

# From Repentance to Faith

Pastor Vijay E.

[www.gracetabernaclehyd.org](http://www.gracetabernaclehyd.org)

*Father, we just want to thank You once again for this time. Thank You Lord for this morning, Father, I pray that You would speak to our hearts, through Your Word, through familiar portions. Even as we have come to the beginning of the New Year, O Lord, You are a God who always gives us chances and opportunities to know You, to know Your will and to surrender. So this morning, Father, even as we meditate upon Your Word, speak to our hearts. Lord, do Your work, Father even through the ministry of Your Word minister Your Spirit to each one of us, enable us to receive You Spirit by faith. Convict us, exhort us, chastise us and encourage us and Lord, write Your Law in the deep most parts of our inner man and cause us to walk in Your ways. Thank You Lord, we praise You, we worship You, we give Your glory, we give You honor, we give You praise for this time. I surrender each one of us into Your hands. Anoint us a fresh this morning. For in Jesus' name. Amen.*

One of the fundamental differences between the Old Covenant and the New is, in the Old Covenant you will see that God gave them laws and left it to themselves to obey and they miserably failed. But in the New Covenant it is completely different – God, through His grace, comes into us, writes His Law on the tablets of our hearts and He says that He will cause us to walk in His ways. That is remarkable. We cannot do it in our own strength, but even as we surrender ourselves to the working and the leading of the Holy Spirit in our lives, God writes His Law, changes our mind and He empowers us to obey if we truly believe. It is all subject to our believing in Him. He empowers us to obey.

## **Hebrews 11:6**

***<sup>6</sup> But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.***

All of us want to please God and the only way we can please God is by faith. It is impossible to please God without faith. So we want faith. We hear that verse often right? *Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.* So it is a faith from hearing. So when we hear the Word of God, God will grant us that faith. He is the one who is supposed to grant us that faith. But for God to grant us that faith there are certain doorways that He has ordained for us to receive that faith from God.

God gave us the promise this year that He will grant us that repentance, He will revive us and when we repent and be revived He will empower us to resist the devil. So if you want to receive this promise it is only by faith that we can obtain this promise. But to appropriate this promise we need faith and to get that faith there is a pathway that God has ordained. Let me show that path to you. These are very important foundations. The Bible says, strengthen your foundations and in the epistle of Jude it says – *my dear brothers contend for the faith which has been once and for all delivered to you. Build yourselves up in the most holy faith, praying in the Spirit and keeping yourself in the love of God.* These are the final exhortations that he gives.

A very important thing for us to do is that we have to strengthen our foundations; to be sure about our foundations. You see, when my daughters want to finish their tasks fast and move to the next level in their studies one of the things that I do is that I stop them. So many times I stopped them. I will not permit them to go to the next level, do you know why? It is because I know that their foundations are not very strong. I will cause them to repeat it again, sometimes make them do all the hundred pages all over again, much to their consternation. But I know that if I don't do that and if I don't make sure that their foundations are strong, if I don't intervene into the situation they are going through, then later on they will fall.

Similarly, He is our God, our heavenly Father, we derive all these principles from Him. You know He will not permit us to progress unless and until He is sure and we are sure about our foundations. Christian life is compared to a building. So once we get the permission from the M.C.H to build there are two stages if I am right. First we lay the foundation and the guy comes and inspects the foundation and if he is absolutely sure that the foundation is strong only then will he give us the permission to build the super structure. And therefore it is very important for us to go back to those

foundations. As we are starting the New Year, we are reiterating the foundations. And we want that faith, right? Faith in Christ and faith of Christ.

There are two arks in the Old Testament. The ark of Noah; that is the believer in Christ and the Ark of the Covenant; that is Christ in the believer. Both are arks. So the faith in Christ and the faith of Christ are essential for us to live every day and to overcome every situation in our lives. *This is the victory that overcomes the world – our faith.* Faith itself is the victory that overcomes. So there is a pathway in order for us to receive this faith from God, it is free; it is a gift. But there is a certain pathway to receive that.

### **Hebrews 6:1**

**<sup>1</sup>Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ,** Understand, New Testament is all about Christ. The scriptures and Christ, these two are one. He has given us the Scriptures and the Scriptures talk about Christ. ***let us go on to perfection,*** Let us move onto building up the super structure, but then in order for God to permit us to build this super structure there is one foundational principle which is very important, ***not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,***

The foundation is the repentance of dead works and of faith toward God. You see, faith is the second one. The first thing that has to take place is repentance. To receive this faith from God, the pathway of God is repentance.

### **Acts 20:21**

**<sup>21</sup>testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ means towards the finished work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. Now, remember in the tabernacle, if you see, in order for the priest to go to the most holy place there are several things that they need to do and go through but the first thing what they have to do is that they have to turn their back towards the east and enter in. That is the first step; that is repentance. Next comes putting your faith on the work of Jesus Christ on the altar. That is the Brazen altar that confronts them.

So the pathway is always repentance. And as we heard, repentance is a gift from God, it is the most incredible gift from God; we cannot manufacture repentance. It is godly sorrow that leads to repentance. And that repentance will not cause us any regret. But worldly sorrow produces death. So this godly kind of sorrow only God can give, we cannot manufacture it by ourselves. You need to understand, salvation is ultimately the sovereign act of God in our lives; the intervention of God in our lives. And if that does not happen then we will genuinely not repent.

So let me show you a passage which actually emphasizes this fact; that repentance comes from God. Let me show you, I am going to put it in a very simple way, in the order that I understood. So that it will help you when you meditate as to how this process of repentance actually happens and learn the characteristics of genuine repentance.

I am looking at it from the view that repentance is a gift from God.

### **2 Timothy 2:24**

**<sup>24</sup>And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,**

I started with this verse because one of the most important instruments that God uses in the process of repentance is a servant of God.

### **2 Timothy 2:25-26**

**<sup>25</sup>in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance,** (Lord, grant us repentance; that is a genuine, biblical kind of prayer, because we can't repent on our own, God has to grant it to us as a gift, ***so that they may know the truth,*** <sup>26</sup>***and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.***

It is remarkable, isn't it? I am going to break these verses into fragments to understand what is happening.

First I understand that repentance is a gift from God. So how do I understand and know that I have genuinely repented? What it brings about is conviction. The second thing that happens is that you are quickened in your spiritual senses. And the next thing that happens is that you begin to acknowledge the truth about yourself and about God. The next thing that happens is that you escape the snare of the devil. And what is that snare? We will look at it later on. Then what happens is that you stop opposing yourself. Some translations use the words – you quit being in the opposition party. Then your will gets activated toward God. These are the seven things that will happen.

#### TRUE REPENTANCE

1. A gift from God
2. Brought to Conviction
3. You are quickened in your senses
4. You acknowledge the Truth
5. You escape the Devil's snare
6. You stop opposing yourself
7. Your will gets activated toward God, you surrender

When you analyze those two verses you will see these seven steps. First you understand that God, in His compassion, grants me repentance. It is a gift, we didn't deserve it. So first we understand that it is the compassion of God.

Second is that compassion brings us to conviction and this conviction leads to contrition and this contrition expresses itself in four ways:

- Confession
- Submission
- Quitting Opposition
- Genuine Surrender

The first thing therefore is that this New Year we saw a New Year filled with God's compassion, nothing else. So many did not have this opportunity, every day you rise up in the morning, I am telling you that in my life today I am alive it is because of the mercies of God; compassion. The gift of repentance is an act of God's compassion. That is the reason why on 31<sup>st</sup> night pastor was saying, 'Lord, cause them to turn.' God has to cause us to turn, we cannot turn to God by ourselves. Look at what it says in *Psalms 80*, three times,

#### **Psalms 80:3**

***<sup>3</sup> Restore us, O God; cause Your face to shine, and we shall be saved!***

Lord, You have to turn us, You have to cause us to repent. Do you know the Aaronic blessing upon the children of Israel? *The Lord bless thee and keep thee and make His face shine upon thee and give you peace...* the face of God means what? It is the favour of God. The way that we are enjoying the favour of God is that God gives us the ability to turn; it is not possible in and end of ourselves. So, turn us O God and cause Thy face to shine and we shall be saved.

*Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved – Joel 2:32* but how do we call unless God causes us to turn and causes His face to shine upon us? And why is He able to do that? He is able to show favour to us because He poured out His wrath upon His Son. He showed us His kindness because He became the enemy of His Son because His Son became sin for us. He is able to bless us because His Son became a curse. He is able to heal us because His Son had completely taken away our sickness upon Himself. He bore our sickness on the Cross. So He is able to shine upon us because of the finished work of Jesus Christ on the Cross and therefore only He is able to cause us to turn.

Again look at how the psalmist addresses God,

#### **Psalms 80:7**

***<sup>7</sup> Turn us again, O God of hosts; cause Your face to shine, and we shall be saved!***

Who is He? Jehovah Sabaoth. That is the reason why Martin Luther writes,

Did we, in our own strength confide? Our striving will be failing. Were not the right Man on our side, the man of God's own choosing, dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus it is He, Lord Sabaoth is His Name and age to age the same and He must win the battle.

He won the battle for us on the Cross. He disarmed principalities. He is Jehovah Sabaoth, the name of God was upon Him. ***<sup>7</sup>Turn us again, O God of hosts; cause Your face to shine, and we shall be saved!*** Now look at how he ends this entire psalm,

**Psalm 80:18-19**

***<sup>18</sup>Then we will not turn back from You; Revive us, and we will call upon Your name. <sup>19</sup>Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; Cause Your face to shine, and we shall be saved!***

Quicken us O Lord, so that we do not turn back from You again. You see that? It is God who has to cause us to turn to Him. So many times the psalmist says, 'Lord, unless You cause me to turn I will not turn.' Think about it, 3 and half years of famine, like pastor was talking about, no dew, no rain, nothing, everything is parched land and Elijah confronts them and says, 'If Yahweh is God worship Him, if Baal is god worship him,' and the people not answered him a word. How long will you falter between two opinions? How long will you be double-minded? How long will you be lukewarm? And think about it – they did not even answer him a word. Their hearts have become cold. Can these dried bones live? *Only You know Lord.* Only You can do it. It is impossible otherwise. So there is a tremendous warning there. There is a warning that because we cannot manufacture this repentance God is moving in His Spirit for us to tune in with His working in our lives and not resist Him.

**Lamentations 5:21-22**

***<sup>21</sup>Turn us back to You, O LORD, and we will be restored;*** You remember last year's promise? The year of Restoration? I don't know if it was completely fulfilled in your life, were you completely restored? I was not. And you know God is saying, okay fine 2022 you were not completely restored, do one thing, let Me turn you back and you will be restored. ***Renew our days as of old, <sup>22</sup>Unless You have utterly rejected us, and are very angry with us!***

That is how lamentations ends. He says, 'Lord, if You don't cause us to turn, if You don't cause us to repent, if You don't restore us, it means that You are angry with us.' Think about it, if God is not working and He has left us to our ways, that is the worst punishment in our lives. *God, giving them up to their own passions, to a debased mind, to a reprobate mind to do those things which do not profit them.* That is the worst punishment. You see, failure at least will cause you to examine yourself. Success without God will confirm you in your rebellion. You don't even know. It is like you have a symptom of rebellion that is asymptomatic. You are carrying a disease and you don't even know the symptoms. And what is going to happen? One day, death bed. 'Oh no! I didn't know!' yes, but it was already there. And what hid that rebellion in your heart? It was your success; you thought that the favour of God was upon your life, but actually the fact was that you were a rebel.

So thank God if He causes you to fail. At least in your failure you will say, 'Lord, what is wrong with my life? What is going on?' You will begin to ask questions. And then perhaps you will turn. Like what pastor said, 'Not all prodigals will turn.' What a statement that is! Think about it. So it is the compassion of God. Look at this in *Mark 5*, this is the Gadarenes demoniac who has been literally taken captive by the devil to do his will. Literally, completely under the influence of the demonic, look at what happens,

**Mark 5:15-17**

***<sup>15</sup>Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind.*** He is sitting. Some people never sit. Some children even if you force them to sit their legs are always shaking. Have you seen them? Very restless. To make them sit in one position is one of the most difficult things to do. Three things: he is sitting; he is clothed; he is in his right mind. ***And they were afraid. <sup>16</sup>And those who saw it told them how it happened to him who had been demon-possessed, and about the swine. <sup>17</sup>Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region. <sup>18</sup>And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. <sup>19</sup>However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell***

**them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.”<sup>20</sup> And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.**

God had compassion. God says, “You were literally captivated by the devil to do his will and unless and until I had compassion on you, you would not sit, you would not be clothed and you would not be in your right mind.” It was the compassion of God. Understand my dear brothers and sisters. Do not take the compassions of God lightly.

**Matthew 9:35**

**<sup>35</sup> Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.**

Jesus was doing all this, and look at how He actually looks at His people.

**Matthew 9:36-38**

**<sup>36</sup> But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. They were all vexed and scattered, all over the place. <sup>37</sup> Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. <sup>38</sup> Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”**

Why are the laborers few? Not because they are gifted, not because they cannot teach the Bible, not because they do not have the knowledge of the Word of God. No. It is because very few shepherds have compassion. Who can really, truly express compassion upon these people? Very few. That is the reason why Paul tells the Corinthian Church, you have 10,000 teachers but you have only one father, that is me. I was the one who literally shepherded you; birthed you in the Spirit. Shepherded you, protected you, you were totally weary, vexed and scattered all over the place. “*I have brought you to Myself. I have compassion.*”

Therefore understand this is a gift of God. Do you know why God gives us gifts? It is because He has compassion on us. And because He has compassion upon us He sends servants into His vineyard so that through the servants He can express compassion to everybody. And therefore He says, ‘*The harvest is plenty, but the laborers are few.*’ What do we labor in? It is the labor of love. You see that? It is not workers. They are laborers. I hope you understand the difference. So understand that repentance is a gift.

**Acts 11:18**

**<sup>18</sup> When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, “Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.”** This is NKJV

Let’s read that in New Living Translation.

**Acts 11:18**

**<sup>18</sup> When the others heard this, they stopped objecting and began praising God. They said, “We can see that God has also given the Gentiles the privilege of repenting of their sins and receiving eternal life.”**

Do you know that repentance is a privilege? If you can repent today, it is the privilege that God has granted you. Understand that. I am telling you, if God has caused me to repent, it is a privilege. That is the reason why John is overwhelmed by this time and he says, ‘*Behold! What manner of love the Father has showered upon me that I should be called the child of God!*’ That is how we personalized it.

Jeremiah is called the weeping prophet. He wept and wept and wept and he says, ‘My eyes are dry and I am so, so, tired of weeping, my eyes are dry. Bring the mourners please, let me train them to mourn and shed tears.’ I mean it is remarkable, if you want to be a genuine mourner, the biblical kind of mourners, *blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted, so that you can comfort others with the comfort that you have received from God, because He is called the God of all comfort.* So Jeremiah says, ‘Please bring the mourners,’ and he is mourning and mourning, and he finally has to express his mourning so he writes the book of lamentations. And this is what he has to say, the first two chapters is a dirge, it is a tragedy.

### **Lamentation 3:21-23**

**<sup>21</sup> This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. <sup>22</sup> Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. <sup>23</sup> They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.**

His compassions do not fail; they are new every morning, every year. We saw 2023 because of the mercies of God. It is a privilege, so many didn't live to see this year. Young people died, younger than most of you have died, so many people committed suicide. And that is the reason why in the book of Malachi He says, 'I, the Lord, do not change and therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed.' What has not changed? His compassions. And they are new every morning. And that is the reason why Paul, in the epistle to the Romans, this is what he says,

You see this is the compassion that God is actually showing towards you and how do you respond?

### **Romans 2:4-5**

**<sup>4</sup> Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? <sup>5</sup> But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,**

Three things: riches of His goodness, forbearance

Forbearance means I should have spanked you but I withheld myself. I heard a preacher, Edwards Williams on CBN. He gave an example of how God shows us compassion. Let's say I am going on the scooter. Even as I am riding on the scooter (especially in the Indian lanes) suddenly a lad comes running onto the street and you apply the sudden brakes and come to a halt, you get off your bike and go to spank the lad and suddenly you see his father and you quietly walk away. I mean this is just a crude example. Even so, God raises His hand to spank us and He sees Jesus and relents and says, 'Okay, for the sake of My Son.' That is forbearance. He bore us! Suffered long.

That is why it says – *it was the longsuffering to God during the days of Noah*. The longsuffering of God waited patiently for 120 years. 120 years of patience and finally 7 days of grace period, I mean extended grace and then He finally has to shut the door because He is a God who is just and righteous. Why? It is the will of God that nobody should perish. You need to understand my dear brothers, the greatest happiness in Heaven is when people repent; there is joy in Heaven.

I like that song: All hail the power of Jesus Name, let angels prostrate fall.

Okay, the angels will prostrate fall when they see the holiness of God and they jump with joy when they see a repentant sinner. Of course, the angels will prostrate fall but we will stand very tall. That is different, we will not prostrate fall. We will be stiff. The worship leader will plead, 'Everybody raise your hands,' and we reluctantly raise our hands. But what do angels do? They prostrate fall. That is the reason why it says, 'When one sinner turns to repentance, there is great rejoicing in Heaven; singing and dancing.' It is remarkable isn't it? What gives angels happiness is to see a repentant sinner. Today if you repent genuinely there is great celebration in Heaven. Can you imagine that we people here, in our daily mundane, simple lives, have the capacity to affect Heaven if we repent of our sins.

So true repentance is a gift from God and it is an act of God's compassion. Do you understand? It is a privilege that God has granted to us. Therefore never take this privilege lightly. So what should the compassion of God bring us to? It should bring about a genuine conviction. If you have experienced the compassion of God there should be genuine conviction; it has to bring us to conviction. Whether that conviction is genuine or not we will examine its response later on. So in order to bring about this compassion, as I told you, God gives us preachers and teachers of the Word of God. That is the reason why I told you in *2 Corinthians 2*, the servant of the Lord must be gentle and kind, in meekness trying to instruct those who are in opposition. They are in the opposition party and we want to bring them in our party.

So to bring about genuine conviction God sends His genuine, anointed servants.

### **Jonah 3:1**

**<sup>1</sup> Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying**

What does Jonah mean? Oh the beauty of God even in naming His servants! Jonah means dove. A picture of the Holy Spirit. Who was Jonah? It is again a type of Christ after He resurrected and He ascended into Heaven, what did He do? He took captivity captive and gave gifts to men, some were apostles, some were prophets, some were evangelists, some were shepherds and teachers. Five-fold gifts He has given after He rose from the dead. Now Jonah is in the belly of the

fish for 3 days and 3 nights, which is the picture of the resurrection, now He is risen and He has taken captivity captive and what did He do? He gave anointed and empowered the ministers to preach the Gospel of compassion.

#### **Jonah 4:11**

**<sup>11</sup> Should I not also have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 people, who do not know the difference between their right hand and their left, as well as many animals?"**

**<sup>11</sup> Should I not also have compassion on Nineveh?** Do you know why, Jonah, I sent you? It is to be a minister of MY compassion. What are you going to minister? Compassion.

Sometimes when I am ministering I am not ministering compassion, I don't know. I was actually convicted the other day, I was listening to Derek Prince and he was saying, 'When the ministers of the Word of God minister, they should minister the Holy Spirit and no other spirit.' What a tremendous warning, right? After that I had to fast and pray, 'O Lord, let me minister the Holy Spirit and not any other spirit.' Compassion! 'Should I not have compassion, Jonah?'

#### **Jonah 3:2-3**

**<sup>2</sup> "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you."<sup>3</sup> So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey in extent.**

*Preach unto them the preaching that I bid thee.* Let me tell you something, it is through the preaching, not discussing. 'let us discuss the Word of God,'? No! Repentance will not come. Philip went to Samaria and preached Christ and the entire city turned. The Eunuch was reading *Isaiah 53*, and Philip asked him, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' 'How will I if nobody teaches me?' and Philip taught him Christ. And after he preached Christ, he saw water and said, 'What is stopping me from getting baptized?' 'If you believe you can get baptized.' Immediately he is baptized. So it is the preaching of the Gospel.

Look at what happens in Acts 2, so the preaching happens and what should the compassion of God, expressed through preaching, bring? Conviction.

#### **Acts 2:36-37**

**<sup>36</sup> "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."<sup>37</sup> Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"**

They were cut to the heart and asked, 'What should we do?' see, conviction has to bring true repentance but not everybody responds this way. There are several kinds of responses to the preaching of the Word. Let me show you a few,

This is when Stephen gives a message to the Sanhedrin and they are very upset. By the way the word Stephen means, wreath, crown.

#### **Acts 7:51-54**

**<sup>51</sup> "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. <sup>52</sup> Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, <sup>53</sup> who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it."<sup>54</sup> When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth.**

Like I said the meaning of Jonah is Dove. If you are coming under conviction and responding the way God wants you to respond, you are not rejecting or rebelling against the Holy Spirit. But if you are, then you will be convicted but after the conviction you will be angry and offended. ... ***things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth.*** And they killed the messenger. So let me ask you something, how you treat messengers of God?

I think in Hosea it says – *I ordained prophets for them and I also rose up Nazarites for them. And they told My prophets, ‘Do not prophesy,’ and caused My nazarites to get drunk.* That is what the people of Israel did. They were cut to their heart but they gnashed their teeth.

Now think about it, let us be honest with ourselves. How many of you were angry when there was a call to repentance? You didn’t show that anger but it was there deep down. Do you know that anger is expressed in several ways? You argue your way out of repentance, basically. God wants you to repent, but you argue your way out of repentance, you get angry, ‘What does He know about my situation?’ God knows. What is your response? Do you get angry? Or do you say, ‘Men and brethren what should I do?’

Look at another response,

**Acts 17:30-31**

***<sup>30</sup> Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, <sup>31</sup> because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”***

Repentance is a gift but it is also a command. It is a gift which is commanded, if you can understand that. Only God can do such things. Let me tell you something, if you are not thorough in your repentance, God will be very thorough in His judgment. His judgment will be very, very thorough. He will not be like, ‘Okay! Let it go!’ No, He will be thorough. That is the reason why He says – *knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men.* We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of all the things that we have done in this body, whether they be good or whether they be bad. Therefore knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men. ***He will judge the world in righteousness.*** There will be no unjust scales and balances in Heaven. It will be absolutely just. The call is to repentance, now look at the response.

**Acts 17:32-33**

***<sup>32</sup> And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, “We will hear you again on this matter.” <sup>33</sup> So Paul departed from among them.***

Some mocked and some procrastinated, as if God is available at your disposal. No He is not. That is the reason why I said, it is a privilege; He has granted gentiles the privilege of repentance. What did they say? ‘Okay, we will think about it later on.’

My dear brothers and sisters, it will be too late if you procrastinate. Let me show you some examples. ***<sup>33</sup> So Paul departed from among them.*** The moment Paul heard this response he didn’t waste even a minute over there. It is like the dove, a dove is very sensitive. The dove, even if you are 10 meters away and you move, if he even gets a wind of your movement he quickly flies away. So Paul departed, he said, ‘I am not going to waste my time with people who say we will think about it later on.’ As if the Word of God can be thought about; it cannot be on the discussion table. Somebody said this - If something comes from God’s table it cannot be put on the discussion table. Over! End of discussion.

**Acts 17:34**

***<sup>34</sup> However, some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.***

Some translations say that they clung to Paul, ‘I want to go where this dove is taking me.’ *As many as are lead by the Spirit they are the sons of God.* They clung to the man wherever he went. That is the reason why how you respond to the message and the messengers of God is very important, notwithstanding the fact that they may be many shortcomings. Scripture cannot be broken, *John 10:35. All scripture is given by the inspiration of God.* It also says, *prophecies did not come by private interpretation but men of God were moved by the Holy Spirit and they prophesied.* Now the question is - how can fallible men give an infallible Word? The answer again is very interesting, it is from the Bible – *the words of God are pure words, as silver tested in the furnace seven times.* Who is the furnace? The Spirit is the heat in the furnace. How many times does He purify? Seven times. What kind of vessels? Earthen vessels. So He uses imperfect men, purifies them, with the Holy Spirit, perfectly purifies them and then when they express the words of God it becomes Scripture.



How come Paul's words are scripture? Do you know why? He has the audacity to say, '*We have this treasure in earthen vessel. I have been purged in the furnace of affliction seven times. Seven times, perfectly, completely the Lord has purged me and therefore what I am expressing is just not mere experience or not my thoughts, it is God who spoke through me.*' And that is also being endorsed by Peter in *2 Peter 3:17* where he says, '*As our dear brother Paul, according to the wisdom that God has given him, he also wrote to you, where unstable men pervert as do they other Scriptures.*' So he is comparing the words and the epistles of Paul to Scripture. That is how Scripture becomes infallible.

So Scripture is infallible, but fallen men are going through affliction. How come David's psalms are Scripture? Hey David, you sinned, stop writing scripture. We will not read any other thing that you wrote. No. His words are recorded as scripture. And even his fall is recorded for all to see.

So this morning, in your repentance if it has brought conviction, how do you respond to the Word? Do you procrastinate? Do you think you can manufacture this repentance anytime that you want? When God is moving you should say, 'Lord! Lord You said that this year is a year of repentance. This is the time frame that You have given us that we can turn to You, O Lord. Enable us not to fight Your Spirit. Enable us not to fight Your Word, enable us not to fight Your servants.' Understand that, otherwise it will be unprofitable for you.

#### **Acts 24:24-25**

***<sup>24</sup>And after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.*** He wants faith now. But you cannot get this faith unless you repent. This access to faith is only through the path of repentance; repentance towards God and faith in Christ. ***<sup>25</sup>Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you."***

How do you treat God? Let me ask you, there is a million dollar door knocking at you and there is another door of poverty knocking at you, what will you do? Will you say, 'I will wait,?' Opportunities don't come like this. The word for time is Kairos. Let me give you an example, when you shop at More Supermarket regularly you acquire points, then you get a SMS alert saying so many points have been acquired. Please redeem these points before 31<sup>st</sup> Dec. You didn't redeem and 31<sup>st</sup> Dec has past. Now you go to More Supermarket and argue, they will say, 'Sir, it is a waste of time to argue with me. The system is not going to allow you.' What should you have done? You should have redeemed your points before 31<sup>st</sup>. You can't argue, 'But I have been such a loyal customer. How can you do this to me?' but sir there is no point arguing, the system will not allow you.

That is the reason why the Bible says – *Redeem the time*. The word for this time is Kairos. Redeem the opportune time that God has given you now, because tomorrow you will not get those opportunities again. I am telling you my dear brothers and sisters, it is a solemn warning to all of us. Some people are procrastinating and procrastinating, let me tell you there will be a time where even if you want to repent, you cannot, because it is a gift from God. So this year God has given us incredible promise, the greatest promise. You know what, something that I love in the Bible, one word I love in the Bible is repentance. I love it! I can preach repentance through the year if I have to. The same message I will preach again with the same enthusiasm because I love it. A convenient time? There is no convenient time, it is now.

#### **Acts 24:26-27**

***<sup>26</sup>Meanwhile he also hoped that money would be given him by Paul, that he might release him.*** Can you imagine? You think Paul is going to give you money? ***Therefore he sent for him more often and conversed with him.*** But Paul only preached repentance and the judgment to come. Each time his heart is only getting harder and harder. The time is gone, now you cannot redeem your opportunities for repentance. It is over. ***<sup>27</sup>But after two years Porcius Festus succeeded Felix; and Felix, wanting to do the Jews a favor, left Paul bound.***

So don't procrastinate, my dear brothers. So this year, do now what you are supposed to do today. Look at one remarkable example in the book of Hebrews, we know the word fornication. By definition we think that it is sex outside of marriage. But what is the essence of fornication? What is the spirit behind it? What is the attitude of a fornicator? Who is a biblical fornicator? In other words, the Spirit of God through the writer of Hebrews is scanning the entire Old

Covenant and He wants to get a perfect definition and the personification of a fornicator and he zeros in on one person, who is that fellow?

### **Hebrews 12:16**

**<sup>16</sup>lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.**

Now think about it, throughout the narrative of Esau in the entire Bible did you find Esau fornicating anytime? But in the eyes of God he is a fornicator. We know that Judah fornicated, we know that David committed adultery, but what about Esau? But this is a biblical definition of a fornicator, **who for one morsel of food sold his birthright**. He is a man given over to the flesh. He is like father, like son; Isaac and Esau go together, both love mutton.

The other day, I was fasting the whole day and I wanted to have dinner, it was a partial fast. So I thought to myself, when I go home I want my kind of food, after all I deserve it because I fasted the whole day. So I said, 'Make me a double Omlette.' She says, 'The kitchen is closed.' Okay! 'We don't have eggs in the fridge.' No problem I will swiggy them. What has happened? What is the whole purpose of fasting? Irritation is coming out. Everybody has an Esau.

So Esau comes home and he is very hungry. I think Jacob knows Esau's weakness, so he is fanning all the steam from the soup towards him and the aroma is going towards the entrance of the house and Esau smells it as he enters. 'Oh wow! What is that?' 'Lentil soup' 'Please can you serve me some soup?'

Can you imagine? Sambar/soup and birthright? That is a biblical fornicator. In other words, he is a man who is consumed by the temporal. In that way Demas was a fornicator, because he was consumed by the temporal and he gave up the privilege of ministering along with the greatest apostle in human history. Think about it, if in hind-sight you were given the opportunity to minister along side with Apostle Paul. In other words, let's imagine there is a time machine and you could go back in time and God says, 'Vijay, would you like to minister with Apostle Paul?' how many of you would like to do it? I think I would want to do it, somehow, even though it is difficult. It is a privilege! I would because I see what is in store for me later on. But what does Demas do? The epitaph on Demas' tomb as read by the Holy Spirit – Demas forsook Paul having loved this present age. Fornicator!

### **Hebrews 12:17**

**<sup>17</sup>For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.**

What is the blessing he wanted? He wanted the birthright and he sought it diligently with tears but he could not get the birthright, do you know why? It is because he could find no place for repentance. Do you see that? Time is up! Over! Is there a choice? If Yahweh is God worship Him, if Baal is god worship him. Is there a choice for us? The Bible says – it is impossible for a man to be led back to repentance; the one who has tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the age to come, if he turns away deliberately to renew him back to repentance it is impossible. What a statement! But I thought nothing is impossible with God, but not with this man, because he has deliberately made a choice now to turn his back on God, notwithstanding all the wonderful spiritual experiences that he had in his life. Understand therefore, there is a time for repentance, there is a time for opportunity.

This might seem like a very innocuous gathering, nothing ostensibly great about this. But do you know what? There is a divine intervention, there is divine visitation, there is ministering of the Holy Spirit, there is an anointing when brothers dwell together in unity. If we miss that anointing, we will be like those foolish virgins. They were virgins, but they did not have oil and the Bridegroom has come. 10 is the number of congregation, by the way. The lamp stand also has 10; 7 branches with 3 extra containers to contain oil. 10 is the number of congregation – 5 wise and 5 foolish. What did the 5 wise virgins have? They had oil, they had oil, they were circumspect, they took every opportunity to gain the anointing and to have the oil. And when the Bridegroom came the 5 foolish virgins did not have oil in their lamps, their fire was burning out and the wise virgins said, 'No, go outside and buy oil for yourself.' Now where are they going to buy oil from? Where will you get genuine oil? Who is going to sell the oil? How do you know whether that is genuine oil?

It is appointed for man to die only once after that is judgment.

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

**<sup>1</sup>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.**

Paul is literally falling on his face and pleading the people. The other day I was at an engagement and in the sermon my uncle was talking about how God, when He created man in His own image, it says that God knelt down and He breathed into Adam. Can you imagine God kneeling before man? I thought that was a fantastic picture – God kneeling before man. And Paul is literally saying, 'I kneel before you and I plead with you, please, please do not receive the grace of God in vain.' *I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God...* I am pleading on behalf of God, as ambassadors of Christ we plead with you, be reconciled with God.

God has given us a ministry of reconciliation. Do you know the first thing that a country does before it declares war on a nation? It takes back the embassy and all the ambassadors. And who are we? We are ambassadors in this world. The first thing God will do before He preaches judgment is that He is going to lift the Church up and the Holy Spirit. The Restrainer is gone. The time is over now. So He says, '*In an acceptable time...*' not a convenient time. There is no convenient time, there is only an acceptable time. *In His divine time He has made everything beautiful.* In whose time? In His time, not your time. It is not Indian Stretchable time; it is God's stretchable time, in His mercy He is stretching. That is the reason why it is called longsuffering.

**<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.**

Behold, now. When? Now! Not today, but now, right now. Today we do not know, today is not guaranteed. 2022 was a stunning year, till the last day they were dying. There were all parables before our eyes.

## **Psalms 32:6**

**<sup>6</sup>For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You in a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters they shall not come near him.**

***In a time when You may be found.*** Not 'You will be found', *You may be found.* Now God, in His mercy and His compassion, He has given us a promise this year saying – *I am going to visit you this year with repentance. If you search Me you will also be found by Me. But because I cried to you and you did not answer Me I will also laugh at your calamity,* it says in *Proverbs 1.* And He says – *Because you despised Me and you did not take My reproof and My correction, when you cry out to Me I will not answer you anymore and distress and anguish will come upon you.*

## **Psalms 32:7**

**<sup>7</sup>You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah**

Therefore true repentance starts with the compassion of God and it brings you to conviction and therefore conviction has to lead you to contrition. Do you know what the word Contrite means? It means to make yourself as dust. That is what it means. The word dust and contrition go together. *As for man his days are like grass, like the flower of the field so he flourishes. For He remembers their frame, He knows that they are dust.* It must lead you to contrition. Put your mouth in the dust, in other words. Understand who you are without the mercies of God. All the glory of man is like the flower of grass, it says. *The grass withers and the flower fades and the glory thereof, its place remembers it no more, but he who does the will of God abides forever.* What do you want to do? It is the will of God to repent.

God, not willing that any man should perish – that is it is the will of God that you should repent. It should lead you to contrition.

## **Psalms 51:17**

**<sup>17</sup>The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart— These, O God, You will not despise.**

What kind of an identity does God give us in the New Covenant? He says – *You are a Kingdom of priests and a holy nation, a royal priesthood. I have made you into a spiritual house to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God.* And what is the one spiritual sacrifice that you offer to God which is acceptable to God? It is repentance which is a broken and a contrite heart. Do you know what contrition means? ‘Lord, if You do not visit me, I am gone! I am done! My history is gone, I am dust.’ When Abraham was haggling (if I could reverentially was that word) with God, ‘If there are fifty righteous... 45..40..35..30..25.... please have compassion upon me I am dust. I know I am dust...’ do you know, he is constantly reminded of the fact that he is dust.

You know what dust is, right? What happens to the dust? You blow and it is gone! That is exactly what God could have done with us. But what does He do? He pours the Word of God, He anoints us with His Spirit and He makes us into a vessel of honor. What a privilege! Do you want to despise that this year?

Look at the response of the preaching of Jonah. That is the reason why it says in *Matthew 12:41* - <sup>41</sup>*The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.* He has spoken to us in these last days through His Son.

### **Jonah 3:5-6**

**<sup>5</sup>So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. <sup>6</sup>Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes.**

They heard the preaching of Jonah and believed. It is not from the least to the greatest. It is in descending order of authority, everybody, from the greatest. You think you are the greatest? First remove your royal robes, including the king. And what did the king do? He emptied his throne. He remembered, ‘I am dust.’ **and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes.** This is repentance, this is contrition. Do you know what they are saying? ‘Lord, if You do not have mercy, we are done! We are only appealing to Your mercy.’ It is literally like that man, son of Bartimaeus, saying, ‘Son of David have mercy upon me.’ And when they asked him to keep quiet what did he do? He shouted even louder. In other words, ‘Please do not pass me by. I do not know if this opportunity will come again or not. It might be over for me. This might be the last opportunity. He cried out even louder.

So this time, this year, cry out even louder from your heart, even this morning. I don’t know for some of you, maybe you should cry out. Do not go and pray in your heart in your room. In your room cry out loud, even Jesus cried out in secret. How do you pray? Do you pray in your mind? No. Read out loud and cry out loud, pray out loud. Cry out in your secret closet.

So the compassion of God should bring about conviction, it should lead to contrition and that should lead us to confession.

Let me qualify the statement – your confess should be as broad as your transgression. If you sin against God you confess to God. If you sin against your neighbor, you confess to God and to your neighbor. If you have sinned against your neighbors, then you have to go and confess to all your neighbors. It is not easy. Do you know one of the most difficult things for us to say is ‘sorry’? And if someone says sorry without meaning it we get angry, ‘You said sorry but you didn’t mean it.’ ‘It is not coming from your heart.’ ‘I know you are saying sorry just to satisfy me.’

That is the reason why your confession should be as broad as your transgression. For some people it is so broad. Richard Wurmbbrand gives this very interesting example. There was this woman who came to church and she was weeping and crying and Richard Wurmbbrand came to her and said, ‘Lady, do not cry so much. God sees your heart. Let me take you to the field.’ He put a big stone on her and he said, ‘throw the stone over here and walk away.’ She threw the stone and she walked away free. Another lady came to him and she said, ‘I also want to have that kind of an experience. Why can’t I have that experience?’ he took her to the same field and he said, ‘Your sin is not like that one big stone; they are like small tiny stones, several stones scattered all over the field. Pick up all of them first.’ Some things are impossible. Which stone should I pick up?

Think about it, for example you slandered and said something that is not true, maybe you said something about me, as an example, then later on you got convicted of your sin. But at first in your religious zeal and your righteous anger etc you conveyed that rumor as gospel truth. You never proclaimed the Gospel, but you proclaimed this lie to everyone. That is very true, right? Some people will never proclaim the truth or share the Gospel but they will go around and spread rumors about pastors etc with zeal. Now that has gone all around the world and now you come to pastor/me and say, 'Pastor, please forgive me. I am contrite. I have sinned against God and you.' The pastor will say, 'Okay now do one thing, go to everyone to whom you proclaimed this message and apologize.' Can you imagine? It is impossible.

That is the reason why it says in the book of Leviticus – *you should not be a talebearer among your brothers*, carrying information from one home to another like a bird flying to every home, 'Do you know what happened? Do you know what happened?' it is called twitter. After that your confession and repentance is sometimes impossible. How much of restitution can you make after that? Think about it.

Boys are very dangerous, they will say, 'I love you. I will marry you.' Later on, 'No, No, sorry.' After a while phone is off and this guy is not even available anywhere. He is gone! Disappeared! He has become a CIA, undercover agent. Think about it. Think about how many boys and girls do that. So if your confession has to be as broad as your transgression, it is better to sin against very few people. So have few friends and sin against them very much, no problem.

### **Luke 15:17**

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

So this is the compassion of his father. He remembers and understands the compassion of his father and that brings conviction, which brings contrition and contrition has to lead to confession. So what does he do? He rehearses his confession.

### **Luke 15:18-19**

***<sup>18</sup> I will arise and (I will) go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, <sup>19</sup> and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."***

Let me make a point, a categorical statement: repentance is not a feeling, it is an act of will – I will, I will, I will, I will. 'Oh I felt and I cried and I wept.' But nothing changed, same old, because your will has not been touched. Salvation is the saving of your soul, as you've heard. So where is the will? It is in the soul. If the will has not been changed have you really repented? It is like that man who had two sons, the father told both of them, 'Go and do this,' one son said, 'I will,' but he did not. The other son said, 'I will not,' but later on he changed his mind. So what is the proof that he changed his mind? He went and did what his father asked him to do. So keep that in mind, it is an act of will.

So the prodigal son rehearses, "***Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you,***" you see that? You say it out, you speak it out because Jesus is the High Priest and the Apostle of my confession. Some people think that if they do not confess then God will not know. He knows everything. It is not like the cat stealing and drinking milk with its eyes closed. No. Everything is open. It says – *the eyes of the Lord are everywhere watching over that which is good and that which is evil.*

***<sup>19</sup> and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.***" That is confession. You have to say that. Whether the father will intervene in the middle and not allow you to finish it that is up to the father. We will leave it to the magnanimity of the father. But what about you? How about your confession? In other words, 'Lord, it is a privilege that I am repenting. And I take it. I am not going to despise the riches of Your goodness.'

So look at what happens in the time of Jonah.

### **Jonah 3:7-9**

***<sup>7</sup> And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. <sup>8</sup> But let man***

and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands.

Look at the way he thinks about God, look at his knowledge about God.

**<sup>9</sup> Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?**

It is not like, God should turn looking at my repentance. No. Who can tell, He is the Master, I will only appeal for His mercy.

### **Psalm 32:3-5**

**<sup>3</sup> When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. <sup>4</sup> For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah <sup>5</sup> I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah**

Lot of people are like, 'Look ma no hands.' What happened to this? 'I don't know. Nothing! I don't know, I did not do anything.' Sometimes I feel like they (kids) are insulting my intelligence. "Do you know, I am Dr. Eathakota basically? Basically that is what my degree is. Don't you know what it takes to become a doctor? And you are saying, 'Look ma no hands,'? People when they are supposed to be silent they are not silent. And when they are supposed to open their mouth they do not open their mouth.

**<sup>3</sup> When I kept silent, my bones grew old**, God broke your bones, basically. Thank God. . **<sup>4</sup> For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me**; it was the conviction of the Holy Spirit upon the life of David. He could just not contain it anymore. He hid it and he is miserable now. And what did I do? **<sup>5</sup> I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.** That is the process.

### **Proverbs 28:13**

**<sup>13</sup> He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.**

Mercy is the gift of God, His compassion, so obtain His mercy.

### **James 5:16**

**<sup>16</sup> Confess your trespasses to one another**, if you have sinned against the other person **and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.**

Today pastor was talking about healing. Lot of you have got lot of sicknesses. Do you know why? One of the reasons is that you have sinned against another person, simple. And what are you doing? You will not open your mouth. I remember David Pawson, he had an elder in the church with whom he couldn't get along with. But one day that elder was in the hospital so David Pawson went to visit him. Both of them couldn't get along with each other. So when he visited him, the elder said, 'David I didn't like you very much.' David, said, 'Same feelings over here.' The elder said, 'No Problem. Let's do one thing, I will confess my faults to you and can you do one thing? As my pastor, could you please pour the anointing oil over my head and pray for me.' Do you know what happened? That day he was not just physically healed but he received healing in his body, into his soul and in his spirit and much beyond. Contrition led to confession which brought healing.

A lot of people are not healed; it is because they withhold confession, 'You do not know what that person did to me.' You will die in your sin, brother. Look at Ahithophel, the quintessential, a man of incredible wisdom, but he hid his bitterness deep down inside of his heart. And one day it came out.

### **1 John 1:8-9**

**<sup>8</sup> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves**, God is not mocked, it is for your own good **and the truth is not in us**. If you do not confess your sins God is not mocked, whatever a man sows that is exactly what he is going to reap. If you sow in the flesh you will reap corruption. If you sow in the Spirit you will reap eternal life. So what do you want to sow and what do you want to reap? **<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

So true repentance is the compassion of God which should bring you to conviction and lead you to contrition which then leads to true confession and then it results in genuine submission.

Genuine or true submission, meaning you are not carrying any offence, you are saying, 'I will come under authority and submit myself to the leading of God and to the people whom God placed in my life.' That is how I escape the snare of the devil. Submission means humility. Submission and humility go together. And what is the devil? He is proud. What is the snare of the devil? He puts pride and ego and offence in your heart and he will say, this is a shame don't do this etc. that is the snare. Escape that snare! Say, 'Lord I don't care what people think about me. I want to escape from that snare. I am only interested as to what you think about me, because only that matters. One of the snares of the devil is to be offended. There are so many people who work themselves out of repentance because they are offended and therefore the Bible says in *Matthew 11:6 – Blessed is the man who is not offended because of Me.*

Do you know why they get offended? It is because they do not have depth in their conversion and repentance. They are very shallow. They are big on feelings, take things lightly, candy cotton. They only want chocolates.

### **2 Timothy 2:26**

***<sup>26</sup>and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.***

Look at the confession of the prodigal son - ***<sup>19</sup>and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.*** What does that mean? 'I want to come under your submission now. I am ready to surrender myself to you. I will not be proud and I will not get offended when you correct me in your house. I know now that all you meant for me is good. I understand this. I am willing to come under your submission.'

Sometimes what happens is that you boast about your self-righteousness and your resume and you will get offended. You will go back home dignified but only one man will go home justified. Who is the other person? The one who genuinely confessed his sins to God and said, 'I am a sinner. Lord, have mercy. I am not even worthy.'

Escape the snare of the devil and come under genuine submission. The devil is a rebel and all his children are rebels. That is Adam. Who is he? He is a rebel, he is a quintessential rebel like the devil and all the children of the devil are in Adam and they are all rebels. Escape the snare, come under submission, because when you come under submission there is protection, God will protect you. Even if your authority is not genuine when you come under God ordained covering He will protect you in the place where you are. Except of course when there is abuse of leadership like Saul what you have to do is run but you still don't point your fingers against him. You don't raise your finger or hand against him because you understood that all authority comes from God.

So what did the tax collector do?

### **Luke 18:13-14**

***<sup>13</sup>And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' <sup>14</sup>I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.***

While the Pharisee was boasting in his resume, that man stood afar and he said, 'Lord, have compassion, have mercy!' that brings true submission.

So true repentance is the compassion of God which should bring you to conviction and lead you to contrition which then leads to true confession and then it results in genuine submission and that will be the end of all opposition.

Yes, that is contradiction.

Do you know something? Every time you disobey God you are opposing yourself. Do you know that? It is like this, this is iPhone 2020, fantastic camera, better than your 3-eyed phone. This is for receiving calls, WhatsApp, browsing, listening etc. think about it. This has a life of its own. Let's say it has intelligence which is no longer artificial. And the phone says,

'I no longer want to be functioning as a cell phone. I want to become a hammer. From now on you are going to use me to drive nails.' What is going to happen to it? It will break itself. What is it doing? It is opposing itself. If you are called to be a man and try to be a woman, you are opposing yourself. If you are a woman and you are trying to be a man, you are opposing yourself. You are contradicting yourself, you were never meant to be this way. I like that construction in KJV, look at what it says,

### **2 Timothy 2:25**

***<sup>25</sup>In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;***

It is interesting, they are not steady in themselves, but they don't think that way. They are actually causing harm to themselves. Think about it, what will happen if you oppose God. God rules by decree. That is why it is called the Kingdom of God. He doesn't rule by vote, He doesn't ask your opinion. He will rule. That is why I said, 'If you surrender to the will of God the will of God will be accomplished in your life. What is the will of God? It is for you to go to Heaven. And if you don't surrender to God the will of God will still be accomplished in your life. What is that? You go to hell. Either way His will will come to pass. Do not oppose yourself.

That is the reason why pastor says that you are full of knowledge through education, that is what even Derek Prince says, you are educating the carnal mind. What happens to that fellow now? This man has got full of arguments PhDs, H2SO4 etc etc. Now to bring him to repentance is virtually impossible. He has got tremendous zeal like Paul. What is Paul doing? Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church. And you know what Jesus says? 'Paul, Paul, why are you persecuting the Church? You are persecuting Me. It is hard for you to kick against the goads. Do you know what happens when you kick against the goads? You are opposing yourself, not Me. You have the license from the government, you have the authority from the Sanhedrin, you have the entire legislative of the state behind you, notwithstanding that you are opposing Me and therefore you are opposing yourself. You will not last long.'

The kings and the rulers of this world are nothing. That is what Nebuchadnezzar thinks. At the end of his life, 'Now I know, He (the Lord) is the ruler and I am nothing. The kings and the rulers of this world are nothing. He displaces rulers and He puts upon the throne the bases of men. He is able to do it.' So quit opposing yourself. How many arguments we have! To obey you don't have reasons, but to not obey you have arguments.

### **2 Corinthians 10:3-4**

***<sup>3</sup>For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup>For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,***

Who are you warring against? Yourself. ***For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God for pulling down stronghold, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.*** What is this? You are willing to lay down your head and give it to Jesus and say, 'Lord, You rule me now. My mind is Yours, I am stopping all opposition. You pass every bill, You don't have to ask me for my consent. Every bill, all authority is Yours.'

### **Romans 12:2**

***<sup>2</sup>And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.***

It is not the removal of the mind; it is the renewal of the mind.

### **Romans 8:7**

***<sup>7</sup>Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.***

Carnal mind is an enemy of God. That is the reason why it says – *put off the old man which is growing corrupt with its deceitful desires. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind and put on the new man.* Be renewed in the spirit and the attitude of your mind. In Telugu and Sanskrit it says – change your monkey-mind.



I had a friend called Ajay Chekra when I was a young boy; he used to come to our house never by the stairs. From one terrace to the other terrace and the next terrace and on the parapet and then we used to hear a loud thud and we know, 'Ajay is here.' That is monkey. 'Hey don't behave like a monkey.' 'Don't play monkey tricks.' What does that mean?

**Joshua 1:8**

***<sup>8</sup>This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you<sup>l</sup> shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.***

Then you will not just have success, but good success. Even the qualification of the success is important. Not any other success, it is good success.

Finally, true repentance is a gift from God, it starts with the compassion of God, which will bring you to genuine conviction of the Holy Spirit which will lead you to contrition, which will lead you to confession, which brings about true submission and ends all opposition and causes you to genuinely surrender to God.

**Isaiah 6:8**

***<sup>8</sup>Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."***

Here I am Lord, send me!

This is the first Sunday after watch-night service, shall we stand this morning? The year 2023 is still young. Amen? And the promise still stands. What a promise – Repent! Revive! Resist! When I heard these three words, I said, 'Boy! What an amazing thing!' all the promises of God start with repentance. That is the bottom line. We talk about faith etc, faith in God, faith of God all that is okay but it first starts with repentance. First repentance and then faith, that is the path, that is the trajectory, that's the algorithm. That is the order in God's Kingdom.

So this morning if the Lord is convicting you of some sin, maybe in your own words confess to God and say, 'Lord, forgive me.' Just take a few minutes in the presence of God, in your own words, quietly; you don't have to say it out aloud, pray. God is good and His compassions do not fail, they are new every morning and He has given us a New Year 2023. What an amazing privilege! Another year, another day, another week, another Sabbath to listen to His Word. Another opportunity to repent, to change, to confess, to put right. To put away all wrong attitudes, to cry out to God and say, 'Lord, visit me this morning.' Some of us are struggling because we have so many arguments in our minds. We are not opposing God, we are actually opposing ourselves. You don't realize that. And God is saying, 'Why do you do this? Why do you oppose yourselves? You are kicking against the goads.'

God is bringing conviction and we are just trying to run away from Him. You can't do it for long. You can't. His will will come to pass. We might as well surrender and say, 'Lord, here I am, I lay down my arguments, I lay down all contradictions.' If any man wills to do His will he will know, that is what the Word of God says in *John 7:17*.

So this morning in the quietness of our hearts, even as the Spirit of God is leading us this morning, let us confess and surrender ourselves. In your own quiet way, it doesn't have to be emotional, if the Lord is giving you tears you can shed those tears, because those tears can cleanse you like it cleansed that woman; her faith brought her to tears and God saw her tears. Some of you don't have tears it is okay, God sees your heart. Maybe you are grieving in your heart, God sees that. He is a God who has visited us with compassion, He will not consume us. Thank God. 2023 all of us are still alive in this Church in the land of the living. What an amazing privilege! Let us not take it lightly. The more I think about the goodness of God and I think about what God has done for me in all these years, all the plans that I have made for myself He had shattered all those plans so that those plans don't shatter me. I thank God, I really thank God this morning and say,

*Closing prayer*

*Thank You Jesus! I was so close to leaving, so close to running away. I was so close to running away from my calling. Had it not been for Your hand of mercy over my life I do not know where I would have been Lord. I don't even know if I would have seen 2023. It is in Your compassion, it is in Your mercy that You saw it fit to give me another year in the land of the living. Lord let me not take it lightly. It is a privilege Lord to repent. It is a privilege that You are granting to each one of us. Let us not despise the riches of Your goodness, Your forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads us to repentance but let us not harden our hearts. Let us not grow hard because we have an unrepentant and an impenitent heart.*

*Lord, this morning I surrender all opposition Lord. I just want to put it aside, lay aside all opposition and I want to surrender. I want to be a child. I want to be a child Lord. I want to be led by the Spirit. Here I am Lord, send me. Sanctify me, cleanse me, use me as an instrument in Your Kingdom. Let many souls through my life be touched. For You said O Lord, that Christ became a curse on the Tree so that the blessings of Abraham, the promise of the Spirit might be given to us so that through the Spirit we can be minister of the Spirit to others and be dispersers of Your goodness and Your mercy to others and bring many, many souls into the Kingdom of God this year.*

*Let us not just enjoy the blessings of God that He has given us but let us share those blessings because the Word of God says that it is more blessed to give than to just receive. We receive it and we give out.*

*Lord, have mercy upon us as a church, have mercy O Lord, have mercy. Lord, Your compassions they do not fail. Thank You Lord, for Your compassions. Thank You, Father, for 2022. Thank You, Father, for Your interventions in our lives. Thank You, Father, for interjecting into our decisions O Lord and changing the course of our life Lord. Thank You, thank You Lord. Even as we look forward Lord, we look forward with hope Lord, because Your mercies do not fail, Your compassions do not fail, they are new every morning, great is Your faithful O Lord. Thank You Jesus, thank You Lord. O Jesus, have mercy O Lord, have mercy Lord. Visit Your people O Lord, visit Your people. Lord the promise that You have given us, enable us to grasp it with both hands Lord. Lord, let us not be slack O Lord in doing good, let us with patience inherit the promise that You have given to us. For You are not a God who will overlook the labour of love that we have shown O Lord. Thank You Lord, thank You Jesus. Empower Your Children, encourage Your children, empower and fill them with Your Holy Spirit. Let them go back home with the assurance that they have been forgiven and let them go back home with the assurance of Your presence in their lives so that when they genuinely witness they will be true ministers of Your Spirit. Thank You Father, thank You, thank You. 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. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

*May the Lord richly bless you and let Him make His face shine upon You. Let Him give you peace this year. Amen.*