

How Did You Reach Here?

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Father this morning, we just want to honor You, we just want to magnify You Lord, Your Word, Your Son and Your Spirit who is here in our midst. Even this morning as we get ready, prepare for Communion, I pray Lord that You would speak to us, speak to us O Lord. Your Word is life, Your Word is truth, Your Word has power to set any man, woman, child free from anything because to a whole nation You said, I sent forth My Word and healed you of your diseases, your captivity, that's the power of Your Word for anyone who believes today. They will not go back the way they came. So, Father by faith I release Your Word, speak to us O Lord, in Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Remember we are looking are looking at the man called Elijah because we all want to do, we want to walk, we want a ministry but God is not so much interested in our ministry, He is interested in the minister because to become the man God wants you to be, it is not easy. It is very easy to be the man you want to be or the world wants you to be. It is very difficult to be the man or the woman God wants you to be. So, and that's our struggle. Most of our prayers if we were to record and play it back, we will realize we are always telling God what to do and put a recommendation "in His name. Amen." I don't know who is saying amen, God or you. That's why I said, 'Always pray.'

So, what happens to God's children, I'm talking about God's children, we are not talking about the people in the world because there are so many experiences which are common in life but that does not mean even though it may be identical, it is still the same. Like we have two almost identical twins in this church but they are not the same, they are different. So, for us you need to realize, there is an unseen Person who is ordering your footsteps, we saw that two weeks back. You could be the best man on planet earth, upright, blameless, who shuns evil and fears God and God removes the edge and all hell literally breaks lose because his feet is being ordered by God. So, please remember if you are a child of God, you will go into the wilderness because there are certain lessons that can be learnt only in the wilderness, the question is, how long will you stay there and how will you come out. Will you come out or will you wander and die? You will go, everyone will go. That is the model. Look unto Jesus the Author and the Finisher of our faith and *Luke 4:1* says the Spirit of God led Jesus into the wilderness.

Luke 4:1

¹Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

Where did He take Him? Jesus being filled with the Holy Spirit and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. So, you may be thinking, thank You Lord, I'm filled with the Holy Spirit today, you may be taken straight to the wilderness but the thing is that, this should be our pattern, our actual, though we are surrounded by the cloud of saints as *Hebrews 12:1* says, our pattern is Jesus, the thing is that yes, He went in the wilderness and *Luke 4:14* says how did He come back? He came out of the wilderness in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 4:14

¹⁴Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region.

He came in the power of the Holy Spirit. He was filled. So, it means these two are not always the same. Your car, your vehicle, your tank can be full of gas but doesn't mean it is full of power. You could be full of the Holy Spirit and yet when you turn the ignition, it is not catching fire, there is no power but when Jesus came He came full, not just was He filled, but He came in the power of the Holy Spirit to Galilee. That's how He came. So, wilderness is a place, it's a stage in our lives where the purpose is to bring us to the end of ourselves so that we may experience all of God. That is the end, that is the place where He chastens us because the man who was brought out of Egypt or the man who saved from sin is not the man who is going into Heaven. He has to be cleaned out. Everything of that old man we are praying day and night, bless him, bless him, God says, 'No, that man has to be destroyed.' There is a new man, it is in the wilderness you will know which man. It's like a marriage, the two shall be one and after the second day, which one. Sammy, which one? You will point to Jyothi, "That One (Jesus)", okay Jyothi, if he says, 'Which one?' you say, "That One." That's the three-fold

cord, okay you're getting your wedding message for the next three Sundays okay, from me and Pastor Vijay. So, there are voices in the wilderness. In *Matthew 4:3* says,

Matthew 4:3

³Now when the tempter came to Him . . .

Where did the tempter come to him? In the wilderness. The devil comes to you in the wilderness. When you are in the wilderness, nothing seems to be going, your marriage is in the wilderness, your job is in the wilderness, your finances is in the wilderness, your relationships are in the wilderness, don't know the wilderness can hit you. Nothing is moving, the tempter will come, who will come? The tempter will come. He will even cause you to doubt your salvation. He doesn't say You are the Son of God, he says, "Therefore, if You are the Son of God." I know people doubt their salvation in the wilderness. In these last seven days till today, last seven days, the number of messages and calls I and my wife have got is all about depression, discouragement, death, around the world. You have to see the spirit that is working on them; it is not old people, old and young. When you get into the wilderness, there are voices out there, right now you are cool because you are studying, many of you are studying, you are cool. Finish, then you are on the streets looking for a job, one month, six months, seven months, one year, the pressure will come, different kinds of pressure are there. Please understand, you will go through, there are voices, different voices in the wilderness, there is a voice of the devil, which will tempt you, challenge you, question you, there is the voice of God in *Isaiah 40:3*, the voice of the one crying in the wilderness.

Isaiah 40:3

³The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

You know you are in the wilderness to be prepared. This is a place of preparation. You look into your soul, you look into your heart, God will show you, there are so many ditches, they have to be filled. There are so many things you are proud about, they have to be brought down. You are proud about your looks, your complexion, your degrees, your talents, whatever it is, it has to be brought low. There are so many areas in your life, you are very rough, it has to be made smooth and there are some areas in your life you are very crooked. It's like the dogs tail, you put it inside a pipe for six months, you take it out, it still goes back to normal, default setting is crookedness. That is Jacob. It has to be made straight. For you must realize that there has to be a highway for the Lord.

So there are voices, voices all around. Please remember, in the wilderness you will start hearing voices. Whose voice will you listen to? It will come into everybody's life. Some people go through different stages of wilderness, because different lessons have to be learnt. Today we will look at one person, primarily one person, not in detail but we will look at him, because these were written for us upon whom the end of ages have come. So for us who live in the last days, we are living in the last days. Unless of course last week we had good news in terms of the Supreme Court's Verdict in the US, back to back victory was for the believing crowd. But we don't know, none of these things will really matter. You need to realize 2024 will decide the destiny of this nation and that nation, which way it will go. Let me tell you, in 2024 if the current dispensation of America wins and they take all three; the Senate, the Congress and the Presidency, it is over. The next thing they will do is that they will take DC and another outline Island called Puerto Rico as states. So they will have 4 extra Senators which will always be democrats, that means the Senate is gone forever. They will pack the Supreme Court, right now it is 6-3, they will make it 20 leftist judges over there, so the Supreme Court is gone. Like here, many courts are gone. Last night what the Gujarat High did, "Arrest her immediately!" and they had a late night hearing in the Supreme Court with 3 judges who put a stay on it. You need to realize, courts are not what you think, and once you take over the courts it is over. That notion is over, there is nothing left.

And it is happening in many, many, countries, the Courts. The battle in Jerusalem, in Israel is because the courts have been taken over. In Brazil the courts have been taken over and the previous president has been barred for 8 years. People are not looking at what is happening in countries, you know what, when that day comes will you be able to stand? Nigel Farage is the most prominent person in Britain. He was behind the Brexit movement which took Britain out of the European Union. Do you know that last week he was de-banked? It is a new term. His account was closed and he

can't open an account in any bank. What will you do? In a country where people do not accept currency and you don't have a bank account. How will you live? Why? It is because the banks do not like your policies and your statements.

We are talking about a day when you cannot buy or sell if you don't agree to their agenda. If they can do it for Nigel Farage in modern day UK, think about it. That is why we preach because when that day comes, stand. To stand you need the truth, you need faith, you need to love God with all your heart. For that love will not fail. *They did not love their lives even unto death.* A day will come, but it is tested in small, small issues. Your faithfulness, your stands are taken in little, little things. Like I shared about those two mothers who made a decision. When the whole world, 99% of modern day women in the world, when the gynaec sees the scan and says, 'This child is going to be born with deformities,' they will all say, 'Abort,' the husbands will also say, 'Abort the baby.' But not these mothers and their husbands. Both their husbands said, 'We will stand with you. We will do everything we can do to save this life and not lose this life.'

That is how it is, step by step, faith is built. Faith becomes strong. It is not through compromise; it is by taking this decision and then when that day comes we will be able to stand. So we do not know whether we will be able to stand or not, we do not know the nature of our heart. In the book of Jeremiah the Bible says – *the heart is deceitful above all things. And God led them into the wilderness, He humbled them, caused them to hunger, and fed them with manna so that they would know what was in their heart.*

So in the wilderness everything comes out. What is inside comes out. In the wilderness, when he was tempted of the devil, 'If You are the Son of God then...' what was inside came out.

Genesis 16:1-10

¹Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. ²So Sarai said to Abram, "See now, the LORD has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her." And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai. ³Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan. ⁴So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes.

⁵Then Sarai said to Abram, "My wrong be upon you! I gave my maid into your embrace; and when she saw that she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes. The LORD judge between you and me."

⁶So Abram said to Sarai, "Indeed your maid is in your hand; do to her as you please." And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she fled from her presence.

⁷Now the Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. ⁸And He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai."

⁹The Angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand." ¹⁰Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, "I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude.

So many things are there in the first 3 verses. First there is something called 10 years. You have a promise, you are waiting for something, and nothing has happened, 10 years have passed by. Time! We are all prisoners of time. Like I keep saying, one of the kids from Nepali church put it on her DP, 'Time doesn't do anything; it just reveals.' 10 years. Chapter 15 a very powerful chapter where Abraham has a promise, he has a vision of Jesus and he has a covenant. What more do you need? A promise, a vision and a covenant; all connected with a child. And in chapter 16 his wife comes and says, '10 years.' And the issue over here in verse 1 and 2 is the subtlety of the enemy. The issue over here is that, ***²So Sarai said to Abram, "See now,*** (in our modern terms – 'Honey! Listen!) ***the LORD has restrained me...*** so it did not start with you are me, it started with Sarah. We will always bring God into the picture and then the husband or the pastor does not know what to say. And who was there in her house? An Egyptian maidservant.

Remember all the old lessons? Where did she come from? Abraham, did you go to Egypt? Why did you go to Egypt? Because there was a dry season in your life called famine, the wilderness, and when that famine came Abraham buckled under pressure and he went down into Egypt, told his wife, 'You are my sister', Pharaoh's men came and took her and then Pharaoh prospered him, gave him camels, goats, and sheep and Egyptians servants and maidservant and one of them was Hagar (presumption). When God prospers a man, He adds no trouble to it. As soon as he comes out of Egypt

there is strife between his and Lot's servants. Strife has begun over property. He humbles and lets Lot go. But there is an Egyptian maid servant in the house. These are things which we picked up from the world when we slid from faith, went into the world, pick up something, kept it there. This is why we need to go through the wilderness, because in the wilderness these things will come out. Suddenly Hagar will pop up. 'Oh! The Lord has restrained me, but Hagar is here.' And the Bible says – **Abram heeded the voice of Sarai.**

That is the problem, there are many voices. This is the voice in the wilderness, but this is not the voice of God, this is the voice of the tempter. But he doesn't come and speak to you directly. He spoke through his wife. Sometimes he speaks through the husband. Like I said, I was teaching the Nepali church, all temptations do not have the same power. It depends on through whose mouth it comes. It doesn't have the same power. It can be exactly the same temptation, but it doesn't have the power, the power is determined by the vessel through which it comes. So Satan came and spoke to Eve and Eve took, ate and gave it to Adam and Adam ate it.

Now this is not Eliezer, this is not somebody else speaking; this is Sarai speaking. And he heeded to her voice. So there are voices put in our lives. Why did Abraham not enter the Promise Land for years and years after the call of God, because his father stopped him. So that is a very important voice. It is not a voice to be disrespected, but it is an important voice. But if their voice contradicts the voice of God; what is already written in the Scripture, then what do you do? You have to get these pictures right. So you have something happening over here, and verse 3 says, **³Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan. ⁴So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived.**

The issue is this, as soon as you listen to a voice that is not of God, immediate productivity. When you listen to God's voice, your wife is there, 10 years in the Promise Land and no children, years before outside the Promise Land no children, but you listen to the voice of the enemy the girl is immediately pregnant. And you will say, 'Thank God, this is the Lord's will.' No, it is not. So don't look at your success. That is communism - 'The end justifies the means.' That is not true. Actually communist didn't say it; somebody else said it and they have appropriated it. For God, the end is not what is important because He has already determined the end, but the means is what matters. It is not whether you will have a child, I have already told you that you will have a child. But it is more important as to how you will have the child. How you will have a ministry, how you will have a job, how you will have a wife, how you will have a child, how you will have a wife, how you will have a child, how you will have a life, I (God) have already seen the end from the beginning, what I am training you in how you reach there.

He is just not the Author of your faith. He is also the Finisher and the Perfector of our faith. That is our issue. Our issues are with the ways of God. The Bible says, as high as the heavens are from the earth so are His ways, who can understand it? That is where faith comes and faith often involves a lot of waiting. That is called waiting on the Lord. Not just waiting, but waiting on the Lord, because there is a promise and the promise will ultimately come to pass but in-between the vessel is being prepared. But here they goofed up. And what happens is that as soon as she conceived when she saw that she had conceived her mistress became despised in her eyes. **⁴So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes.**

Her mistress became despised in her eyes. Did you see that? Trouble has started in the house. Next verse is interesting, **⁵Then Sarai said to Abram, "My wrong be upon you! We think that these are all sanctified people, they became sanctified later, but they were typical today's household. "My wrong be upon you! I gave my maid into your embrace; and when she saw that she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes. The LORD judge between you and me."** Poor man is now caught. Do you know what he says? **⁶So Abram said to Sarai, "Indeed your maid is in your hand; do to her as you please."** He washed his hands and said, 'You do what you want. That is your maid, you do whatever you want.' **And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she fled from her presence.**

Isn't this the Sarah about whom Peter says – she has a meek and a gentle spirit? Daughters of Sarah. I preached a sermon also on her. But that is later Sarah, this Sarai dealt so harshly with her maidservant that she ran away from the house. What a Sarai! We have to read Scripture to see that God doesn't white-wash anybody's character. As it is He write. I mean, think about today, if it was written about any respectable man who is sitting over here that he went into his maidservant, what will you think about him? That is Abraham, father of faith.

When wilderness comes, when famine comes, when barrenness comes, when pressure comes, you do not know what you will do. So don't sit today and smirk because you haven't reached that point yet. When famine came mothers cooked and ate their babies. You do not know what it is to be that hungry yet. After the white horse men there are other horse men that are coming. Famine is coming, war is coming, death is coming. And you do not know what you will do. That is why you have to believe today. See, ignorance is bliss until you have to write an exam; then you will realize that it is not bliss, I wish I knew. Read the accounts of real history as to what happened. All around the world from the entire western world to the eastern world during the World Wars, what happened when brutal conquerors took over nations? What did the women do? What did the young girls do to eat? They sold their bodies to the invaders because they could not handle hunger.

There is China breathing down Korea and Japan and all. Why are the Koreans and the Japanese still not friendly? It is because when the Japanese took over Korea, the Korean women were used as comfort women for the Japanese soldiers. Do you know what happens when these eventualities take place? What is happening in Manipur? 355 churches have been burnt down to the ground. Do you hear anybody speaking about it? The head of the state PM hasn't spoken one word in 2 month about what is happening. It is not far away. These things will happen, it is already prophesied that things will only get worse, but the question is – when it happens where will you stand? What will you do? When the day of evil comes the Bible says – **Stand!** Will you be able to stand? One of the smartest men in Britain is Nigel Farage, he doesn't have a bank account now, he is wondering what to do. He said, 'In the next few weeks I will make a decision, whether to stay in Britain or leave.' He was the force behind Britain leaving European Union and they just cancelled him; they just sent him a letter saying 'we are closing your account.'

Let me ask everyone of you who are single and working, tomorrow you get a text saying, 'We are closing your account, come and collect your cash.' Let us say you have two accounts, they are closed. You go to every bank and they look at your name and say, 'No Sir/madam, we can't open an account for you.' What is the reason? 'No reason.' What do you do? It is happening before our eyes. That is why we have to learn from all these people how these great men and women buckled under pressure over stupid things which created problems for generations.

Genesis 16:7

⁷Now the Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur.

She is the first person in the Bible with whom the word 'wilderness' is mentioned. Who is the first person to be found wandering in the wilderness? It is Hagar. Hagar is the first person to be found in the wilderness. And verse 8,

***⁸And He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?"
She said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai."***

This does not happen to her once, it happens to her twice.

Genesis 21:14

¹⁴So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and ¹⁴a skin of water; and putting it on her shoulder, he gave it and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba.

First time she ran on her own, the second time she is sent out, but both the times she ends up in the wilderness. So it does not matter, maybe you ran. There are a lot of people your age who ran away and got married and they end up in the wilderness. When I minister to the Nepali church and I talk about marriage, I tell them, "Don't run away and get married." Because that is the tradition over there. 'When I visited last time I saw your children. Where are they now?' 'They ran away.' Two years later they will come back, what happened? He went away with somebody else. So you could be running away, or you could be sent out. Both the times the girl is in the wilderness. That is who she is. Verse 8, ***⁸And He said,*** who said? The Angel of the Lord. I keep telling you, when you see Angel with a capital 'A' it is Jesus. That is the assumption; that it is Jesus.

This is where you have to understand God. Our God is not like other gods. Our God is different. Jesus is in the wilderness, looking for a maidservant who ran away from her master's house who is wandering, who is pregnant. And

He goes in search of her. This is the same Jesus, who 1000s of years later will sit at a well, wait for a Samaritan woman who was married 5 times, divorced and living with the sixth one. If you don't understand the heart of God you will despise His discipline, because whom He loves He chastens. We read *Deuteronomy 8:1-4*, we do not read verse 5. He led them into the wilderness, He caused them to hunger, He humbled them, tested them and He fed them with manna, that man shall not live by bread alone, all that and in verse 5 it says – *Whom He loves He chastens*. That is why He took you into the wilderness, so that He could discipline you and get all that flesh out. That is what is happening to her.

So He is asking her this question - ***8 And He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?"***

Like is said, question are very important. This is the sixth question God asked in the Bible. You are all well-versed by now, right? The first question is – *Where are you, Adam?* The second question – *Who told you?* That is what Abram should have asked, 'Who told you? God promised us seed, and I listened to my wife's voice. I should have gone back to Him and said, 'Lord, You promised me, You gave me a vision, You made a covenant; a unilateral covenant You made with me connected with the seed. And my dear wife, she is a godly wife, she is a good woman, she has put up with all my junk, even when I told that she is not my wife, she still stood up with me and she walked with me all these years, she is a good woman, but this is what she is suggesting to Your promise, is that the way?' he did not ask. Who told you? What have you done? That is the third question. The fourth question is to Cain, the next man in the universe. Why are you angry? The fifth question is also to that man, where is your brother? Now you have the sixth question in modern terms, which is spoken to an unwed, single mother. She is not married, she is just a concubine, ran away, unwed, pregnant, single mother – 'Where are you coming from? Where are you going?' These are important questions.

Do you know what this question means? Wherever you are in life and you are struggling, the simple question is – what brought you here? Don't say, 'Aaiyyo papam.' This is not a time for sympathy. When you go to a doctor, does he say, 'Aiyo papam' (Oh! What a pity)? He will say, 'I want a diagnosis.' Doctor, I'm hurting here. My this and that is hurting. He doesn't say, 'Aiyo papam,' he will ask you to get several tests done and come back and then he will tell you what is wrong with you. She is sitting there. She is probably crying, lost in the wilderness, ran away and God doesn't say, 'Aiyo papam,' He asks, "Where are you coming from?"

Do you really want a solution to deal with your problem? Six months have passed by, second half has begun, so you are at a junction, somewhere at the cross-roads. You need to ask this question – what brought me here. That is what God is asking. Don't blame man, don't blame God, God is not coming to blame anybody, He said, "I took all your blame on the Cross, I blamed nobody. I am coming here to see that you have a solution." So the first question He asked is - where are you coming from, where are you going? What brought you here? Don't fool yourself, learn to ask tough questions. So if I were to ask you, 'Where are you?' you would say, 'I am in the church.' That is not what it means. Are you listening? You may be in Church, but that doesn't make any difference. The question is – are you hearing? You are in church, yes, but are you hearing? Are you hearing what God is trying to tell each one in your own situation?

Questions – where are you? That is why I said, you need to read the red-letter Bible. Do you know the first words of Jesus Christ recorded in the Bible is a question? And He was 12 years old. "Son, how could You do this to us?" mama is all emotional, tears and everything. The Son says, "Why were you seeking Me?" He was not shouting or screaming, He just asked a simple question – Why were you seeking Me? Didn't you know that I should be at My Father's business? You are a person with so many revelations; you had angelic visitations, divine conception, Simeon's prophecy, Anna's prophecy, all these things you heard. Then why were you seeking Me?

Once a class teacher in a class, in a classroom, Math problem, he asked the students to solve it. The whole day children tried to solve it. They couldn't solve it. Final bell rang and the students all left. Classroom was closed, the school was closed. It is night. One mother is panicking, her child hasn't come back. She starts going around to every friend's house, 'Did he come here? Did he come here? Did he come here?' he was nowhere to be found. Then she goes to the school and the school is closed. Those days it was a small school with just 1-2 teachers. She goes to the teacher's house and says, 'My son isn't there.' And the teacher thinks, 'Your son? Let me go to the school. Because I gave him a problem.' They lit the lamp, opened the school, opened the classroom and the boy was there in his place, fallen asleep. And as soon as he wakes up and sees the light, he shouts, 'Sir! I got the solution!' he sat there until he got the answer. The

teacher knew, 'If it is that boy who is lost, I know where to find him. He will be in his classroom with his task.' Until I crack this I am not leaving. Do you know who that boy was? Neolean Bonaparte, in a Math classroom.

Jesus is asking the question – you know everything about Me, you came finished your ritual and went back. You didn't see Me. Where do you think I would be? Playing marbles on the road? Mama, where do you think I would be? You have seen My life for 12 years.

Questions, questions children, questions. God asks questions. And those questions are general questions addressed to all of us. Where are you coming from, where are you going? Do you have a vision in life? If you continue doing this, do you think you will reach here? Promises are given - *more than conquerors, he who overcomes shall reign with me, he shall be a pillar in My temple, eat manna etc*, all this. But looking at the way you are going, do you think you will reach any of these positions? Admission was free because somebody paid the tuition fees. But promotion is not free. You need to get your life in order. Where are you coming from? Where are you going? What brought you here? Please don't misunderstand, 'Oh! He is being so hard on her, poor cast away maid servant.' Today it is all victim mentality, everybody is a victim.

Supreme Court passed a verdict on affirmative action, suddenly all the Law college students want to have comfort rooms for the students, because that verdict hurt them so much, so we shall buy them teddy bears to cuddle. What kind of a generation are we raising? We are talking about United States of America, you age group (the youth). They can't take a verdict so now they need to be comforted. God doesn't do that. He will comfort, but He will comfort you by asking very tough questions. Do you know that if you have a tumor the surgeon scalpel is an instrument of comfort? First he will hurt you, then he will stitch you up, then he will send you and put you on painkillers. But it is an instrument of comfort.

Elijah, where are you coming from? I am coming from the king's presence, gave him my message, He told me to go to Cherith. Elijah, where are you coming from? I am coming from Cherith, because He asked me to go to Zarephath and He has commanded a widow. Elijah where are you coming from? God asked me to rise from here and go to Mount Carmel. Where are you coming from? Where are you going? If God where to ask us a question, do we know? But the narrative changes,

1 Kings 19:2-4

² Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time."

This is what we say in English – the last straw on the camel's back. Elijah broke.

³ And when he saw that, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. ⁴ But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!"

He is suicidal. I was telling Ma, my wife, do you see how many people are suicidal. I said, in all my life I can honestly stand before God and say, never has that thought ever crossed my mind even in the darkest day; to kill myself. Never! Why are people so suicidal today? Here is a prophet who is suicidal. God feeds him and all that, makes him walk for forty days and then verse 9,

1 Kings 19:9

⁹ And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Whether you are a maidservant, or whether you are a prophet, the question is the same – what are you doing here? What brought you here? Take a clear evaluation at the end of six months, half-yearly exam. What brought you here? Are you there where God wants you to be? Is this God's design, appointed place, at His appointed time in your life? Is this where you are supposed to be? Or should you have been somewhere else? What brought you here? So it does not matter whether is it Hagar to whom He shows great sympathy or a prophet God is the same. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. And He is asking the same question. What are you doing here? How did you reach here?

Depressed? Discouraged? Suicidal? How did you reach here? Just a few days back you brought fire down from Heaven, I gave you anointing which made you run faster than Elijah's chariot. How did you reach here? You cannot build your life on yesterday's successes, because today is a new day. Today's challenges are different. The powers of darkness are not going to rest until Christ comes back. Their wrath and anger is only going to increase. The question is – when those days come, will you be able to stand? That is what it means to build and build. *Build yourself in the most holy faith*, Jude will say. This has got nothing to do with feelings. Faith has got nothing to do with feelings. Feelings lie. It may agree, it may disagree but faith goes in that one line, God said, therefore. I stand on it. I believe. And I do.

You cannot escape the wilderness. You will reach there. That is the place where milk and water will be separated. You will realize. And God is not there to condemn. He says, 'I just want you to know that this is all you can handle. If you need to go to the second level you need to have another encounter with Me.'

You can't; don't try anything for God in your strength, it is humanly impossible. By the time you stand before God no man will boast. It is of God, by God, for God. Nothing of flesh will go to that other side.

So, even if like Hagar, it is a sin-driven wilderness. Not Spirit-driven wilderness but sin-driven wilderness God is so merciful and wonderful.

Isaiah 40:1-2

¹"Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God. ²"Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins."

Why are you in Babylon? It is because of your iniquity. 70 years of captivity. Why are you there? Because of your sin. but Isaiah, don't speak hard to them. Comfort My children. Comfort! In verse 3 it is the voice in the wilderness crying out. So, God, when He asks these questions, He is always coming to comfort. We, as pastors, may shout and scream or our tone may sound aggressive, but that is not God. That is why about Jesus it is written that He never raised His voice in the streets. *A bruised weed He will not break, a smoking flask He will not put out.* He is always coming to His children, to comfort and put our lives in order. He saved us, He will carry us through but He can carry us through only if we agree to what He is saying. Not fight Him.

Even to the sin-driven He speaks comfort. Does He throw Elijah out? No. He wakes him up, feeds him, wakes him up again, feeds him and says, "Go to Horeb, that mountain where your forefathers and all met Me there. You come there and I will speak to you." But when he reaches there the first question is – "what are you doing here?" He speaks comfort.

Genesis 42:22

²² And Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not speak to you, saying, 'Do not sin against the boy'; and you would not listen? Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us."

Famine has come. The 10 brothers were doing masti, they were doing whatever they want. People live like that, lot of young people in our church; they don't come to church, they do whatever they want, because it is masti time and one day famine will come. The day famine comes you have to go. You go to Joseph. You don't know Joseph, but Joseph knows you. Oh! You are all honorable men, right? He said, "Put them in the prison for three days." This 'Three days' will keep coming.

Three days later Reuben is saying, "***Did I not speak to you, saying, 'Do not sin against the boy'*** did I not tell you? Who is that boy? Joseph. When did this happen? 21 years ago.

Famine will come. 1st years famine, 2nd year famine, 3rd years famine, David said, 'Lord, I am doing everything according to Your Word, why is there famine in my life?' "Son, this has got nothing to do with you. There was a king before you. He did something and the famine has come." When did they do this? 21 years ago. When is the famine hitting them? Why are you here now? Reuben, Simeon, Levi, all of you, why are you here now? Ask this question – what brought you here? Sin is standing against you. 21 years ago you sold your brother as a slave, you forgot, everybody forgot, but God

hasn't forgotten, that has to be put right. That is the question that Cain refused to answer. What did he say? "Am I my brother's keeper?" Is He coming to condemn? Is Joseph going to condemn them? You know what happens? Joseph looks like an Egyptian, he hears this, do you know what he does? He goes to the other side and he cries. He cries, he is not hard. But he knows that until these things are put right restoration cannot take place. That is why I said, much of our prayers are like twisting God's hands.

So Hagar, Elijah and all these people had to go through these seasons. So the first step is always – diagnose. We have doctors over here, but if the same cases keep on coming, from practice, they don't ask you to diagnose; they will prescribe a list of medicines and 3-5 days. Why there is no need for diagnosis? It is because the first case was the same, the second case also was the same, third and fourth case also was the same, 5th, 6th also the same, symptomatically yours also seems to be the same, so just take these medicines. Nobody gets upset with the doctor. 'Oh, what kind of a doctor, he took only five minutes and he didn't see radiology, scan, lab tests, nothing, he just gave me medicines?' nobody has a problem with that right? But when you come to the pastor and pastor listens to you and says, "This is the problem, just do this." You will say, "Pastor never listens to me." That is because all the previous cases were exactly the same. So there is no need for a radiology test. It is the same, there is nothing new under the sun. Please understand, that is how it works.

God was gentle with Elijah. But you need to rethink, don't thin in the ways of the world. That is the first solution – don't conform to the pattern of the world, renew your mind. You have to read the Bible, because if anybody was asked, 'Does anybody want to go to the wilderness? Does anybody want to go to Thar desert? Sahara desert?' nobody wants to go.

1 Kings 19:4-5

⁴But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!" ⁵Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise and eat."

Who met Hagar at the wilderness? The Angel of the Lord. Who met Elijah in the wilderness? Who met Jacob when he was running from his father's house and was lost in the wilderness? Who met him? The Angel of the Lord. What is it written in *Mark 1:13*?

Mark 1:13

¹³And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.

See, in the wilderness God doesn't leave you alone; there is an angelic ministry you are appointed to. Those are the places, you know those old stories where there are foot-prints in the sand? This young man reaches Heaven and God shows his whole life as foot-prints on the sand. And he looks at those foot-prints and he says, "I remember that day, I remember that day, I remember that day," and then he sees that in some places there are no foot-prints at then and he knows those times and asks, "Lord, why are there no foot-prints? I remember that those were my worst years in my life." And God tells him, "Son, those were the years I carried you that is why your foot-prints are not there." Isn't that what He told about Israel? "I found you in the howling desert and I carried you on eagle's wings and I brought you to Myself." Those are the best moments in our lives where we can actually encounter God. And all of them had that experience.

So are we wandering, lost, discouraged this morning?

Jeremiah 17:5-7

⁵Thus says the LORD: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the LORD. ⁶For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when good comes, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land which is not inhabited. ⁷"Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD.

Don't put your trust in your flesh. Abraham put his trust in his flesh. Sarah put her trust in her flesh, Hagar put her trust in the flesh, now all are in the wilderness. The house has become a wilderness, the girl is in the wilderness, the unborn baby is in the wilderness. And Hagar is a type. There is a Hagar in all of us.

Genesis 16:7-9

⁷ Now the Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. ⁸ And He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai." ⁹ The Angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand."

And He said, "Hagar," He knows you by name. "Lord, do you know who I am?" "Of course I know who you are. The problem is not whether I know you, the problem is whether you know." 'Lord, bless me, bless me, bless me.' Really? What is your name? What is your name? You want me to bless the old man? I don't bless the old man, the blessing is for the new man. I will bless the other one. Your name is Israel. Only Israel I bless. Are your blessings, all your prayers connected with the old man? Or the new man? What is your name? Kruthika or Deborah? What is your name? Brunda or Hannah? What is your name? Whom do you want blessed? Who is speaking? Because there are two voices that come out of our minds and our mouths. Who wants to be blessed? Do you know your name? I know your name. That is not the point, the point is, God is asking, 'Do you know your name?' you are saying, 'Bless me! Bless me! Bless me! Bless me!' but the question is – "Whom do I bless, the old man or the new man? I don't bless the old man, I kill him, I bless only the new man."

Ask yourself this question. These are questions we need to ask, otherwise we are just like the children of Israel, wandering in the wilderness, taken care of by God and die. Why? It is because they wanted the blessings of the old man – 'In Egypt we remember, we ate all these things. Oh! It was so nice! It was so nice, it was so nice.' God said, 'Okay, die here.' I am not taking you back there. I am not taking you there either. They wandered and died.

What is your name? You can't fake your resume with Him. Your company may swallow it, He won't. ***'Hagar, Sarah's maid.'*** That is who you are. That is your job profile. I know your name, I know your job too. 'Hagar, exalted concubine of Abraham!' No, you are Sarah's maid that is who you are. Assistant Manager? No. Salesman that is who you are. Don't put these titles, this means nothing. I know who you are. Jacob I love, but Jacob is a worm, I know you Jacob, you are always wriggling like a worm. You never go straight. But I love you. In My love I will transform you into Israel.

⁸ And He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai." ⁹ The Angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand."

Will you take that solution today? Now I am not telling this to you. What I am asking you is that when God gives you this solution, will you take the solution? What did He tell her? ***Return to your mistress.***

1 Kings 19:15

¹⁵ Then the LORD said to him (Elijah): "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria."

The God of Hagar is the God of Elijah. You are caught in the same situation and the solution is to go back the way you came. Oh no, he is Elijah the exalted prophet God will consider him. God says, "I don't change My ways for anyone. Whether you are a maid-servant or a slave, or whether you are the only surviving prophet in the land My way is still the same – go back the way you came." That is why I said, "We don't understand His ways." We just believe and obey. Go back!

Genesis 16:9

⁹ The Angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand."

Return to your mistress is the first one. The second one – submit yourself under her hand. It is the pill which gets stuck in our throat. It is a horse pill. When you get TB and all they will give you this pill which is as much as half your finger. This is the pill which gets stuck in every Christian's throat – Submit to your mistress. When that pill comes. We like apple pie, pecan pie, we like every pie. But God says, 'None of that will help you, there is another pie called humble pie.' Whatever way you pronounce it you have to eat it. That is where your salvation and restoration lies. First, go back the way you came. Second, submit. Return and submit. Let's go to the most familiar favorite parable in the Bible.

Luke 15:14-19

¹⁴ ***But when he had spent all***, that is the son, One day many will come to the Lord having spent all, they will come to the end of their rope and they will realize that they have come to the end of their rope, then they will turn back and see that God is there, holding the end of the rope, ***there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want.*** ¹⁵ ***Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.*** ¹⁶ ***And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.***

¹⁷ ***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!'*** ¹⁸ ***I will arise and go to my father,*** and go back the same way I came.

When he left his father's house he was in a hurry to know the world. Now he is going slowly back, because on the way back he is eating humble-pie. Go back the way you came, "and I shall submit to my father,"

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

See, principle has never changed anywhere. Whether it is Hagar, whether it is Elijah, whether it is the prodigal son – go back the way you came, go and submit to the authority I have placed over you. That is where your protection, your provision, your power, everything lies. And that is the first simple principle of the Kingdom of God. And we have a problem with that. In Heaven that was the problem and Satan refused to submit and took one-third of the angels down with him. On earth Adam and Eve refused to submit and took everybody down with them. And Jesus came to show the way. The way is – submit. *Even though He was a Son, He learnt obedience by what He suffered.* Even though He was equal to the Father He did not consider equality. He humbled, humbled, humbled finally to death. And is there any further you can go? Yes, the form of death you choose. He chose the most despised form, the death on the Cross. Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place. He showed us a way. There is no other way.

He just did not say, 'Go! Return the way you came. Submit to your mistress!' He doesn't leave you like that, you have to read the next verse. Verse 10,

Genesis 16:10

¹⁰ ***Then the Angel of the Lord said to her, "I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude."***

'Oh! If I go and submit to that harsh mistress...' God says, "Don't worry, even she is under My hand. Your blessings cannot be robbed from her. You just stay under. I will bless your future. That is in My hand. Nobody can take it away from you. You do what I tell you to do, I will do what only I can do. What will I do? I will bless you." We do not want multiplication of descendants, you have to see the principle here. God says, "I will bless you in ways which you can never fathom or understand. But if I have to bless you in that way then you have to do My way." If you say, 'My way or high way.' God says, 'Take the high way' because the old man is a rebel and he hates.

If you have doubts, go home today and read Genesis 3. Do Adam and Eve ever open their mouth and say, 'Sorry'? Even the buffaloes on the road are more polite than the human beings. Every time the scooter has touched the buffalo it looked at me apologetically. If it could speak it would say, 'I am sorry. My master puts me in the middle of the road.' Did Adam say 'sorry'? Did Eve say, 'Sorry'? Did Cain say, 'Sorry'? Submission is a very difficult thing for us.

Ephesians 5:21

²¹ ***submitting to one another in the fear of God.***

Ephesians 5:22

²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

Ephesians 5:25

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

You can't love your wife unless you submit to God's command. Every wife is lovable until you get married to them. Honestly, because you are in love with an image. It is true. And then when you get married you realize, 'Okay, I am getting to know that person.' And everybody is busy trying to change the other person and God says, "Nobody can change anybody, only I can." and reality strikes. That is why you have a covenant, if there is no covenant each one would have run away the second day. So God says, "I am binding you with a covenant." Even God had to bind Himself with a covenant, otherwise God would have left us. Are you seeing how it is? This is the submission for men - **²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,**

It is not 'love your wives'. That is not very difficult, 'I love you.' Every man says, 'I love you' 'You never understand me!' 'But I love you.'

God said, "Love your wife as Christ also loved the church." That is the problem. 'I am not Christ!' well He said, "Be!" every man's answer is that, 'I am not Christ.' but God told husbands. "Love your wives, just as Christ," we don't like these words 'Just as'. Father, forgive us our debts, just as You have forgiven us. Why did You put that over there? Just 'forgive our debts' would have been enough, right? Why did You put that, 'just as'? How do you feel when you hear the word, 'just as'?

All the children are sitting there and smiling, 'Thank God I am not married.' Don't worry, next verse is about you.

Ephesians 6:1

¹Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Ephesians 6:5

⁵ Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ;

Employees, modern day IT bondservants, obey your masters.

Ephesians 6:9

⁹ And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

Assistant Manager, general manager, whatever your title is, do the same thing. So it doesn't matter whether you are a man, a woman, a husband, a wife, child, manager, slave, master, everybody is asked to submit. That is the first law. There is no other way. Hagar, go back the way you came and submit to your mistress [who dealt with you 'harshly']. Did you get it? You have to be careful.

Genesis 21:9

⁹ And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing

Watch this! Listen carefully – if one generation despises authority, the next generation will be scoffers. In the last days, Peter said, scoffers will come. The whole western world is full of a generation who are scoffers of everything that is of God. Why? It is because their parents despised authorities, especially the women. This is what is called as iniquity passing down. Hagar despised and Ishmael scoffed. It doesn't stop with you. Nothing stops with us. It just passes on. See, we don't know to go to deep diagnosis because it starts upsetting us. We talk about transgender movement, LGBTQ and all these problems. But do you know what the mother of all these movements is? It is feminism. Nobody spoke. The mother of every movement you see today began in the 1900s as feminism; emancipation of women. Now the scoffers have risen because the women despised authority. We do not want diagnosis, because it hurts. It gets too close.

You want a solution? Go back the way you came. All you Christian mothers, all you Christian wives, all you Christian workers, learn to submit. All you Christian men, learn to love as Christ, you will raise up children who will not be scoffers in an age full of scoffers. There is no other way. That is why we don't want to go the way we came. And I am literally telling you, if you do not guard your hearts, girls, the more you are educated the more you will start despising authority because that is what education does. Modern day education does not make you humble, because knowledge puffs up, education does not make anybody humble. The fear of God, the knowledge of God makes you humble.

1 Peter 5:5

⁵ Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

Cloth yourself with humility, with submission. Otherwise what God has for us, the Promise Land. What He has for us, a land flowing with milk and honey, houses which you didn't build, well you did not dig, gold and silver and bronze in the hills, cattle you did not raise, everything that I have for you will remain in the enemy's hands, simply because you did not listen to My voice in the wilderness. That was all for you. Another generation will rise who will take it but you?

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸ while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

This is important. I always go back to some of my favorite verses in the Bible. Therefore, this is the reason we do not lose heart, why? We are growing older, the teeth are starting to shake, the joints are creaking, hair is turning grey but we do not lose heart, because inside we see something else. The actual man, the new man, the born-again spirit is changing. If that is not happening you will lose heart. Your outward man is perishing and your inward man is also perishing. You will lose heart.

¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment. You will start seeing life completely differently. You see life completely different. If you have doubts go read the story of Joseph, under the hand of the father, submissive, 'Here I am.' Went into the wilderness, put in a pit, sold as a slave, under the hand of Potiphar, refuse to buckle, refuse to go against his authority, thrown into the prison on a false accusation, under the hand of the prison warden, refuse to move and then under the hand of the Pharaoh. And then he names his two sons. What are they names? Ephraim and Manasseh. What do their names mean? Your entire wilderness, all your pain and everything is forgotten. Light affliction, it just looked like a moment, it is gone, because he has learnt.

Stay where God has placed you, stay in God's order. It was like a moment; it is forgotten. "And He (God) has made me double fruitful in this land." You will not remember those things. But if you don't come God's way, all that you will remember is affliction. There is nothing else to remember but because you went through God's way it is a light affliction.

¹⁸ while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Yesterday we had this wonderful question on the Blood. Listen to that, it was all on the Blood and then about this. And question was about marriage. When we go to heaven how will relationships be? And Jesus had answered that question in *Matthew 22*. Do you know that there is nothing you see in this life which is eternal, everything is temporal. Everything is temporal, even your marriage is temporal – until death do us part. After that there is no marriage, there is no husband and wife there. Even heaven and earth is temporary. Heaven and earth shall pass away. *Revelation 21* says – *I saw a new Heaven and a new Earth*. There is nothing eternal here, except the Word of God. Heaven and earth will pass away but not one dot from His Word. It is forever settled. So the ones who have understanding are looking at things not seen by faith at what God is saying. Looking by faith, because by faith we understand. Famine is temporary, wilderness is

temporary, barrenness is temporary. Your sickness is temporary. Your marriage problem is temporary. Everything that you see is temporary, if you allow God to come in.

There is a woman standing outside, she is picking up sticks, in her mind there is only one thought, 'Death is here at my door. This is the last meal, my son and I are going to eat and die.' There is no one from whom she can borrow, everybody is hungry, everybody is starving, famine has eaten the land and she is thinking death, thinking death while picking up sticks, and that is what she says when she opens her mouth, "We are planning to eat and die." And then the prophet says, "No, go and make a cake for me, bring. This is the Word of the Lord, your bin and your flour, your oil and your jar shall never run out." If you believe the Word of God, the famine that should have killed you was just temporary. It was just temporary. Your barrenness was just temporary. But would you submit to God? Would you submit to God's ways? God had to wait until Abraham and Sarah could no way do anything. Even if there were 100 slaves in the house Abraham is too old now. God waited till then and then said, "You will have a son."

So your barrenness was temporary, all you needed was to bring God into the picture. There is a woman with 12 years issue of blood, there was the issue of blood, she is old, she has lost all her money, went to every physician, now she is at the end of her line, and then she heard about Jesus. So your illness is temporary. Your poverty is temporary. There was a widow whose husband was the servant of the prophet and he died and his two sons were going to be taken as debtors. She comes to Elisha. Elisha says, do this and do that and suddenly she had more than enough. All you needed was God to come into the picture. Everything that you see is temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal, but the things which are not seen can be received only by faith. 'My marriage is about to break!' husbands love your wives. 'My marriage is over!' love your wives as Christ Jesus loved His Church. Submit to your husband as unto the Lord. Your marriage will come back from the dead.

It will come back. Your finances will come back. Your health will come back, because our God is a God of restoration. Everything that you and I see is temporal. The only thing that is eternal is what God says. Hagar is running, but the question is – you are running from your mistress house, you are lost in this wilderness. Where are you going? Where are you coming from and where are you going? Two questions – Practical: do you know where you are going? Spiritual: this is the only man's house who knows the living God, if you run from his house where will you go? You leave the church, you don't come, you don't go to church, where are you going? If Jesus were to come tomorrow, where will you be? There is a Hindi song which goes like - The last trumpet is about to blow, where will you be? And where will I be? If He were to come before the communion service is over, where will you be? Did you ask this question? Where are you coming from? Where are you going?

Where am I going? I keep telling my wife, all the things and problems that consume our minds and people's minds, if Jesus were to come tomorrow all this will not have any relevance. Honestly think about it, everything that is consuming your mind right now, your worries and anxieties what relevance will it have if Jesus were to come on July the 3rd? Will it have any meaning? No. it will have no meaning. And that is how we should live. No one knows the day or the hour when the Son of Man comes. Live expectantly. It will be all fine. He says, 'I will take care of you.' Because everybody is like on the tender hooks here. It is true, the fact is true. She will die.

1 Kings 17:12

¹² So she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar; and see, I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die."

It is a fact, it is true. She will die. But the issue is that neither Elijah nor Jesus comes to the church to let us die. He comes always to give us life. But life is conditional, what does he say?

1 Kings 17:13

¹³ And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son."

"Just do what I tell, make it and give it to me first and then you both eat as well." And then the tone changes.

1 Kings 17:14-15

¹⁴For thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth.' " ¹⁵So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days.

Her famine was just temporary, what was eternal is God. We have been studying the Book of Revelation – from everlasting to everlasting, there is no time there. No sun, no moon, there is no day nor night. I gave you an entire explanation of what eternity is going to look like from our understanding of the Scripture. You don't get tired, you don't sweat, you don't sleep, you have strength forever. There is no day, there is no night. There is no sun, there is no moon. That is eternity. And in that eternity inhabits God, everlasting to everlasting. So God says, don't look at the temporal, look at the eternal and there is only one thing I have that is eternal; it is the Word of God. So the question is, Sarah said, this one said, Jezebel said, what do You say? My flesh is saying this, but what do You say? That is what Jesus asked the disciples and everybody starts leaving, 'They are all going. Peter, Andrew, James and John, do you also want to go away?' Peter said, "Where shall we go? You alone have the words of life." That is what we need to understand. Everybody is looking at the temporal. Who is looking at the eternal and making decisions?

Hagar is stunned. Look at what Hagar says in verse 13,

Genesis 16:13

¹³Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?"

Do you know that she is the first human being who names God? Do you know that? See, we don't understand this God. We talk about all these great ones in the Bible, but the first one to name God according to her experience was an Egyptian maidservant called Hagar. You are the God who sees. 'You saw me in my affliction and You showed me the way.' And she goes back and submits to her mistress.

James 2:26

²⁶For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

There are two parts to it. First there is a 'body' here. There are all bodies sitting here and in every body there is flesh. As the body without the spirit is dead. So the question to ask is – which spirit drives you? Everybody is driven by a spirit, which spirit drives you? For if there is no spirit you are dead. You cannot do anything. So what spirit motivates you? What spirit leads you? What spirit drives you? That is the first question, because whichever spirit you are I yield to will control us. So it does not matter whether it is Hagar, or Elijah. Elijah, who told this lady at Zarephath, "Do not fear, just do as I say," little later would fear and run and another spirit drove him to suicide. Now I want to die! Which spirit is leading you Elijah? Three days earlier it is the Spirit of God who made you run faster than the chariot and a little later another spirit is driving you to suicide. Which spirit did you yield to? Which spirit? There is a body, but every body needs a spirit.

If you take a balloon and leave it over there nothing will happen, but if you fill it with helium it will go up. What made it go up? The spirit in it. You see some people go out on two legs and come back in the evening on four legs because another spirit got into them. They name it 'Sri Laxmi wines' and 'Jonny Wines' but when that gets in you are gone. What happened? You went like a human being, steady on two legs and came back like an animal on four legs. What happened? Something else is controlling you now. So a body without a spirit is dead. So therefore the spirit realm is unseen. What controls you? Which spirit controls you?

Second thing, you say that you believe, faith. Show me your works. You say that you believe, you say that when Jesus comes back you are going with Him. But you never come to church on time, you are never there for worship. There are churches in which I have preached, mainline churches where people come exactly at the time of benediction; they have timed it over the years of practice. When benediction is about to begin, just when the pastor gives the benediction they enter, receive it very religiously and then go down for coffee. And they are expecting to be part of the rapture.

Show me your works. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. You never listen to any message, you never read your Word, you never pray but you are expecting to be raptured. Where? Which spirit is going to take you? That is what he is talking about; there is a body, there is a spirit and there is faith, there is works. Where are your works? There is a way which God has shown us. And Jesus said, "I Am the way." This is statutory warning – *faith without works in dead!* So it doesn't matter, whether it is John or Jesus, will you yield to the Spirit? 'If You are the Son of God...' 'Okay I will prove to you that I Am the Son of God' and He makes all the stones into bread. If He did that He would have yielded to another spirit, not the Holy Spirit.

The entire pressure in the wilderness for Jesus is to yield to another spirit other than the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "No!" He has been given the entire world in a platter, satan showed Him the kingdoms of this world and all the glory of the kingdoms, 'All You have to do Jesus is bend and I will give it to You.' Jesus said, "No dude, I do not submit to that spirit. I submit to another Spirit." The pressure is always to get this body under one of these spirits. If there is no spirit the body is like a balloon without air, dead. The minute you fill it with gas and release it it goes up. The question is not whether it goes up, the question is – what spirit is it taking? That is what God is asking Hagar, "Where are you coming from? And where are you going? Which spirit is leading you? The Holy Spirit? Then go back the way you came and submit to your mistress. You want My Spirit to lead you? Then go back." Elijah, what are you doing here? 'Oh no I am the only one.' "Shuusshhh! Correction! There are 7000 others who did not bow down. I do not want this pity party here. I appreciate you and appreciate your dedication, but let Me make a correction, there are 7000 others who haven't bent their knees to Baal. Now go back the way you came. I have got a problem with your depression. Do you know why you are depressed? It is because you have no friends. You are a very unfriendly character. You lived with that lady and her son, you did not build any relationship, you left him at Beersheba. Nobody seems to be sticking to you, because you are a very unfriendly character. To have friends you need to be friendly. So you know what I am going to do? Anoint these three people and then train that young man called Elisha. Let him walk with you. Learn to fellowship Elijah. Don't be an introvert. You've got a problem that is why you are depressed. That is why you are discouraged because you do not have anybody with whom you can relate. You cannot, I can't change My order. My first words about man are that it is not good for man to be alone and you are alone."

That is your problem, you are alone. Now Elijah will walk the next 18 years with a man called Elisha. And he doesn't want to die anymore. He is still waiting to die. 1000s of years have passed by, while everybody is asking, 'Lord, when will we rise?' he is asking, 'Lord, when will I die so that I can get my new body?'

Genesis 16:8

⁸ And He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai."

We don't tell the whole story. You know when our children were very small, parents need to know your children very well, especially fathers need to know their children very well, because according to Scripture, usually, father is the final authority, right? So when the little one comes to you and says, 'Daddy, can I go play?' you need to realize, this fellow never comes and asks me, 'Did you ask your mother?' yes 'What did she say?' she said don't go. 'That is why you came to me? Go back the way you came.' Lot of people will say, 'I am so intimately connected with God' but they are absolute rebels, they will not submit to anybody, 'I hear only from God.' Even Jesus did not walk that way. If you have doubt read *Luke 2:51-52* what is written about Jesus,

Luke 2:51-52

⁵¹ Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

He went down with them, why? For Him, who is God, to go back with His parents is a journey down, not a journey up. But He went down with them and He was subject to them. For how many years? He was 12 years old at that time, from 12 to age 30, you will see Him next at the age of 30; for 18 years He was subject to them. In the process because He went down and was subject to them, Jesus increased in wisdom. Meaning, if He had not submitting to His Father's order to be subject to two simple godly, but semi-literate parents, He would have never increased in wisdom. Maybe in

stature but not in wisdom. He would not have had favor with God, maybe with man but not with God. Not even His Son could circumvent God's process. Don't try. Don't try, you will just wander and die in the wilderness. He will take care of you, it will be the same food every day, but nothing will change.

Hagar is very subtle, 'Oh! I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress.' Why don't you tell the reason as to why you are fleeing from your mistress? 'Oh! She dealt very harshly with me.' But why did she deal harshly with you? 'HMMMMMM! I despised her.' Okay! You despised your mistress, you despised authority. You despised authority that is the reason. Let's come to reality. So the diagnose is here – 'I despised authority, I could not handle it. My authority was harsh towards me so he gave me the pink slip and now I am wandering around looking for a job.' God says, "Go back and apologize. He may not take you back but you do that for My sake." Send an email – 'Sir, I am sorry I should not have talked that way. Forgive me.' That's it! And then you realize that another door has opened for you because you went back the way that God said is His way.

I know people who came from the Middle East and all, standing before me and crying, 'Pastor, I do not know, I have been working and working, but everything goes down the drain. It is like putting money in a bag full of holes. No promotion, nothing.' I was like, 'Okay, let me just think. Wait a minute. How were you at school?' 'Hehehe! School eh?' 'Yes school. Because I am getting something in my spirit that in school you rebelled against the principal and your teachers. Did you?' Hehehe! Yes! 'Then what did the teacher say? "You will never amount to anything in life" Now stand here and confess, as a servant of God I will release you from that curse.'

Isn't that what God did with Jacob? You want to be blessed, but what did you do with your father? You despised authority. What did you tell your father? You think your father is a joke? You think your father has an inbuilt authority? No, that authority was Mine; I gave it to the father. What did you tell your father?

So I said, 'Stand here, let me pray over you. Let me break it. Otherwise these things will follow you.' Hagar, if you run you will die. You want to live and you want your child to be blessed and have a future? Go back the way you came and come under authority. Yes she is harsh I understand that. But don't worry about it, you just keep your mouth shut and I will bless you. Potiphar was harsh, Mrs. Potiphar was harsh, everybody was harsh but Joseph zipped his lips and kept quiet and in one day he rose. The Pharaoh set him on high and said, 'There is nobody like you in Egypt, the very Spirit of God is speaking through you. Here, take my signet ring, wear my chain. You are second only to me.' Why did that happen? What did this man do? Did he do an MBA. How can you be an only Hebrew in Egypt and come from the prison and become the Prime Minister in one day? How is it possible? What is Joseph's secret? He came under authority; he never, ever, despised authority.

There are God's ways. There is no other way. Everything you look in life is temporal. But there is something that is coming that is eternal. And we are preparing for that. So as we go into communion, remember we are preparing for something eternal. It doesn't matter even if you become the president of America it is only two terms, after that you have to retire. Compulsory retirement. But in the Kingdom of God it is forever and ever and ever. The only thing that matters is what he says – "Well done! My good and faithful servant." Faithful, what? Servant. Well done good and faithful CEO? No. Servant. Even if you were a CEO your heart was always of a servant.

That is why you should read during America's war for Independence. There were these soldiers digging the road, making a road and there is this sergeant with his badge standing there and ordering and shouting at everyone. Another man comes on the horse, he looks around and asks the sergeant, "How come you are not digging?" 'Don't you see? I am a sergeant.' "Oh! I'm sorry sir." And he got down his horse, went down and started digging with the others and after it was done, when he was going the sergeant asked him, 'BY the way, what is your name.' "Don't worry, my name is George Washington. The General." You are a sergeant, right? I am George Washington, but I am a servant.

Jesus is the Son of God, right? Everything was made by Him, for Him, of Him. Everything was about Him. But what was He doing for 30 years? Working on earth as a carpenter, making yokes, making chairs, making benches. When was the last time you stopped and looked at a carpenter and said, 'Wow! What a profession!' did you? Who wants to be a carpenter? "Well done! My good and faithful Servant." For thirty years. When He was baptized the first things the Father says is, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The question is – did He preach? No. Did He worship in the

worship team? No. we don't even know whether He could sing. What did He do? He just did what His Father asked Him to do, "Zip Your mouth, stay with Your parents and listen to what they say. Go to the synagogue every week, never miss a service, just do what the Rabbi says. If he asks You to read then read, otherwise just sit there. You may know the whole Torah but it doesn't matter, just sit there and listen. I am teaching You something. If You want to be the Savior of mankind, first thing – be a Servant."

Hagar, Sarai's maid, go back the way you came and submit. And what does Hagar say? "The God who sees me. Wow!" is that your response, if God were to ask you to go back and do what He asks you to do? "The God who sees me" or "I wish He never saw me"? You see her response? Look at her response, what is God ordering her back to? Slavery. And she says, "He sees me in my affliction and has given me the solution to my problem. He is the God who sees me."

Everywhere you see, repatriation, slavery, all kinds of fightings, France is burning fighting for right to kill babies. Everyone is fighting and here God is sentencing somebody back to slavery and she says, "He is the God who sees me in my affliction." So Hagar is not an ordinary woman, some of the faith of Abraham has passed on to her.

Communion prayer

Father, we just thank You Lord, we thank You for Your Son, because He walked in the way You showed Him. He was not just a King, He was a Servant King. He showed us what it is to submit, He showed us that all the affliction that comes through submission is very temporary but it will produce for an eternal fruit of righteousness and rewards. That everything anyone is going through, here in this church and online and offline, is all temporary because of the obedience to Christ, that eternity is beckoning and You have shown us the way. And at the end of that journey was this Body and the Blood that was shed. The emblems that are before us today, as we part take of it I pray that we will once again humble ourselves to Thy cause. Touch Your people, heal and strengthen Your people Lord. For in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

As we come to the end of the service, whoever is in the wilderness, whatever wilderness it is, different kinds of wilderness – family, finance, office, all kinds of wilderness are there. Don't be like the children of Israel, like in *Psalms* 78:19 they asked this question to God, "Can He spread a table in the wilderness?" they were always despising God, always doubting God. Can He spread a table for us in the wilderness?

Psalm 78:19

¹⁹ Yes, they spoke against God: They said, "Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?"

Another man in the wilderness, David, do you know what he said?

Psalm 23:4-5

⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.

Another man went even further, his name was Moses. You should read *Exodus* 33:15. Do you know what he says? He is in the wilderness, do you know what he says? He fell in love with the wilderness because God was there.

Exodus 33:15

¹⁵ Then he said to Him, "If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here.

He fell in love with the wilderness because God was there. And God is showing him the Promise Land, he says, "No! First tell me, are You coming with us or not?" and the most powerful verses is in the book of Hosea,

Hosea 2:14-16

¹⁴ "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfort to her. God always speaks comfort in the wilderness. Even to Hagar He speaks comfort, "Hagar, I have not come to destroy you. I have come to give life, but there is only one way. Go back and submit." A few years later when she is actually thrown

out, back in the wilderness, He will tell her, "Arise! Lift that boy. He shall become a great nation." And the Word of God says that God was with the lad in the wilderness.

¹⁵ I will give her her vineyards from there, and the Valley of Achor (Remember the valley of Achor, where Achan and his children were?) as a door of hope; she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt. ¹⁶ "And it shall be, in that day," Says the LORD, "That you will call Me 'My Husband,' And no longer call Me 'My Master,

That is the issue with all women, right? Why should I call him, 'Lord and master'? God says that you will call Him, 'Husband.' "You will understand what I Am, you will realize. I will lure you into the wilderness to Myself." And that day we will realize, 'What a waste! I wasted my life. I should have just submitted in the beginning. His intention for me was always good.' Simple – God cannot think bad about His children. He can only think good about His children. Is there any other here who is sitting and plotting how to destroy his children? Anybody? That is what He said, "If you evil fathers know how to give good things to your children, how much more will I?" what will He give you? The Holy Spirit. The body without the spirit is dead. The body with the Holy Spirit is alive. That is the Spirit that led Him into the wilderness and gave Him the power to overcome in the wilderness and when He came out, it was not the same Man who came out. The Man who went in and the Man who came out were not the same Man; He came out in the power of the Spirit.

And even people like Nicodemus came to Him and said, "You must be from God." Isn't that what the woman at Zarephath said? "You are a man of God and the Word of God is in your mouth. His truth." That is what Jehoshaphat say about Elisha? "Is there any other prophet?" they said, 'Yes, there is one man.' who is that? Elisha, who poured water,' what is that man's testimony of 18 years? He poured water for Elijah. Suddenly Jehoshaphat says, "Yes, the Spirit of the Lord is with him and the Word of God is with him. Call him." For you he must have been just the man who poured water, but God is telling me, "That is the only man upon whom I could pour My Spirit, because he was under." That is what He wants to give us - His Spirit without measure.

Shall we stand?

Closing prayer

Father, this morning, we stand in Your presence Lord. So many Lord, every child will be taken into that wilderness. It is a season. But it is so that You can bless us and not destroy us. We destroy ourselves by our stiff-neckedness, by our rebellion, by our false spirituality and our religiosity, our lack of interest, our worldliness, in so many different ways. But to the prophet and to the maidservant Your direction is the same, "What are you doing here? Go back the way you came and submit." Ishmael would become a great nation, Elijah would mentor a great prophet all because they obeyed. And you are speaking to somebody today, if you are willing and obedient you will eat the best of the land. But if you resist and rebel the sword will devour you, the wilderness will devour you, or you can come out of the wilderness in the power of My Spirit. Two stark choices are before us at the beginning of the second half of this year. And I pray Father that all of us will make the right choices, all of us will make the right choices. For You always come to Your people to give life.

Even today, let there be an impartation of Your life into each person who believes. Healing for those who are sick, be healed in Jesus' name. Be made whole in Jesus' name. Let there be deliverance in the house of God. Everyone who came with a disturbed mind, agitated mind, there was a churning of the demonic inside you. I command deliverance in the name of Jesus. Let every spirit that is not of God leave now in Jesus' name. The body for the Lord and the Lord for the body. Let there be a consecration this morning. Let there be a filling of the Holy Spirit in Your people. And I pray Father, as they decide to go back the way they came, like those lepers who as they were going were healed, I pray as they decide to go back and put things in order in their lives, healing will take place, restoration will take place. Doors that were closed for years and months will open. Promotions that have been stayed will come. And they will be able to look back and say, 'Yes. I listened, I believed and I obeyed. Now I look back, my lines have fallen in pleasant places. He restored my marriage, He restored my home, He brought my children back, the prodigals came back home. My master changed completely he is so kind to me now. Everything changed.' It is only because you chose to obey and God was working. So make a resolution today. Don't look at the other person, who is creating trouble in your life. Don't look at them, leave that person into the hands of God. You make a decision for yourself. Sarah is harsh, that is not the question,

you go back, Hagar, you submit to her authority and I will see that your descendants multiply. Nobody can rob you of your blessings.

I pray Father, many will take heart. Husband will take heart, 'My wife is incorrigible, but I will still choose to love. God give me the grace.' 'My husband is a harsh man, but I will still choose to submit, Lord give me grace.' Children will make a decision, 'I will choose to come under authority.' Employees will choose to make the decision, employers will make a decision. And I stand here on the strength of God's Word and say, the blessings will start flowing, the damn will burst open, God will vindicate Himself in your life. Receive that Word of God and go in peace. Thank You Father, thank You Lord. That is what we want Lord, whole lives and whole homes make a whole church, O Lord. That is all we ask, may Your presence dwell in our midst. Thank You Lord. We praise You, we worship You, we glorify You. For in Jesus name we pray. Amen.

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