesus and you live the resurrected life, you come into the crosshairs of people who are Pharisees, who are pretenders because your life convicts them. Chapter 12 ends by saying that many of the leaders believed in Jesus but because of the fear of the Jews they did not completely trust Him because they chose the honour that comes from man rather than the honour that comes from God. And then chapter 13 is powerful. All the signs are over, now you know what Jesus does? He enacts *Philippians 2*. He puts away His robe knowing that he came from the Father, now He is going back to the Father and all the things have been given to Him, into His hands. Do you know what He does? He takes the feet of His disciples; the position of a bond servant; He takes away His robe, He did not take the equality with God as something to grasped, He took upon Himself the form of a man, a form of a bond servant and He starts washing everybody's feet. And He says, 'What I do you will not understand now but later,' then Mr. Peter says, 'Lord, You can't wash my feet.' 'Peter, if I don't do this you do not have any part in Me.'

You know what Peter says? 'Lord, please give me a nice bath also.' Jesus says, 'No, you already are clean because of the Word.' Then Jesus finishes this entire act, comes and sits down and He looks at His disciples and says, 'You know what I did? You call Me Master, you call Me Lord and all that is true. But if I being the Master and Lord, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.' And He says, 'One of you is going to betray Me.' Everybody is upset, John is leaning on the breast of Jesus and Peter is like, 'Who is this fellow? Who is going to betray Him? Ask Him, ask Him. You are the closet, right? He will tell you all the secrets.' 'Lord? Who is going to betray You?' 'The person with whom I am going to dip this bread and give it to that person is going to betray Me.' So He dips and gives it to Judas and Judas takes it. And nobody thinks it is Judas because they have such high regard for Judas, he was a perfect pretender, pretender of the first order. Hypocrite number one. He could fool all the disciples. The closest to Jesus got fooled by Judas. So even when Jesus said clearly that this is the fellow that is going to betray, Judas was acting so well that no one got it. Like John Wesley was praying, 'Lord enable us not to be pretenders,' because Jesus knows us through and through, whether our heart is for Him or not. You know how *John 13* ends? *Satan, having put this thought into the heart of Judas to betray Him.* You know what it says? Once he takes the bread, it says, *Satan enters Judas.* Jesus looks at him and says, 'What you have to do, do it quickly.' So he goes out into the dark, away from the presence of God, away from the protection of God. Away from the provision of God. And you know what he does? Later on he goes and hangs himself. When he leaves Jesus says, 'Lord I thank You.'

And then you have chapters 14,15, and 16 and it is the most intimate lessons, He speaks to His disciples and He says, 'Now I no longer call you My servants I call you My friends.' The process of becoming a friend of God is not easy. You cannot just sing, 'I am a friend of God, He calls me friend,' what song is that? Do you know when Abraham was called the friend of God? It says that when he was ready to offer Isaac on the altar, according to *James 2*, that is when he was called the friend of God. And do you know what the Angel of the Lord says? 'Now I know that you fear Me.' That means the fear of the Lord and friendship with God go hand in hand. F & F, otherwise you get a big 'F' fail. You sing, 'I am a friend of God, He calls me friend' I am scared of such songs. No, no, no, not yet. Not many of you, no.

Jesus calls them friends now. You know what He says? 'Now that I have told you that I am going away your heart is filled with sorrow, but let me tell you something. I will come back to you in the form of the Holy Spirit and your joy will be

complete. *John 17* is the high priestly prayer of Jesus. He calls Him 'Father' how many times? Six times. 'Holy Father' 'Righteous Father' 'Father' 'Father' 'Father' 'Father' the way that I loved You and the way that You love Me and how we were united together, let that same love be among them. Lord let them know that the way You love Me, the same love that You have for Me is the same love You have for these people who stayed with Me all these days. Let them experience You as Father.'

Chapter 18 and 19 He is betrayed and sentenced to death and He is crucified. Chapter 20 He is raised from the dead, chapter 21 He restores them, especially Peter. And He tells Peter, 'When you were a young man you went wherever you wanted to go, but when you become old somebody else will lead you where you do not want to go but you will still go' and by this, the Bible says, He was prophesying the kind of death through which he was going to die. This is just a perusal. If you peruse through the Gospel according to Jesus this is something which I wanted you to get the frame work because I was reading through the Gospel according to John and I loved it. I just want you to get to the mood of the Gospel as to what is happening in all these chapters. And what is the whole purpose of the Gospel? The purpose statement of the Gospel is given in *John 20:30*. This is vision 20-30

#### **John 20:30**

<sup>30</sup> ***And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> but these (signs and wonders) are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.***

This is the purpose of the Gospel according to John. Signs and wonders, as you already know, the word 'miracle' is not mentioned although KJV talks about miracle it is not a miracle, it is a sign. One of the first things that he says is that Jesus did not perform miracles, but signs. And why did He perform signs? We don't have to speculate. It says,

#### **John 6:26-27**

<sup>26</sup> ***Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.***

Why are signs given? It is so that we might believe. But what is the main purpose of the sign? It is so that we might seek Him, not for what He gives, but for who He is. In any relationship for that matter, what is the complaint of many people when a relationship goes sour? 'He/she used me, I feel used.'

<sup>27</sup> ***Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."***

In Telugu there is a saying 'Koti vidhyalu koti korakeh' meaning all the education that you get it is to fill your stomach with food. All the skill that you earn is to fill your stomach.

That is a very sad statement right? In other I did my PhD, etc, etc, why? To earn 3 meals a day. It is actually very sobering to think that. But then you know what? He says, 'Don't labour for the food that perishes.' Now what does food do? When you eat food what happens? You are satisfied. In other words you search for food because food has an inbuilt quality in it to satisfy, not just our hunger but our pleasure. Therefore there is food which gives us satisfaction which is temporary. That is why He says, don't labour for that food. But labour for the food which gives you eternal life, where there are pleasures forevermore.

This is one of the examples that Paul Washer taught us, from one of his sermons. And these images stick to my mind. He says, 'You go to Heaven, if you can divide Heaven in days, day #1 in Heaven you see the glory of God. Do you know what happens to you? You go mad, you are awestruck. How people go crazy and excited when they watch a movie. I remember watching this movie from Matrix called the Judgment Day. That guy walks through the bar, he is liquid so he walks through the bar and his gun gets stuck. The details, I was like, oh my God! How did he even think like that! I mean I went crazy, when you watch the details. And there were movies which we watch for 27-28 times, reviewed it and every time we were going crazy. You know what, that is nothing. Today if I want to watch Matrix I will vomit, because the people who made the movie, when I saw it first, they were Wachowskis brothers. Now they are no longer Wachowskis brothers, they are Wachowskis sisters. Now I will vomit.'

So when you go to Heaven you see God, day #1 your mind will blow up. And the thing is that as much as your mind blows up that much it will expand. Your mind blows and you will go crazy and you come back home and you are like, 'Hey! Did you see Jesus? Oh boy! Too much! Too much! Too much!' that is day #1 in eternity. Next day go you and your mind blows up even more, you come back home and go crazy. Now that will keep going on forever and ever and ever. You will go to Jesus, take your crown (if you have a crown) you will lay it at His feet and say, 'Lord, I worship You. I love You. Thank You for dying on the Cross for Me. You are holy! Holy! Holy! You enjoy it and then come back home with your crown again. Next day you go back home or you go back to your worship center, whatever it is, you go crazy and crazy and crazy to the power of infinity. Asymptotically you will go crazy. That is unbelievable.

But do you know what He says? On the other hand there is a pleasure, which is in the world, which only gives you temporary satisfaction. But the problem is that many of us are deceived into thinking that this is permanent. Because we see it tangible. How many of you know the name Kai Cenat? Kai Cenat is a very famous YouTuber. Just recently FoxNews gave this news. A very famous YouTuber who wanted to give away play station consoles for free in NYC. So he made an announcement in his Instagram page to all his followers that at such and such a time in NYC I am giving away play stations for free. The entire streets were filled with young people. Nobody comes to a revival meeting like that. They risked their lives to get a free play station console. And when they didn't get it they were inconsolable. What a generation! What a generation my dear brothers and sisters!

We are living in a generation where because of the misrepresentation of God and because their teachers, I mean when John was praying he was praying, 'O Lord, many times we were such bad examples.' And I believe it is true in my life too, I was not as excited as I was supposed to be for Jesus. When they look at my testimony they should be like, 'My goodness! This God, my father is crazy about Him. What kind of a God does he worship? Why he is crazy about this God?' and you know what Jesus is saying? Do not labor for that thing which perishes. For a stupid video game? How stupid it is! Play station. I mean I cannot even imagine the stupidity of a play station now. It attracts you, you are willing to risk your life, you are willing to risk a stampede to get a play station. What kind of a generation are we living in? Do you know why? It is because we have not been presented an alternative in God. The signs that Jesus gave were designed and calculated precisely so that they can touch the inner man of our spirit and awaken that hunger and thirst for God and cause us to follow Him.

But the problem is – we get lost in the miracle and we do not follow the Miracle Worker. Do you know what Moses says? 'Lord, if I have found grace in Your sight show Me Your ways so that I might continue in Your grace. In Telugu it is very interesting. It says, so that I can continue in the grace that You have given me. I want to know Your ways so that I can continuously experience the grace of God in my life. So what happened? We have lost ourselves in the intricacies of the miracle. How was it performed? How was it not performed? It is possible? Is it not possible?

For God everything is possible. You sent chandrayaan. You understood some physics, gravity and Newton's laws you understood at a higher level. That is all. And you will put something on the moon. For what? You know there is a very interesting statement in *Genesis 11*, it says – they made a tower which will reach to Heaven, they were making and making and making and the Bible says that God came down. He was like, 'You are trying and trying and trying to reach Me, okay let Me come down. What are you trying to make? All that money! Of course 'we are not as expensive as NASA, we can make the same that NASA makes at a percent of the fraction of the budget of NASA.' Oh great! So what am I supposed to do now? Does it have the capacity for me to exit these heavens and reach the heavenlies? When I know that heavens and all that we see are going to be rolled up like a scroll. God will fold them like a handkerchief and He will throw it away. This space and time fabric of universe that Einstein imagined and envisaged God will just fold it and throw it and He is going to make a new Heaven and a new earth. What Laws I do not know. I can only imagine.

### **John 20:30**

**<sup>30</sup> And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book;**

The three purposes for the sign:

1. That you might seek Jesus.
2. That you might believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God.
3. In believing that you may have life, life eternal, life forevermore

Lot of people believe, they only believe for the miracle until they get the miracle, but they will not believe for life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever continues to believe in Him will continuously experience eternal life.

So what kind of a life are we talking about? We are talking about eternal life, not just temporary life. A life that is forever, so that you can keep your focus on the unseen and not the seen. Even your marriage. I think what John Pieper titled his book on marriage – ‘This Light and Momentary Marriage’ not affliction. I like that title. Even this marriage that you are waiting for, ‘When am I going to get married?’ people who got married ask, ‘Why did I get married?’ and people who are waiting ask, ‘When will I get married?’ this is a continuous cycle, ‘Whom am I going to get married to? Will I have a home? What curtains will I have?’ etc, etc. all the dreams, I am not against that. But do you know what? We’ve got a Home in Glory Land that outshines the sun. Kya Baat Hai! What a statement!

So this morning, what is the purpose of a sign? It is to seek Him, to believe that He is the Son of God, and in believing that you may have life. So many people saw the signs but truly very few people followed the sign to its logical and intended conclusion, which is to find Jesus Christ.

I have shared all this, to introduce the hero of today’s plot.

### **John 9:1-3**

***Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth.*** He was born blind. He is equivalent to all of us; we are born in sin and shaped in iniquity like this man. But look at some interesting observations that the disciples try to make. <sup>2</sup> ***And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”***  
<sup>3</sup> ***Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.***

It is like when you go to hospitals there will be a doctor and there will be students from Gandhi Hospital. When I was a young boy, may 6-7 years old, I was a crazy fellow. I was jumping from buildings and my parents did not know. So our thrill was jumping from the top floor to the sand on the ground. So we jumped and jumped and what happened one day is that I started limping. And my mother was looking at me and she was like, ‘Why is he limping?’ and I limped and I limped. So they took me to a railway hospital. And they took the x-ray and everything and the doctor said, ‘Your son has polio.’ That night my mother was crying and crying and I was wondering what happened. Then they were like, okay let’s go to Gandhi hospital. Someone suggested, ‘Take him to Gandhi Hospital, there are excellent doctors.’ And it is true, fantastic doctors, because they see so many patients they know.

So we went to the orthopedic ward in the Gandhi hospital, the guy looked at my profile, x-ray and he said, ‘Students! (his disciples and I am the subject now).’ I remember him so well, he said, ‘Students, what do you think happened to this fellow?’ something like that is happening in *John 9* but it is the opposite. Here the professor is asking the students. And the doctor looked at me and smiled, ‘Nothing happened to your son. you know what, his ankle got a little ruptured because he has been using it a lot. (he is not know what I was using it for). You just give him some calcium tablets and calcium rich food. Just increase the intake of eggs and milk, he will be alright in a few days.’

So that is exactly what is happening over here. The disciples asked, ‘Teacher, what do You think?’ the blind man is the subject now. And Jesus looked at them, ‘Every time you see somebody you want to make him a subject.’ We have that kind of an attitude right? ‘What could be this fellow’s problem? Something is there, some generational curse.’ I am not saying that generational curses are not there, please don’t misunderstand me. There are so many things which are there. ‘Somewhere, some sin he might have committed. Grievous sin, his parents or somebody might have committed. His ancestral line is all messed up.’ They are starting to speculate. All these things are there in the Bible.

Remember the guy at the pool of Bethesda, Jesus looks at him and says, ‘You know what? You have been made whole. Don’t go and sin anymore. Because if you sin, something worse will happen.’ So therefore the condition of yours now is because of your sin. So there are consequences of sins. There are problems because of sin, because when the 4 friends bring that 1 man and Jesus looks at their faith and tell him, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven you.’ So what is the cause for your sickness? It is the sins that you have committed. So here, in this case it is not because of the sins that he has committed, it is not because of any ancestral curse or any bloodline curse etc, etc. it is a unique case. Very unique.

Nothing to do except for the fact that we are all born in sin, shaped in iniquity. We are all in Adam and our bodies are deteriorating because of the disobedience of our forefathers. We are not talking about that.

Now Jesus makes a very powerful statement -<sup>3</sup>***Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him."*** In other words He is saying that this problem that this person is in is not because of his sin or the sins of his parents. No He is saying<sup>0</sup> that very specifically, He is ruling out that possibility. Not all problems have the same source, my dear brothers and sisters. So whom should you ask for the source of any problem? Christ the anointed One and the Spirit of Christ. That is the reason why we need to have incredible discernment when we are doing ministry. It is not one-hat-fits-all. No. everybody's problem is unique, everybody's background is unique and therefore we have to be very careful. We need to be careful, otherwise what happens is that we start discussing that person just right in front of him.

Think about this beggar, 'Who sinned? This fellow or his father?' What will he feel? What is he going through now? He will be like, 'Now I am becoming an object of discussion.' How insensitive! But look at the way Jesus answers.

#### **John 9:3-4**

<sup>3</sup>***Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him."*** So what is the purpose for this particular problem that he is facing? It is so that the works of God may be revealed in him and through him. Jesus uses the word 'manifest' through him. And then He says, <sup>4</sup>***I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.***

So the question therefore is – what is the work of God that has to be made manifest in this person? We need to ask this question. Therefore the most important poignant question when we read this verse is – what is the work of God that Jesus is talking about? Therefore we don't have to turn so far away according to Gospel according to John. Let Scripture interpret Scripture. Let's see,

#### **John 6:28-29**

<sup>28</sup>***Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"*** <sup>29</sup>***Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, (look at that, so precise – this is the work of God) that you believe in Him whom He sent."***

In other words to believe in Jesus Christ is by faith and there are works that accompany the belief that you have in Jesus. Did you understand that? This is the work. What is the work? That you believe in Me. in other words, believing in Jesus is not passive, it is active. That is the reason why I am talking about intentional faith, resolute faith and things of this nature because there is something which is there in a person that believes that Jesus is the Messiah, something transformative about that. That he should not be passive about his beliefs, there is something that he is going to do about it. ***I must work the works of Him who sent Me; the night is coming when no one can work.*** In other words if believing is the work of God then you can do that work only as long as it is day. In other words, putting your faith in Jesus is not at your convenience. No. 'Tomorrow I will believe' 'Day after tomorrow I will repent' '2-3 days after tomorrow I will think about it'

#### **2 Corinthians 6:1-2**

***We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. <sup>2</sup>For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.***

That s/I the reason why today if you hear His voice do not harden your heart. I mean I was so touched when John was praying, 'Lord, enable us not to get hardened,' because if we do not respond to Your Word, what is the logical conclusion? What is going to happen to us? We are going to get hardened. It is going to be more difficult for us to repent tomorrow than today. therefore there is no September, there is only march in the Kingdom of God. 'Today if I miss, I have tomorrow,' no, no, no. Most of us have become so careless, 'One day or the other it is going to happen. Kesara sara.' One of the things that I have realized is that opportunities, when they come to your door, you know what you do? Grab it with both hands.



That is the reason why I like Bartimaeus, 'Jesus! Son of David have mercy on me.' Sshhhhuushh!! Shut up! What does he do? 'I don't care about you, you can say whatever you want, but I am going to shout even louder.' But the point here is that this guy is not even shouting, he doesn't even know.

You know what lesson I have learnt from this? There could be certain areas in your life where you don't even know that you are blinded to it. And unless and until God unilaterally intervenes in that situation there is no freedom, there is no deliverance. And God does that from time to time. Do you believe in such a God? He unilaterally comes into our lives and he just interjects into your sphere of influence and He changes your situation completely. That is exactly what happened to that widow in Zarephath. I mean she was like ready to die, and God intervened, unilaterally.

So this person becomes resolved in his faith in 7 stages. I am going to talk about it this morning. Let go back and look at that miracle again.

#### **John 9:6**

***<sup>6</sup> When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. <sup>7</sup> And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.***

What a simple thing right? He was sent, so he went, he washed and he came back seeing. Four steps – he was sent, so he went, he washed and he came back. That is a sermon in itself, I am not going to go into that today. but look at this, how did it start? Lot of us we get caught in the details of the miracle. So He spat, He mixed the saliva into the mud and made clay and He applied on his eyes, it is like Adam being recreated all over again. That is all fine. What he did do? He took the clay and he applied it? No, read it again, verse 6 ***He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed.*** That is the point – He anointed. It is not the process but the anointing. The same word 'Krios'. Where do you find this word?

#### **Isaiah 10:27**

***<sup>27</sup> And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.***

The seven stages:

1. He was Anointed
2. He Attested
3. He was Accosted
4. He was Abandoned
5. He was Alarmed
6. He remained Adamant
7. He was Accepted

The first stage is the anointing.

#### **Luke 4:18**

***<sup>18</sup> "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed;***

You see, it is very clear here. What causes the recovery of the sight? The Spirit of the Lord who anointed Jesus. So the first work of believing is your response to the anointed Word. It is not the clay which in itself has the power to heal, but it is the anointing of Jesus which has got the power to heal. Nothing more than that. *He sent forth His Word.*

#### **2 Corinthians 1:21-22**

***<sup>21</sup> Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, <sup>22</sup> who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.***

Why we do, therefore, come every Sunday for the teaching of the Word of God? Why? Is it because we have nothing else to do? Or nothing better to do? See whenever you miss class that means you are telling the professor that you have something better to do. So if you are not found in the class and you are found in the Coffee shop, then coffee is better than the lecture. Lecture gives me a headache, coffee gives me a high and therefore I better have coffee than attend the class. That is what you are telling the prof. See, whenever you miss anything you should absolute be sure that you are in a better place and not in a bitter place.

So why do we come for the teaching of the Word of God?

**Psalms 133:1-3**

***<sup>1</sup>Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! <sup>2</sup>It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments. <sup>3</sup>It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing— Life forevermore.***

So what is here this morning? Do you believe there is life? Do you believe that there is anointing? The first thing, therefore, is the anointing. Therefore what happened to him is that he responded to the anointed Word. I'll tell you something, if you want to get the anointing you have to respond to the teaching.

**Galatians 3:2**

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

What gives you the anointing is the hearing of faith. So you heard. What did you hear? 'Go, wash and come back.' And what happened? He went, because he was sent, he washed and he came back seeing. See how simple it is when you do the things of God. The problem is that you do not do it. The first thing is the anointing. What brings deliverance and healing is the obedience to the anointed Word. And nothing else. The obedience of faith is the only thing that matters. That is the work that comes from faith. He was sent, so he went, he washed and he came back.

**John 9:8-9**

***<sup>8</sup> His neighbors and others who knew him as a blind beggar asked each other, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?" <sup>9</sup> Some said he was, and others said, "No, he just looks like him!"***

You see, already people are divided. I found it very interesting, when a miracle happens in a person's life people are divided, 'Hey! Is this the same Vijay? He was not like this before. What happened?' I mean, people should ask you that question. I remember the first time when I got saved, I was 18, boy! What a powerful Word it was. I came back home, I cleaned up my room for the first time in my life without my mom asking me to do it. And my parents looked at my room and were like, 'What happened to Vijay?' and then I went to college with a smile on my face. My friend looked at me and said, his name is Anil, 'Hey! Vijay? What happened to your face? What happened to you? Why that joy in your face? What has changed?'

You see, this is visible, my dear brothers – when God touches you, you can't hide it. The skeptics and the non-skeptics both will say something. 'Arrey! He is the same but what is this?' your language changes, the way you talk changes, the worst word that can come out of your mouth is 'stupid' while all the sanskrutham is coming out of your friend's mouth. And I had a friend, his name is Rajesh Reddy, he was like, 'Vijay, what is that scolding? The maximum you can say is 'stupid?'' and he could use every name in the book, in Telugu. He was the original sanskrutham. Boy! He could invent stuff and he is looking at me, 'What is that? Why has it changed?'

That is what happens. Do you know what happens? Once you are anointed and you respond to Word of God you attest the work of God in your life through your face. You attested it and you say, 'You know what? Transformation.' It changes you completely. The question is – have you changed? Sometimes it is incremental. And sometimes it is drastic. Regardless it should be there, change should be there.

**John 9:8-11**

<sup>8</sup> *His neighbors and others who knew him as a blind beggar asked each other, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?"* <sup>9</sup> *Some said he was, and others said, "No, he just looks like him!" but the beggar kept saying, "Yes, I am the same one!"*

I was blind but now I see. I can see very clearly, everything now.

<sup>10</sup> *Therefore they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?"* <sup>11</sup> *He answered and said, "A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed, and I received sight."*

You see, he was very clear. He didn't say, 'He applied on my eyes.' He said, 'He anointed my eye.' Look at verse 7,

<sup>7</sup> *And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.*

He came back. See, blind people are very sharp, just because they are blind it doesn't mean that they don't know the way. They know it very well. I had a blind student in my class, I was shocked. He was given admission in IIIT and he was doing a very complicated course. You need to do experiments with it and hands-on course; Digital Logical Processor. And he used to tell me, 'Sir, don't give me an easy paper.' I looked at him and I was like, 'Wow! What self-respect!' you don't have to pity me because I am blind. And you know something? He was better than some of the best students in the class, sometimes. I was shocked. I am telling you out of experience; in a class of 125, one blind student. And he used to have this computer, with his hearing he used to type so fast, very sharp.

So this blind man, he went to the pool of Siloam. That means he knew where it was. He wash and he came back. And what did he want to do? He was looking for the One who healed him.

This is what I wrote – faith comes by hearing and not by seeing. The Word of God works in those who believe. We walk by faith, not by sight. That is important. But when Jesus heals the people He wants then to follow them voluntarily. Jesus did not say, 'Wash and come back' what did He say? 'Just go and wash.' But he did the third thing; he went, he washed and he came back. That is the option that we all have. Lot of people, they take all the benefits of the church and after that, 'bye bye' they disappear. It is up to the man who receives the miracle to make the choice; to take the miracle and disappear or to follow Jesus wherever HE went. So what did he do? He came back looking for Jesus.

I told you right, what is the purpose of the sign? That you might seek Him, that you might believe Him and in believing Him you might have eternal life. So there is only one person in the entire Gospel according to John who actually follows the sign to its intended and logical conclusion. What about us? Think! Food for thought for us this morning.

### **John 9:13**

<sup>13</sup> *They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees.*

You know what, I like the word 'formerly'. Ex-blind man, ex-sinner, ex-homosexual, ex-sodomite, ex-pornographer, ex-cheater, ex-liar, ex-glutton, ex-drunkard. I like that word. It is over. If any man if he is in Christ he is a new creation. Old things have passed away and all things are new.

### **1 Corinthians 6:9-10**

<sup>9</sup> *Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,* <sup>10</sup> *nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.*

What is reviling? Given over to food. One of the things that we, as a church, tolerate is gluttony. There is a nursery songs that we teach the children – the aging ape was out of shape because he ate and ate and ate. What a song! The aging ape was out of shape because he ate and ate and ate and it says that whenever something was served, like when the cake was cut into several pieces he used to go for the biggest piece. And they used to tap him on his fingers and say, 'Oye! Not the biggest piece, but the piece that is closest to you. When the bananas used to come he used to go for the biggest banana. So he ate and ate and ate and one day all the little apes found something strange that happened; he wanted to come out of his bedroom but he got stuck in the doorway. He couldn't get out, he couldn't come in. and he cried, 'Oh! I am out of shape!' and all the little apes said, 'Oh aging ape, you went out of shape because you ate and ate and ate.'

You know, a lot of people are like cows. What do cows do? From the morning that fellow takes this much hay and he puts it in the trough. So he eats the hay. After the hay is over what will he do? He will send it to the fields. Now this fellow what does he do in the fields? Does he relax? No. he grazes acres and acres. Acres and acres are finished. That is the reason why one of the reasons for soil erosions is excess grazing. All because of these cows. So he grazes and grazes and he comes back home. Again that fellow will take one big chunk of dry hay and puts it in his trough and he eats that. After he finishes do you think he stops? He will be like, 'All that I ate I will bring it out and chew.' He is going to eat the whole day. What are you? Reviler. Of course we are not consumers of food, we are consumers of data. We love data. Not small data, but big data. GBs and GBs are being consumed. OTT1 season 1, season 2, 3,4,5,6. Do you know how teenagers are? 'Arey! Today we saw friends, season 1-30.' What are you doing? Consuming and consuming. Reviling and you boast about your reviling. Oh! Today I saw so many movies. We are cows, my dear brothers. And after you finish consuming you bring it up and talk about your experience.

See, you need to understand, what you spend time on the most that is what you talk about the most. Think about it, this is the principle in the Bible. Remember the animal husbandry that Jacob thought us? He made those speckled rods and flock came near the water, they used to watch the speckled rods and they used to birth speckled lambs. I was thinking what kind of a strange logic is this? This is a PhD in animal husbandry. Until the Lord taught me something important and spiritual – what you think on and meditate on the days of your life that is exactly what you will birth. You consume and consume and think about food, think about food, what will you talk about? 'Do you know how I made that? How I made this? That dish was fantastic.' All you can think about is food. Or clothes or movies or what have you and never about the Word.

Now think about it, when was the last time we came together as believers and you reveled in the Word? We ate so much of the Word, now let us bring it back, ruminate upon it and meditate upon let, let it percolate into our minds, let it change the way we think. How many ex-revilers here this morning? I will tell you honestly, if you come to me, to my church office. I have 3-4 friends Sammy, Peter, and couple of other guys. What we talk about is only the Word. Only the Word. I was on a long drive with Pastor Eric, travelling from here to Jamshedpur. Boy! 1300 miles we drove. What were we thinking and talking? We had so many sermons being played and talking and talking about the Word. Every time we go on the mission trip you should see, our minds are saturated with the Word. And after you finish talking what happens? You are edified, you are exhorted, you talk about the Word and you come out of the office you will not go out the same. I challenge you, you will not go out the same. We are not going to waste time on nonsense.

How many of you have come together as believers and brothers, band of brothers BB, what do you think about? What do you talk about? Very important. That is the reason why, do not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinner, nor sit in the seat of the scornful but his delight is in the Law of the Lord and in His Law doth he meditate day and night. In *Malachi 3:16* (all 3:16 in the Bible are fantastic) says – those who fear God often talked one to another and a book of remembrance was written and those things will be declared one day when we stand before God. You know what are those things that you discuss with yourselves? The conversations that you had.

Okay let's move on. Something has changed in his life. He has attested now. First, he was anointed. Second, he attested. And third,

#### **John 9:14-15**

**<sup>14</sup> Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.** That is the problem.

**<sup>15</sup> Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see."**

He is not going to change his testimony. This is what I call resolute faith. He is not going to be intimidated.

**<sup>16</sup> Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them.** Already there is a division. Let me tell you something, your testimony will divide people. It is not going to be neutral.

**<sup>17</sup> They said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."**

How beautiful, right? How did he start? 'There was a man called 'Jesus' now second revelation 'He is a prophet.' You see how his revelation is increasing. From 'Man called Jesus' to 'He is a prophet.' Warren W. Wiersbe made an interesting statement – 'Are we conservative? Or are we preservative?' what are preservatives? People who preserve their traditions. They are what we called as sensationalist. Nothing against them, I love those brothers, some of them are very godly people; sometimes they put me to shame. Nothing against them. 'This is what we believe, this is what we think. So it shall be written and so it shall be done. Period. We are not going to change one bit.' That is preservative. Who is a conservative? Conservative is a man who embraces truth wherever he sees it. A true conservative will always embrace what God is doing and will not oppose. We are to test the spirits, we are to abstain from all appearance of evil. Yes. But also we are supposed to cling to what is good.

'Oh I do not do t hid. I don't do that.' Yes, but what do you do? Do you do what is good? Do you embrace something which is good? Long back when I got this gift of tongues I went and told somebody, 'Thank God He gave me t he gift of tongues.' They said, 'There is no tongues.' Gone! And when I came back and told pastor, pastor was like, 'Why do you have to share such things? This is for you, not for them.'

If it is good and acceptable and does not contradict the Word of God and the Spirit of God and the Person of Jesus Christ, what are we supposed to do? We are supposed to embrace it. You don't become preservatives of tradition. No. we embrace truth. A truth conservative will embrace it wherever he sees truth.

### **Proverbs 18:13**

**<sup>13</sup> He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him.**

In other words, you have to test it. Some will say, 'No, no, this is nothing. We already know all these things, they don't happen anymore.' We see how those people fall down. You call that tongues? Arrey, those people are misrepresenting the Holy Spirit, they are abusing it. Just because they are abusing t he gift it doesn't mean that the gift doesn't exit. Why do you want to devoid yourself from the incredible gifts that God wants to give freely? Another very important principle.

### **Proverbs 18:17**

**<sup>17</sup> The first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him.**

That is the reason you have to be very careful, especially with children. When you enter the home, they will cry, 'Mommy did this to me.' 'What did mommy do? Bad mommy.' That is what he expects from the dad. Don't be fooled with tears. He is crying! So what? It is as if 'Jesus wept'? That is how they equate it to – Jesus wept, I also wept. You need to have discernment. Why are you crying? Why are you weeping? 'Because this and this happened.' Okay, but what did you do? Should I ask mom what happened? 'No, no, no, this is what actually happened.' See, that is exactly what happens. Go you to pastor, 'Pastor, do you know what this person did to me?' what happened? 'This is what he did to me.' Oh! Bad boy Vijay. That is not w hat pastor does. He will first ask, 'What did you do?' we have to test; we have to abstain from all appearance of evil but we also have to cling to what is good.

Do you know what Pharisees are? They have already made up their mind – this is it. Messiah is this. Equation, they have to follow this equation otherwise we will not accept Him. Do you know something? All the greatest scientists went against tradition. Why do we like Elihu? Because he went against tradition. They challenged it.

Why do we have the protestant church? Why are we sitting here and enjoying the Word of God? Who made it available? Luther made it available, through the protestant reformation. You see? Cling to what is good. This Man is not from God. How do you know? That is what even Nicodemus says, does not our Law says that you have to give the man a chance to explain himself. Why are you coming to conclusions like that? It is because you are a preservative and not a conservative. You want to preserve your tradition. Do you know something? More followers of Jesus, and the Pharisees say, 'What is going to happen to us? What is going to happen to our seats? The Romans are going to come and attack us. The focus is 'us'. And one guy gets up and he says, 'It is expedient that one man should die for the sins of others.' And ultimately they kill him.

Therefore a remarkable thing that happens to him.

### **John 9:17**

***<sup>17</sup> They said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."***

'We already know that He is not from God, because He does not obey the Sabbath. What do you say? He says, "He is a prophet." Let me tell you something my dear brothers. When there is a personal testimony that God has done in your life is tangible nobody can say anything against that. Something personal has happened to you, God came through. God will come through. I mean I can say so many things in my life for sure, but one thing stands out. You know, it was a time in my life when my papers were getting rejected left, right and center and I was accused of self-plagiarism. I didn't even know that something like that existed. I got back the report from the reviewer saying, 'You have plagiarized from your own work.' I asked, 'What am I supposed to do?' you are supposed to site the work that you already did. I was like, 'I did not know.' And my papers were getting rejected left, right and center and at some point I finished my papers and I submitted it to this particular conference and I went to the Lord, I begged Him and I pleaded with Him. Abigail was going to be born and I had my deadline. She was born on March 4<sup>th</sup> and my deadline for the papers was March 5<sup>th</sup>.

I like the people in Japan, nothing against them. But those people were supposed to sponsor the conference that I was supposed to send my papers to. May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011 there was tsunami there in Japan. So they postponed the submission date for the conference by one month. So I had one month. Since Abigail was born I didn't have much time, so now I went back to the lab and I sent. Now because the deadline was postponed the number of submissions also increased. So there were supposed to be 1500 papers in the conference, but because the deadline was postponed there were close to 3000 papers that were sent to the conference. And three months I was pleading and pleading and pleading. Only one prayer – Lord enough, Lord. Enough of reject, reject, reject, reject. Do something, do something, do something. And the Lord came through. Out of 3000 papers 600 papers were accepted and 1 paper from India and that was mine.

What do you think? 'Miracles don't happen. God does not answer prayers.' Shut your mouth, I have a personal testimony. 'Healings don't happen.' Shut your mouth. I am healed, what are you trying to say? 'You can't be healed. This does not happen.' Do you see the power of unbelief? You know, I am telling you, some of us are trapped in this unbelief. Let us to one thing, as a cooperate body. Let us all say out loud, 'I renounce unbelief in Jesus' name.' you have to say that, because the Word of God has got the power to work in those who believe. This is the sign my dear brothers. And the sign has to lead you to the logical conclusion. And you are trapped there because you are trapped by your prejudices – this can't happen. That cannot happen. Who told you? Are you God? He who upholds everything by the Word of His power, who made the entire world by the Word of His mouth can't do something?

Do you know why we have an atom bomb? Because they found out that everything is held by the Word of His power and they found a way to disintegrate it and that is how the atom bomb came into existence. They were able to harness the power of God in that bonding between atoms and electrons. What holds it together? Not your Science, not Bohr's law, not Rutherford's alpha model. No. it is the Word of His power.

I am telling you, so many of us are trapped in unbelief. 'It can happen to them brother, but it will not happen to us. Your marriage can go straight but it will never happen to me. It cannot happen, it will not happen. According to your faith let it be. Can you believe that? Two fellows come to Jesus and say, 'Lord, we want our sight.' Do you believe that I can do this for you? Think about it. 'Yes Lord, maybe one eye, so that I can see with one eye.' the other fellow says, 'Both eyes Lord.' No chance. I want both eyes. Think about it, one fellow will start a church of one eye. The other fellow goes and starts a church of two eyes. There is already a division. Why? All because of your unbelief. Alright, let's move on.

Coming back to this blind man. the more doubts that were being raise, the more resolute his faith is becoming. 'This can't happen. This can't happen.' He is like, 'You know what? I don't care. This happened to me and you can't change this. Let us move on.

### **John 9:18-19**

***<sup>18</sup> But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight.*** So here in this situation what happened? He was anointed, then he attested the miracle. And what has happened? The Jewish people come and they accost him. Accosted meaning to confront,

saying, 'This cannot happen. Then they call his parents. <sup>19</sup> ***And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?"*** <sup>20</sup> ***His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; <sup>21</sup> but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself."***

His parents abandoned him. We have nothing to do with this. Why? It is because they feared the Jews. How the fear of man brings a snare. Shiphrah and Puah, the two Jewish midwives in Egypt, they were commanded, 'if it is a boy kill him. We will give you money.' Do you know what the Bible says? *'They feared God.'* Amazing, isn't it? They feared God and God gave them ideas as to how to answer Pharaoh. 'Did I not tell you to kill them?' 'Our Israeli women are not like the Egyptian women. Israeli women are very tough. Your Egyptian women are very, very, sensitive. Everything is delicate, during pregnancy they have to move slowly, for labor they have to be taken gently and even after that there is no guarantee. But our women are hardworking. Even before the woman goes into labour she brings forth a man-child. Amazing isn't it? God gave them the words, because they feared God. And do you know what the Bible says? God gave them houses.

Who are midwives? Midwives are those people who could not bear children, so they become midwives helping others bear children. And because they feared God God gave them families; their own children.

#### **Matthew 10:34-37**

<sup>34</sup> ***"Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. <sup>35</sup> For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; <sup>36</sup> and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.'*** <sup>37</sup> ***He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.***

So you know what they are saying, his parents? 'Arey! ShuussHH!! Don't share this testimony. Shush! Please don't say anything about Jesus.' You know what he is saying? He has resolute faith, 'I love Jesus more than I love them.'

#### **Matthew 10:26-28**

<sup>26</sup> ***Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. <sup>27</sup> "Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. <sup>28</sup> 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.***

So how do you escape hell? By having resolute faith. So he was abandoned. He was abandoned by his own. Then comes the next stage.

#### **John 9:24**

<sup>24</sup> ***So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner."***

<sup>24</sup> ***So they again called the man who was blind,*** these people don't give up, isn't it? They want to force the lie out of you. There is a saying in literature – if you torture the text sufficiently it will confess to anything. It is like this, in our lab we do the experiment wrong and G is 9.8. So we will torture everything and get 9.8 and the guy will look at it and say, '9.8? nobody gets 9.8 in the lab.' You somehow get it, but the trained eye cannot be fooled. You cannot fool some professors. They will look at the entire book and they will go to the point where we made the mistake. You are hoping that in the volume of the things that you have written that you can camouflage the lie. 'Vijay? How did you get this? 'Oh Lord, have mercy. That is one thing which I was hoping he would overlook. But that is exactly the thingOs he asked.' That is a trained eye. How did you get it?

Remember the story the great man gave, he went to this professor and the professor gave one of the toughest exams. Most of them will fail. If you get 1 then you are the topper of the class and everybody will get -10 etc. One fellow in the exam was writing his answers and taking additional after additional. He was asking for more and more additional papers and the others were like, 'What is happening? Who is this genius?' and by the time the exam is over he had a big bundle.

And all the other students had one paper each. So the professor graded everybody. And then the next week he came back to the class with the papers and he puts the big bundle on one side and all the other papers on the other side. He called all the other names and handed them out their answer sheets. Everybody got 0, -0, -1, -2, etc. and then he looked at the big bundle and said, 'Who wrote this exam?' And he said something very powerful, 'You know what? These answers are not right. They are not even wrong. They don't even qualify to be answers. What did you write? Do you know?' if you torture the text sufficiently you think it will confess to anything. So the Jews were torturing this fellow.

It is like our 3<sup>rd</sup> degree torture in our police station. They torture and torture until he confesses. And finally he says, 'Yes I did it, I murdered, I killed I did everything. I deserve life imprisonment.' He takes the life imprisonment and he goes. But this man is made of resolute faith. Look at what he says,

**John 9:24**

***<sup>24</sup> So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner."***

We already know that He is a sinner. You know what, this is an intimidation. Alarm; he was alarmed. Where do you find this – 'Give glory to God'? Where do you find this exact phrase? They know their text and this blind man also knows the text, even though he is a blind man. I believe he read the Braille version of the Torah.

**Joshua 7:19**

***<sup>19</sup> Now Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I beg you, give glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me."***

Give glory to God, otherwise we are going to stone you with stones. We already know that this Guy is a sinner. We are going to threaten you, 'Tell that this Guy is not the Person who healed you.' How can you change the testimony? I remember Pastor James giving this fired-up example of this old man of God. Ultimately he was on a death row and he was going to be hanged because of his faith in Jesus Christ. And finally they came to him and said, 'Old man, to burn you alive we are feeling bad. Why don't you just confess that Jesus is not Lord? Please! Just let it go. We will leave you. You are an old man. to torture you it is going to be difficult for us. We can't see you being tortured.' Do you know what that man said? 'This Jesus has been faithful to me all my life. And when it matters the most now how can I deny Him? Burn me, it doesn't matter.' Do you know, when he was being burnt at the stake there was the glory of God on his face. A special grace is given.

Achan, give glory to God.

**John 9:25**

***<sup>25</sup> He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see."***

'I am not going to change my testimony.' This is resolute faith. 'You can alarm me, you can threaten me. You can do whatever it takes, but I am not going to change my testimony. I like Rahul Gandhi, do you know what he said ultimately, even to the supreme court? 'I am not going to apologize. No sorry.' And also made some very powerful statement. 'My name is Rahul Gandhi. I am not Rahul Savarkar.' I was like, 'Whao!' My name is Rahul Gandhi. My name is not Savarkar. So I won't apologize.

I remember that scene in 'Gandhi'. There is this entire court scene, Gandhi is there standing on the dock and he does not have a defense council.' So they ask him, 'Who is going to plead your case?' he says, 'My lord, I plead my case because I am also a barrister.' 'Do you plead guilty?' 'NO.' there is the entire crowd there and they were all observing carefully. And they say, 'I am going to release you on a bail of 100 rupees. (100 rupees in those days)' and you know what he says? 'I refuse to pay a bail of 100 rupees.' They are shocked. The entire British raj falls flat on one man who stands strong on his convictions like that. And then they say, 'I release you without a bail if 100 rupees.' And they release him. You should see that scene you will have tears in your eyes. You will not come out of the movie without crying. It is awesome. It is one of the most poignant movies. It is imprinted in your brains. Do you know why?



It is because he stands on this resolute faith. You can't change it. You can torture me, you can alarm me, you can threaten me. But how can you change this testimony? This is visible. How can you call this false? I was born blind.

### **John 9:26**

**<sup>26</sup> Then they said to him again, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?"**

What did He give you? You know it is like in our country. When you become a believer they will first ask you, 'Which cast?' 'Not that cast.' 'You are not that cast but you are a believer? How come? What did they give you? Did they give you dollars from America? What did they give you?' they cannot believe that you have changed your faith. What did He do to you? I was blind but now I see. You know what Paul tells Agripa? 'Agripa, I was this man, I was killing and persecuting the Christians and God gave me this visions and from that day onwards I was not disobedient to that heavenly vision.' He never changes his testimony and Agripa says, 'You are almost trying to convert me also.' You know what he says? 'My lord, I wish that all of us were like me except for these chains.' And he says. 'Much learning0 has made you mad.'

Personal testimony, my dear brothers. You know what? That is the 5<sup>th</sup> Gospel. There is the Gospel according to John, and the Gospel that you live out.

### **John 9:27**

**<sup>27</sup> He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. (I mean this guy is getting exasperated; he is losing his patience now. Look at this) Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?"** do you also want to become Christians?

Edward Williams gave a fired up testimony. I heard him recently, he says, One RSS guy is his friend. Very good friend. He told Edward Williams, 'Sir, whenever you speak people are getting converted.' Edward Williams says, 'Brother, that is not true. Come to my church I will tell you.' So the following Sunday he took him to church. And he showed him a man sitting there at the end. 'You see that man? That man has been coming to church for the last 10 years. 52 Sundays for 10 years. He never misses church. 52\*10, 520 Sundays he was there and he is still not converted. He heard message after message, after message. But he is still not converted. So don't tell me that when I speak people are changed. It doesn't happen, I give you give data.'

### **John 9:28-33**

**<sup>28</sup> Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. <sup>29</sup> We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow, we do not know where He is from." <sup>30</sup> The man answered and said to them, "Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! <sup>31</sup> Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. <sup>32</sup> Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. <sup>33</sup> If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing."**

I wrote this down just for us to think. We are sometimes so pharisaical that we have already made up our mind about someone. We believe that he/she can never change. And even if he has changed, it is faking. We don't give people a chance at all. We don't believe that people can change at all. And we don't want people to change actually. Do you know why? If he changes, then it is a threat to me. Think about it. Actually we like our younger brothers to continue in their debaucherous lifestyle. May he never come back to church again. We are so pharisaical; we don't give people a chance at all.

This is one of my problems too. Once I make up my mind about somebody it is so difficult for me to change. My wife says, 'You know what? How many chances did God give you? You have already made up your mind about somebody. That it is? You are not going to change?'

We are like that; we are so, so, pharisaical even in our thinking. We do not want people to change, because then it justifies your analyses about them, 'I told you! I told you!' you know something? Jesus knows all our thoughts, all our intentions, all our attitudes and He even knows what we are going to do in the future and He still calls us 'friends'. 'Oh

you mighty man of valor.’ And Gideon is like looking around, ‘Who is that?’ ‘You, mighty man of valor.’ ‘Me, Lord? No chance.’ ‘Yes absolutely. That is the point.’ No chance for others, no chance for you, but for Me all things are possible. So he was alarmed, but did he change? No.

### **John 9:34**

**<sup>34</sup> They answered and said to him, “You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?” And they cast him out.** That is when Jesus comes. **<sup>35</sup> Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him,** (who found him now? Jesus. Earlier he came back to Jesus, now Jesus found him) **He said to him, “Do you believe in the Son of God?”** look at the progress. First it was – a Man called Jesus. Next, He is a prophet. Next, Man of God. Then fourth, the Son of God. **<sup>36</sup> He answered and said, “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?” <sup>37</sup> And Jesus said to him, “You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.” <sup>38</sup> Then he said, “Lord, I believe!” And he worshiped Him.**

The sign ultimately took him to the Savior. You see that? There is only one place where from the entire record in the Bible who would take the sign and follow the Savior. I am talking about Gospel according to John.

- First, he was anointed.
- Second, he attested the work of God in his life.
- He was accosted; he was threatened to change his testimony.
- He was abandoned by his family.
- He was threatened, he was alarmed by the Jews.
- He remained adamant
- And then he finds Jesus and he is accepted.

See ultimately you don’t accept Jesus; He accepts you. But through it all he maintained one thing, what is that? Resolute faith and he never, ever changed his testimony. So the blind man teaches us some incredibly powerful lessons. We are coming into a day and age where our faith will be questioned, we will be threatened, we will be intimidated. It doesn’t matter where you live; you might live in India, you might live in Europe, you might live in America. It doesn’t matter where you are. And it says that they will kill you and they will think that they are doing God a favor. What are you going to do when those times come? Are you going to abandon Jesus? Or even if everybody abandons you will you cling to Jesus?

The sign is supposed to take you to the Savior. So many signs that God has done in our lives. The very fact that we exist as a church today, through COVID, nothing has happened, all of us have jobs. It is a miracle in and of itself. Has it led to our Savior? Or are we still complaining? Some of us so easily give up coming to church even though there is anointing. We just need a reason not to come to church.

I want to mention this. We have our Bible study on Tuesdays and the place I go to there are very simple people. They don’t understand English. And they are so grateful that I started the study there. So every Saturday do you know what they do? They come with Avinash. His mother and his brother who is MR, they come on a Saturday, they clean up the church and they set up the church. Do you know? It is because they are grateful. The sign led to the Savior. And we can be 52 Saturdays, 52 Sundays and several pastors’ conferences and Bible studies yet we are so busy for God on a Saturday.

Let me tell you something, you put God as priority, God will prioritize your career. But if you prioritize your career you will lose God and you will lose your career, both. If you prioritize God God will prioritize your marriage. The wife will come to you like Isaac. But if you prioritize your marriage you will lose God and you will lose your marriage. If you prioritize God and not your children, God will bless you. But if you prioritize your children and not God, you will lose God and you will lose your children. I am telling you that out of my personal testimony and experience. I remember the days when we used to come on a Saturday. It doesn’t matter how busy we were but we prioritized God.

We used to come, it was a privilege, it was a joy. You know what we used to say? Don’t clean the toilets. You know why? don’t steal my crown. That is how zealous we were. We used to fight to clean the most debauchorous stinky toilets. We used to have our service in a place in Abids, they used to have some kind of parties just the night before. People used to

get drunk and booz used to be all around, vomit all around. We used to go and clean up as a privilege. We prioritize God, God prioritized us. If you prioritize your self, your career and not God, you will lose both your career and God.

Those who love themselves and love their lives what will happen to them? They will lose it. And if you lose your life for Christ's sake you will find it. My dear brothers and sisters, the sign has to take you to the Savior. And there is only one man in the entire Gospel according to John who took the sign and went to the Savior. Do you know why? It is because he had resolute faith. It started with the anointing and it ended with him being accepted. And through it all, all the things that have happened to him through it all he remained steadfast in his testimony and he never gave up. May God bless us with that kind of a resolute faith. May He do this work in us and through us, in these last days and the rest of the 5 months that we have.

Shall we all stand up this morning? Shall we pray and in your own words speak to Him. Come back to Him this morning. August is a new month, new day, new week. God is a God who gives us chance after chance. He has not dealt truly with us according to our sins. He has not rewarded us truly according to our iniquities. But as the Heaven is high above the earth so great is His mercy toward us. And as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. So this morning, let us ask God and say, 'Lord, even if everybody abandons me I do not want to abandon You. I want to abandon myself to You.' We want to say, like Peter, 'Lord, where shall we go? You and You alone have the words of life.'

### ***Closing prayer***

*Thank You Lord for the privilege of being called Your children. We do not want to shorten Your hand in our lives because of unbelief. And from this blind man we learn one powerful lesson, O Lord, that You intervene in our situations, even though we do not even ask for it. This blind man was begging for alms but he received his sight because Jesus intervened. And this sin was not because of the sins of his forefathers. It was just so that the works of God may be revealed in him. And I pray Lord that this morning O You would intervene in somebody's life this morning who has faith.*

*You know people who have faith and people who do not. And Your Word says, O Lord, the Word of God has the power to work in those who believe. And I pray Lord this morning that You would cause faith, that You will cause the gift of faith to birth in our hearts O Lord, repentance where repentance is required, that we would change from our old ways. We will embrace O Lord Your ways and through it all we will not change our testimony, that we will attest the work of God in our lives no matter what the cost because we are here not to seek a miracle but we are here to seek You O Lord.*

*We seek the Giver and not the gift. Jesus, rid us of any vestige of self interest that we may have, the craving for honor from men, especially of what people think about us. We are so careful about that. This morning O Lord, what You think about us matters. What You see matters. May You work in us. May You do a deeper work in our hearts. Write Your laws in the tables of our heart, cause us to walk in Your ways. We thank You, we praise You, we worship You. Even as Your children go into another week, I pray Lord that the blessings of the living God will pursue them and overtake them, that You would go ahead of them and that You straighten crooked paths for them. That You would open doors for them. That in all the things that they do O Lord, let them seek You. Seek You and be resolved to follow You and not to change our testimony.*

*We thank You, we praise You, we give You the 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. In Jesus name we pray.*

