

The Wilderness

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Father we just come to You this morning as Your children, Your Word says, the whole family in Heaven and earth bow their knees, acknowledge Your Name that You are our Father. We are coming to You as children, as son and daughters. For the exhortation, through Your servant Solomon is, 'Son, daughter, listen to My words.' So, we come to You Lord with the attitude of a child, of a son, of a daughter so that we may hear what You are telling us, what You are speaking to us, what You are exhorting us to be. Touch our ears Lord with the precious blood of Your Son, cleanse our ears and sanctify our ears that we may hear what Your Spirit says for over and over Your Word says, all those who have ears let them hear what the Spirit says. O Balm of Gilead, touch our eyes that we may see. You told the last day's church, Laodicea, to buy from You salve for their eyes because they were blind, they could not see. Touch our eyes O Lord that we may see our own true state and also what is coming. Touch my lips Lord, sanctify my lips with Your fire, cleanse it first, then Lord I pray, grace be poured upon my lips that I might speak Your Word, for no one is worthy to speak Your Word unless You make us worthy Lord. The Word You said, I have magnified it above all My name, the Word You said is forever settled in the heavens, the Word You said was in the beginning with the Father. Touch our hearts that we may believe, we may believe for if we believe in our heart and confess with our mouth even today, we will be saved, that's Your promise. Thank You Father, thank You Lord. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

In the past few weeks, three, four weeks maybe, we've been looking at the person in the Bible, probably one, not probably, one of the greatest prophets in the Old Testament named Elijah and in the New Covenant he is the most important prophet from the Old Testament because he is the forerunner when Jesus came first, it was the spirit of Elijah that was upon John that prepared a people to receive Jesus. He went before Jesus. Before Jesus comes a second time to establish His millennium Kingdom on earth, nobody knows when. No date can be set because He Himself said no man knows the day or the hour, so, nobody can set a date. If anybody sets a day, it is false. All we can do is use the discernment God gives us and read the signs but before He comes to set His Kingdom, His everlasting Kingdom on earth, again it is the spirit of Elijah that will come and then finally in the middle of the tribulation, I believe Elijah will be one of those two witnesses who will literally stand on earth, given power to a man like never before. It is kind of the power that both Moses and Elisha had in the Old Covenant combined. If you read that portion, the kind of anointing and power that is delegated to those two witnesses, unbelievable. So, Elijah is important, okay, and if you look at the ministry of Elijah, whether it is in the Old Testament or in the transition period from the Old to the New as Jesus is on earth and then at the end as prophesied by the Apostle Malachi, it is one purpose – to turn the hearts of people. Turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and turn the hearts of the children to the fathers before the day of the Lord. It's to prepare, prepare.

Last week if you listen, when you get time, I know some of you are really busy, some of you are not busy, some of you are really busy but when you get time, go through the messages, make time, okay. Ultimately, our entire life is about two days. The first day is called the day of death. It is appointed unto every man to die once and the next day is the Day of Judgment. Our entire life comprises of these two days and all that we are hearing, all that we are seeing, all that we are doing is a preparation to that day. *It is appointed unto every man to die once*, except that select few who will be alive when He comes and as the Word of God says, *who have been found worthy to escape all these things and stand before the Lord*, they will not die, everybody else. So, the whole of life is a preparation for that day – the day of death and the day of Judgment. So, it matters how you die, it really matters how you die. Live well, die well.

So, today we will go back to Elijah, the preparation of a man, a man who will prepare a people and then we will have at the end of his ministry, the preparation of a generation represented by Elisha. A generation prophetically Daniel will say, a generation who knew their God and did great exploits and who could not be seduced by flattery by the anti-Christ spirits. A generation will arise like the world has never seen, okay. So, say, 'I want to be part of that Lord.' So, let's look at this man because we have to look at life in the light of Scripture, otherwise, life will not make meaning, we will not understand and we may actually fight against the very things we should fall in line with. You know what, Jesus told the greatest Apostle on the road? "Why do you kick against the goads? You are fighting the very things that are supposed to bring you to Me." And sometimes we don't realize, we might be in life, fighting the very things in life that are supposed to make us into what God wants us to be. So, in *1 Kings 17*, we saw this man, out of the blue, no

genealogy, no background, no resume, we know nothing about this man until thousands of years later Apostle James will say, 'Elijah was a man of like passions, like us and he prayed,' that is where the difference is, the similarity ends. He was like us, but unlike us he prayed. He is a man of prayer, he understands, he was a man of prayer. We will never know unless you read the New Covenant because if you look at the entire recorded life of Elijah, his entire record of prayer is two lines. "Lord, I have done everything according to Your Word O Lord, now prove Yourself" and he is called a man of prayer. You know why? Because if you have a hidden secret life before God, you don't need to speak much in public for God to answer. He answers, He answers. He is a man of prayer and he, out of the blue, he comes, he makes his declaration which God has put in his mouth. No rain, no dew until the Word of the Lord comes in my mouth, then God tells him turn eastward, *1 Kings 17:2*,

1 Kings 17:2-3

²Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ³ "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan.

Get out! That's not what we expect it to be like. After the greatest day of your life, prophetic day of your life, standing before who is who in the kingdom, the king and his retinue making your declaration, the next thing, God sends him into exile. Go to the wilderness, hide yourself. Months, weeks, I don't know maybe years we don't know. A year later, again the Word of the Lord comes, in *verse 8 and 9*

1 Kings 17:8-9

⁸Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ⁹ "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you."

That's what I said, we have to see patterns in the Bible, we have to be very careful. *Hosea 4:6* says,

Hosea 4:6

⁶My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. . .

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; who God is, what is ways are, how does this God work. My people are destroyed because of lack of knowledge. Through the prophet Isaiah, God tells Israel in *Isaiah 5:13*

Isaiah 5:13

¹³Therefore, my people have gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge. . .

In the last days, we are living in the days no longer of IT, that was till 2022, 2023 is the age of AI. We are living in the age of AI and if you do not know the Word of God, a small city called AI will defeat you but if you know the Lord and hear from the Lord you will defeat AI, called Ai in the Bible. You go read Joshua 6, 7 and 8 you will understand how to handle AI. My people are destroyed because of lack of knowledge, because they do not have knowledge, we go into captivity. We will say, 'No, I am not captive, I am free.' Let me ask you, really? Are you free from the power of sin? I'm not talking about the penalty of sin. Are you free from oppression? Can you truly say, 'Satan is under my feet'? Go into captivity. This is a Book of life. As Solomon says, there is nothing new under the sun, everything you and I want to know, how to overcome in life, end up in eternity as an overcomer is found in one Book (Bible). That's why it's called the Bible. What does Bible mean? That we know, that is Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth. That's in humor or seriously but what does the word Bible mean, the Book, that's what it means, the Books.

In this Book, there are two fundamental things you should look for. One, in this Book is the doctrine of Christ the Person; the knowledge of God, wisdom, which is the application of knowledge out of it all comes faith and without faith it is impossible to please God. So it has doctrine, how to live but doctrine alone is not enough, we struggle. We need examples. So, in this Book are the experiences of men good and bad. Starting with bad in Genesis 3, our first parent brought us all down, literally ate us out of the garden. The good and the bad, all the experiences we need both. Please understand we need both, I need doctrine, I need the experiences of people so that we know how to put it together. That's how our entire modern education system is framed. You have theory in the class and practical in the lab and

when you go through both, you actually understand how to make this concept work in real life and God does the same thing. He gives us doctrine and He gives the experiences of people and doctrine, do not take it lightly. In *2 John 1:9-11*

2 John 1:9-11

⁹Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; ¹¹ for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ, the whole thing is called the doctrine of Christ, does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him. It does not mean that everyone who comes to your house, you need to ask them what their doctrine is but if somebody knocks on your door and say, 'I have something to say to you,' because all these people go, all these cults go from door to door knocking and try to tell you, Jehovah's witness are very evangelistic, they will come but if anyone comes to your house to witness, to testify but does not bring this doctrine, ask them first, 'What is your doctrine? You want to share something with me, what is your doctrine?' For he who greets him, shares in his evil deeds. So, don't underestimate the power of doctrine in the Bible. Doctrine is important because, doctrine is the way we think and ultimately how we live and ultimately how we live and ultimately how we will end up. And experiences, after giving us the whole list of people in *Hebrews 11*, *Hebrews 12* says,

Hebrews 12:1-2

¹Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Therefore, we also since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses. These are witnesses who have experienced the power of God in their lives, the doctrine of Christ in their lives, cloud of witnesses starting from righteous Abel who was murdered by his brother Cain onwards, we have experiences of men and women recorded in the Bible and we learn from doctrine and it is from people and we learn from both, how to lay aside two things; the weights and the sin that easily entangles. Why? Because we have to run with endurance the race that is set before us. You have to finish the race because rewards are only for those who successfully finish the race and what we need for this race is endurance, patience, perseverance and endurance. Though we have these cloud-of-saints, ultimately our eye should be fixed unto Jesus. Look unto Jesus, who is the author and the finisher of our faith. If you are in the race and if you are faithful, he is the one who starts you, He is the one who is faithful to finish you. See that you finish your race. You will see there, these are the witnesses.

So, when the church begins in the Book of Acts, in *Acts 2:42*, the first church that is birthed in Jerusalem, they received the Word from Peter very gladly, they are baptized and they steadfastly continued in what first? The Apostle's doctrine, for those of you who are very new hear today, you need to understand why we spend so much time in teaching the Word. Why we spend so much time teaching the Word, I will tell you. In the beginning I said there are two days which are most important in our life – the day we die and the Day of Judgment. When we stand on the Day of Judgment, Jesus says the Father has committed all judgment into whose hands? Into the Son's hands and Jesus said, "I will not judge you, I won't judge you, what you heard on that day will judge you." You know how you will be judged? Not what you heard in school, not what you heard in college, what you heard from the Word. This is the Book by which you will be judged. Jesus probably will not even have to open His mouth because everything will be very clear. All of us will know our life in the fraction of a second. If the devil can take Jesus up to the mountain and show all the nations of this world and their glory in an instance, do you think God cannot show our entire life, everything we have heard, received or rejected in a second, because there is no time in eternity? That's why we spend so much time teaching, *they gathered*, if you read, *daily for the apostle's teaching* and then years later when persecution started and they were scattered from Jerusalem, the Word of God says that they all went preaching the Word because they had doctrine set into their lives, that's why we teach. Whether you receive or not is not the issue, when we stand before God, we will be first judged as teachers whether we taught, then we will be judged as teachers whether we believed. So, each one has to be faithful to what we are called to. So, we need doctrine, remember we need doctrine.

So, for beginners in the Kingdom of God, I will make it very simple then go through the whole mass of the Bible. Read Exodus 20, there are Ten Commandments there, doctrine, concise capsule, right? Capsule - Ten Commandments. Read the Book of Proverbs, one chapter a day, how many chapters are there? How many? Thirty-one chapters, it is concise wisdom of God. You get the daily readings; you see it is very concise Doctrine, then go read Matthew chapter 5, 6, 7 the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon of the Mount takes the entire law and prophets and gives it to you and says, this is what I expect from you, people of grace. This is My expectation. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ, what can grace and truth do? Go read *Matthew 5:2* onwards all the way to *chapter 7* last verse; He is teaching what the kingdom is all about, the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine of the Kingdom. Somebody wrote in the prayer request, 'Help me have a very close intimate relationship first with God.' He teaches us to pray and the first the He said is, "Our Father." Have a relationship, that's why the first thing is relationship. Elijah will turn the hearts of the Father's back to the children the hearts of the children back to the Father. First, is the relationship, can you go to *Proverbs 4:1-3*,

Proverbs 4:1-3

¹Hear, my children, the instruction of a father, and give attention to know understanding; ² For I give you good doctrine: do not forsake my law. ³ When I was my father's son, tender and the only one in the sight of my mother,

Who is writing? Solomon, who is his father? David, who is he writing to? Another generation. Do you know there are three generations here? David, Solomon and to somebody else he is writing and, do you know there is a word that is used here? Tender, it's not just talking about his age, it is talking about the affection with which his father spoke to him. You know what it means? Discipline without relationship will produce rebellion. You know what God is trying to say? He says, "Come to Me first, I am your Father, come to Me, rest in Me, I have taken all your guilt away, I've taken all your sins, I've taken it all, come to Me." He tells Israel, "All day long I stood with outstretched hands and nobody came, come to Me, come to Me," and then listen. And Jesus was very particular about it, right? He was tired and the disciples tried to stop the children, what did He say? "Do not stop the children from coming to Me." So, God speaks, go to Him as a Father starting today, go to Him as a Father, let Him comfort you, then listen to His Words and read this. Faith comes from hearing, but hearing comes from the Word of God. This is the Word of God, in Greek you call it Logos and the hearing part we call it the Living Word or Rhema but Rhema cannot come without Logos. Rhema will never contradict Logos, cannot, get this because in the last days be very, very careful because when Jesus went up the mountain and His disciples asked Him when they were coming out of the temple, they asked, "What are the signs of Your coming?" He said over and over, "Beware of deception," and every deception begins with this words 'God said', or 'did God say?' And that is supposed to be Rhema. In *Deuteronomy 6:4*

Deuteronomy 6:4

⁴"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!"

There will be no contradiction between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, there will be no contradiction between Logos and Rhema. There cannot be, *in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God*. And what did the word say in *Hebrews 10:7*

Hebrews 10:7

⁷Then I said, 'Behold, I have come— In the volume of the book it is written of Me— To do Your will, O God.' "

In the volume of the Book it is written about Me, behold, I have come, for what? To do Your will. The Son, that is the Word will never contradict the Father. How can the Son contradict the Father? The Spirit will never contradict the Son and the Father. What did *Romans 8:27* say?

Romans 8:27

²⁷Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God

Even the Spirit makes intercession for the saints, how? Only according to the will of God. There is no contradiction in the trinity. So, in the last days be very, very careful, if you hear something, if it contradicts this, (the Word), God didn't

He did not speak, why? Because it is written, *"I have magnified my Word above all My name, it is forever settled in the Heaven. Heaven and earth will pass away but not a dot from My Word."* So, guard yourself because the last days are the days of deception, be careful. So, if we get these foundations, these fundamentals, we also look back into our own lives, right, look into our own lives, if we had known these fundamentals, we could have avoided so much confusion, so much grief, so much pain, so much delay in our lives. We could have honestly. So, faith is not in the church or in man, faith is in God and in Christ. In *John 14:1* this is what Jesus says.

John 14:1

¹Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.

That's faith, okay. Lot of people have faith in their church, have faith in your church if your church has faith in God. They have faith in their Pastor, have faith in your Pastor, if your Pastor has faith in God. But when your pastor including me and Pastor Vijay, when we go out of the Word, stay in the Word, let the Pastor go but you stay in the Word. For fifteen years I have said the same thing. Stay in the Word, believe in me. So, when sent His Son other than the big purpose, that is Atonement, the other primary reason He sent Him is that we would know how to walk in the Word, how to live this life of faith, how to live in the Word. That's what *John 1:14* says

John 1:14

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

This is what God ultimately at the end wants to make everyone. If you want to be full of glory, you don't need a halo behind your head, you don't need to be a superstar or a megastar, all you need to be is full of grace and full of truth, okay. So, keep your eyes fixed on Christ Jesus always because all the saints could have erred even though all their records are not mentioned, there was only one Man who was perfect in all His ways, it was Jesus. So, God's intention, when you read the Word of God, now you have all kind of dreams and all but most of it has nothing to do with God or the coming Kingdom. We call it vision, mostly it is ambition and we make decisions based on ambition and say 'God told me.' Years later by the time we realize, 'What a goof-up I made!' you have lost so much time but God being so patient and merciful will still pick us up, wipe those tears and wounds and get us back on track. That's what I said, what an awesome God. But His intention has never changed. What is His intention? *Romans 8:29*, understand, this is His vision for everyone.

Romans 8:29

²⁹For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined, put this thing over there, mark, to be conformed to the image of His Son. To be conformed to the image of His Son. He is relentlessly working on us. There's a story told about Michael Angelo probably the greatest sculptor ever. He was working on a statue, you know those days in Italy, you have Patrons who are big lord, because they had the money and others had the talents, so you need a patron, his patron was walking by and he was working on his statue and the patron looked at it and said, 'Oh! Look at the nose!' he just made a comment, 'Look at the nose.' Michael Angelo looked at the nose and he realized the nose, something is wrong with the nose, the patron went somewhere, came back eight hours later and you know what Michael Angelo was doing for eight hours? Working on the nose. His patron did not like the look of the nose, the artist for eight hours was trying to fine tune the nose. God has already decided, whom He foreknew He has already predestined, this is my destiny. You know what destiny is? We are destiny's children and this is my destiny, all He foreknew, He has already predestined this, we will be conformed to the image of His Son. You can block Him, you can oppose Him, you can fight Him, but it is better to fall in line. Predestined, it's an awesome word, right? We are all predestined people, foreknew by God. David understands these mysteries and he is writing this Psalm with his mouth open.

Psalm 139:16

¹⁶Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book, they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.

Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. He says, even before I was really formed in my mother's womb You saw me, what else did you see? And in your book, they were all written, the days fashioned for me. What is the day today? 18th of June. Do you know in God's Book for everyone, nineteenth is already recorded including what all each one of us will do, everything is written. 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd till the day we die, everything is already written, because whom He foreknew, He has already predestined that they will be conformed to the image of His Son. That's what He is saying, when as yet there were none of them. This is who God is. It is from these words we receive our comfort. In Romans 15:4,

Romans 15:4

⁴For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

That's what. That's what Scripture - - when we go through the doctrine, go through the experiences of people, tally with ours and where they agree, we are good, where they don't agree, we ask God's grace to keep changing. You know what it gives us? It gives us hope, it gives us patience. It gives us comfort, it gives us hope, because that's our destiny, that's our destination. If you do not know your destination, how will you know your destiny? Do you know one day, that's what I'm dealing with in the Nepali Church, Genesis 16. One day Abraham created, goofed-up his home and Sarah is acting like a typical Indian mother, chases the maidservant out of the house. Maidservant also, her tail went up, Sarah decided, I'm going to snip your tail off, Hagar as we say in Hindi, Hagar ran and when she runs, the angel of the Lord meets her and asks her a question. The question is this. He said,

Genesis 16:8

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."

Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from? Where are you going? The sixth question God asks in the Bible. Do you know where you are coming from? Do you know your destiny? Do you know where you are going? Do you know your destination? Or are you like Albert Einstein? Albert Einstein got into a train and he lost his ticket, the ticket conductor came and said, 'Sir, your ticket,' he searched in all his pocket everywhere, then he got on his fours, and he was looking under the seat and the conductor said, 'Sir, it is okay sir, we all know who you are. Sir, it is okay, you don't need to look for the ticket.' He said, 'Dear sir, I know who I am, you know who I am but I don't know where I am going. I am looking for the ticket to find out where I am going.'

Do you know where you are going? God's children, do you know where you are going? Are you ready to go there? Are you prepared to go there? Whole of life, after salvation, is a preparation for that destination. You have to get out of this world. The children of Israel got out of the Egypt and they were on the way to the Promised Land, their destiny and their destination was the Promised Land, a land flowing with milk and honey. God saved us out of this world, where are we? Next time we have a funeral like we had on May 25, read what is written on that van in which the mortal remains go, 'Heaven-bound Services'. That's what the church is. This is a heavenbound services, we are preparing you to go to Heaven. Heaven bound services, that's where we are going but you need to know what you are going to be there so you know what the preparation is like. It's not like today, you do B.Pharm. And you end up in IT, you do MBA and you are doing something else, you studied one thing, you are doing something else, no. God doesn't do like that. He's not filling empty slots over there. He is preparing a set of people. In *Revelation 1:5-6*. Five talks about how the Blood of Jesus has washed us from our sins in His own Blood and then say in six, He has made us.

Revelation 1:5-6

⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, ⁶ and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Your eternal destiny of every child of God, what is that? Kings and Priest of His God and Father, to Him be the glory and dominion forever and ever. That's what is happening here, that's what God is preparing all His children for. You are what

He has made us. Every Monday and Friday mornings we are doing an in-depth detail, verse by verse study on the Book of Revelation and we have reached till seven, tomorrow will be eight. Go through it, it is preparation. It is not an ordinary Book, it is a very powerful Book. The end of the Book, when you go to the last chapter, eternity has begun, the millennial reign of Jesus Christ is over, eternity has begun, the Son has brought every enemy under His feet, including death, has been thrown into the lake of fire, now he hands the Kingdom to the Father so that God can be all and in all and the reign of the Father begins forever and ever and this is what is written in *Revelation 22:3*

Revelation 22:3, 5

³And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. ⁵ . . . And they shall reign forever and ever.

That is destiny, that is destination. The truth is that none of us are fit for the job. None of us are fit for the job, we have to be made fit. All that we are going through is the process of preparation of every individual person. Sometimes, we confuse and we get obsessed with the place and not the person. Don't worry about the place, in *John 14:2* is the place

John 14:2-3

²In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

You don't have to worry about the place, He is preparing it but "If I go and prepare a place for you. I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am there you may be also." Verse 3 is completely different, it is talking about you, me, we. It is talking about the persons, this is the difference between a house and a home. We are so busy preparing houses, everything has to match, the color the furniture, all that is good but the problem is, what are the kind of people who are living inside there? Do you have peace? Do you have joy? Do you have real, good fellowship relationships? It is good to have a good house, it is better to have a great home. All houses are not homes and all homes don't need a house. And even Abraham Isaac and Jacob lived in a tent. So please, get this clear. In the same way we get so obsessed with ministry, 'Lord You use me, Lord use me,' that is ministry, we don't get so obsessed with being the minister who God can use, becoming the person God can use. To young people, Paul writes to a young person called Timothy, 'In a great house there are many vessels, all kinds of vessels. If a young man cleanses himself, he will become a vessel of honor.'

2 Timothy 2:20-21

²⁰But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. ²¹ Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor,

How God uses you, leave it to Him. Our entire obsession should be, 'Lord, not about the ministry that we do. It is becoming the minister according to Your heart.' Our obsession should not be about Heaven and how many acres I will get. What kind of a house, I've already got an architect, I'm designing here. 'Forget about it,' He said, 'I am preparing.' But Heaven is a prepared place for prepared people. That is what you see. Elijah comes, man of prayer and passion and he prays and then God speaks, he stands before the king and the palace and probably the entire retinue and he speaks boldly and fearlessly and as soon as he finish speaking God says, "Get away from here," that's what He says, "Get away from here, turn eastward and hide." The next three and a half years is the preparation of Elijah to be the minister who will fulfil God's will in his generation; the preparation of a man.

So, we look at these pictures of different saints in the Bible including Jesus Christ, the amount of time, the detail God takes to prepare a person. He's gone, he's now hidden. For the next three and a half years, nobody is going to hear, in obscurity, in the wilderness called Cherith, in the wilderness called Zarephath he is hidden, yet God is working on him. Can you remain hidden? Can you remain obscure? No Twitter account, no Facebook, no Instagram, no counting every day first thing in the morning, how many followers, how many read my tweets which has no sense. Can you remain in obscurity and allow God to work? These are great men of God, even His own very Son for thirty years no one saw Him. Living in obscurity, not just living in obscurity, living in a despised place. Obscurity plus despised because the first thing a good guy responds when he hears about Jesus of Nazareth, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Can you stay in a

place like that? Can anything good come out of prison? Oh! Tremendous things have come out of prison, tremendous men and women of God have come out of prison. God didn't even change the format for His own Son. Hebrews 5:8 writes like this.

Hebrews 5:8

though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

That's why the prosperity gospel is so popular because in the prosperity gospel, there is no preparation, there is no suffering. Name it, claim it and blame it. Nothing there and those churches are packed. There is no demand, except for money, there is no demand, nobody is being prepared for anything, everything is earth bound, not heavenbound services. They hold earthbound services. It is all about now. Be careful. It is the making of a man and what is the man going to eat in the beginning? Bread and meat in the morning, bread and meat in the evening and drink water from the Brook, for how long? We don't know, until the Brook dry, when did it dry? We don't know. Often God's providence in the lives of people who have surrendered to His working does not meet our expectations because, those who have surrendered to His will and He is working on them, He is not supplying their wants, He is supplying their need. He knows what I need, He knows what you need to be Heaven ready.

That's why I said, sometimes we are fighting the very things that will make us ready for Heaven. It doesn't fit; His providence will never fit our human carnal expectation. Go to Cherith, I have commanded Ravens to feed you and drink from the Brook. Lord what! Providence of God, Ravens? Then after the Brook dries, arise, go to Zarephath. What Lord, Zarephath? "I have commanded a widow, a poor widow to feed you." His providence doesn't meet with our expectations and so many people are discouraged and depressed not because God is not God in their lives but because they haven't understood His providence because He is working on you. They have confused need and want; my God shall supply all my greed. No, all my need. And He alone knows what I need. He knew what Elijah needed, He knew what the children of Israel needed in the wilderness. He alone knows.

That's why the first thing to understand and acknowledge and walk in the will of God is to offer your body as a living sacrifice because all the need we storm heaven with is connected with the body, from daily food, to a husband or a wife. There is no marriage in heaven, I have told you many times. So, why do you need a husband, on earth. 'Lord, I am so lonely,' and we quote scripture for it. 'It is not good for man to be alone.' You are teaching God Scripture now. It is good to be married, I'm not discouraging you, but I'm saying surrender so that you will get a man after God's own heart, not your heart. Many of you are in trouble because you got a man or a woman after your heart and you didn't realize that the heart was deceitful above all things. But as a Father, He is going to give us what we need and take us on that route and if we agree and not rebel against His Spirit, who is the guide, the counsellor, the empowerer, He will teach us and help us to get rid of every sin and every weight and build into us endurance so that we finish the race, like an overcomer. That's the obedience that comes by faith. That obedience can be forged into us old time rebels only in the wilderness, nowhere else.

So, wilderness is a spiritual state, it is not necessarily a place, it is a place or a spiritual state where you have no control, only God has. Where you don't get what you want but you are only given actually what you need and you don't like it. Elijah is being prepared in the wilderness, that's what Cherith is called. Cherith means a place He's chipping away, cutting away then from there he's put into Zarephath, the crucible or the furnace where God is melting away. Did you know this man needed three and a half years preparation for one day to stand before the powers of darkness, for one day he needed three and a half years of preparation? And for the Son of God to stand before every power in Heaven and earth and to bring them down, He needed thirty years of preparation because He came in the flesh. One day. Jesus's entire life could be put into four hours, He's hanging on the Cross, four hours and at the end He says, it is finished. For those four hours, God had to prepare His Son in the obscurity, in a despised town called Nazareth for thirty years.

Salvation is the easiest thing on earth. If you repent and you believe in your heart and confess the Lord Jesus Christ, you are saved. But to be an overcomer is the most difficult task on the earth. God has not made it easy for His Son or anyone of us, but it is possible. Elijah in the wilderness. Look at the people in the Bible. Joseph in the wilderness, thirteen years forgotten. Moses in the wilderness, forty years forgotten. Israel in the wilderness, David in the wilderness. John the Baptist and John the Apostle in the wilderness. Jesus in the wilderness. So, everybody you see in the Bible who you can

put in the bracket as an overcomer could not escape the wilderness, so how do you expect to escape? If you think you are not in the wilderness don't worry it is coming. Right now, many of you are in a cocoon because you have a covering, you are protected and taken care of, one day it will be lifted. When it is lifted you will understand what it is to be led by God because only those who go through the wilderness, successfully, can become authentic voices of God in this world, only they can become authentic witnesses. That's what I said, even God's own Son had to learn obedience. We try to short-circuit the process, it doesn't happen.

Now, we look over here. Okay, let us be honest, except few people like Pastor Vijay and all, let us be all honest. We all came through school, when we came through school, we all had the same subjects, but honestly if our parents who were all Indians pumped into our heads, 'Dear son, dear daughter, become doctor. Dear daughter, become a doctor', but, there are only four doctors here. Doctor David, Doctor Beulah, Doctor Sushma, Doctor Richard, only four doctors what happened? We all came through the same school because you realized, you did not have the stuff in you to become one. It needed endurance. Everybody's dream was same, everybody was pumped into, your destiny child is to become a doctor but you didn't become, why? Have you noticed the higher you go in education, the smaller the number becomes? We call it higher education but we never talk about numbers. So, everybody has got this teaching that everybody is going to be an overcomer, a king forever. Admission is free, promotion is not. So, fight for it, don't get discouraged. Take your eyes off things that are below, keep your heart and mind on things that are above and look through the Word, ask the Spirit, listen to the teaching and find out, what is important for God. That is what Jesus said, seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, don't worry about all these things, it will come. What you need I will add, but keep your focus, put your nose towards heaven.

Look through the experience, in this cloud you see, do you see this cloud? Do you see righteous Abel, do you see Enoch, the first man who was raptured, he had to walk three hundred years with God before he could be taken. We always talk about the fact he was taken but the fact was that two hundred and ninety-ninth year, he was not ready to be taken. Look at the cloud of witnesses, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, look at these witnesses, learn from their lives, where did they get it right, where did they get it wrong, and through it all, overall, you see the patience, the love, the kindness, the mercy of God, how patient He was. So, you have a promise. He has made us kings and priests to His God, unto Him. That's the promise; the promise is connected with a position. What is the position? Kings and priests, you will function as kings and priests. In-between is a big line called process. We love the promise and we love the position but in between is the process. You see when you go these graveyards, you have tombstone written whatever is the name, born 1947 then one line and died so and so year, this one line is an entire person's life, one line, that is called the process. Now, we are not talking about your IT process, and many of you are struggling in some of your companies because the process changed and you don't know the new process. So, you got saved, you got so happy like I was happy the day I got saved and that week I got saved but I did not know a Stranger whom I do not know, who knew me very well got in. That is *Malachi 3:2*

Malachi 3:2

²But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like launderers' soap.

Who can stand the launderer, the refiner as He was called in the Old Covenant? He comes and Jesus is very nice, He will say, "I will send you somebody just like Me, you will never be orphans, He will be the Counsellor, He will be the Guide." You know what He is? The refiner and the launderer. He begins His work and most of us fight the very hands that feed us. We are not fighting the Devil, many, many people in their lives are not in any spiritual battle fighting the Devil, they are fighting God who is trying to change them in the image of His only Son. So, God doesn't short-circuit, He doesn't change the process. Look at His own Son, how it is written in three different gospels - Matthew, Luke and Mark. Look at it.

Matthew 4:1

¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit 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,

Mark 1:12

¹² Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness.

He was led by, He was led up and He was driven. He was led by the Spirit, led up into the wilderness by the Spirit and driven by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness. Who is this? The Son. Talking about Israel in *Deuteronomy 8:1-2* where there testing ground was. Israel who came out of Egypt, we who came out of the world of sin.

Deuteronomy 8:1-2

¹“Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers. ² And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

See, only the wilderness will reveal what is in our heart. See, honeymoon is not forever. Once you come back from the Honey moon the real life begins, then what is in the heart comes out. So, don't get upset about what is happening in your homes, just learn these things are coming out. These things were always there. It was there when you were in Egypt, when we were in the world. God saved us from the world but that does not mean the world left us. So, He brings us into the wilderness as an individual, He brings us into the wilderness as families and when these troubles begin, what is inside comes out. You'll say, 'Where did this come out from?' Don't worry it is nothing new, it was just hidden, it was in you, everything comes out. Remember that old illustration I showed you? I got a young man to come here with a full glass, then I came and I told him to come and push me and the water spilled and the water was in my hand spilled on my shirt. Then I asked you all, why did the water spill on my shirt and you all said because he pushed me, I said, 'no.' It is not because he pushed me, it was because there was water in the glass. If the glass was empty he can do whatever, nothing will spill on me. So, people who push you, God uses them to show what is in you, it comes out and you need to realize, thank You Lord, I didn't know this was inside me but you can push the Son of man to the extreme, strip Him, make Him naked, whip Him, nail Him on the Cross, He open His mouth and forgives His enemies because what was in came out. Every time He opens His mouth in extreme circumstances, what is in is coming out.

That's why we are in the wilderness. God has to take every child of is, there is no short cut called Egypt to Promised Land, no shortcut. The question of how long you will be in the wilderness is determined by two parties. Sometimes, with the servant of God it is decided by God, sometimes it is decided by you. It was two years journey, but it became forty years. So the question is this, can we go through the process or will we fight? Look at *Nehemiah 9:19-20*

Nehemiah 9:19-20

¹⁹ Yet in Your manifold mercies You did not forsake them in the wilderness. The pillar of the cloud did not depart from them by day, to lead them on the road; nor the pillar of fire by night, to show them light, and the way they should go. ²⁰ You also gave Your good Spirit to instruct them, and did not withhold Your manna from their mouth, and gave them water for their thirst.

So, they too were led in the wilderness by the Spirit, by the same Spirit who led His Son into the wilderness, so is God partial? No, He is not. It was the same Spirit.

Isaiah 63:13-14

¹³Who led them through the deep, as a horse in the wilderness, that they might not stumble?" ¹⁴ As a beast goes down into the valley, and the Spirit of the LORD causes him to rest, so You lead Your people, to make Yourself a glorious name.

Do you know why He is leading us through the wilderness? So, that when we come out the way we should come out, He receives glory, so that He can say, "This is My son, this is My daughter in whom I am well pleased." He receives glory. You see, you get a distinction, you get a medal, you are happy, you jump, then you go home and ask money from your father or mother to go out with your friends and celebrate, two days later it is over but for your father and mother it is put there in the case which is to show, called showcase and every visitor who comes, whether a stranger or known one,

they will say, "My son." Who got the glory? Parents got the glory. If we finish well, who gets the glory? God gets the glory, Jesus gets the glory. Length is determined by us and God. Moses was driven into the wilderness when he went into the wilderness, do you know what is written about him? He was trained in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, mighty in words and deeds and he was a short-tempered angry man. That is what he was. When he came out of the wilderness, 40 years later, it is written that he was the meekest man on earth to whom God could speak face to face. The question is – what made him meek? The wilderness.

Joseph was in the wilderness of Egypt. Now he is in the wilderness of Egypt. Came out after 13 years. Now he is the prince of Egypt. Do you know who he is? He is the most merciful, forgiving person living under the heavens. What caused him to be that man? The wilderness. David comes after being chased for 14 years, roughly 14 years, and when he comes out of the wilderness, he is God's anointed king, a man after God's own heart. When he wins his battles the first thing he says is, "Is there anybody from the household of Saul (his mortal enemy, who put him in the wilderness for 14 years) to whom I can show grace?" what made him that man? The process.

Do you know when Nabal sent his servants back by saying, "Ah! Tell him to go! I am not going to give him anything." What did David say? "Strap your swords, let's go. We will finish them off." He wasn't yet ready to be king. God said, "Few more years. You are not ready. You are My king; not the people's king. People need proud, short-tempered, angry peacocks. But My soldiers, My kings, My priests are made of different material. You are not ready. Stay there." So learn through these people, so that you are able to identify, 'Okay I am also going through a wilderness season, I feel abandoned, I feel alone, I feel despised, I feel that nobody cares all my dreams have gone down the drain. What is happening?' you are being prepared. If you have a promise, you are being prepared. You are being prepared.

That is what *Psalms 105* says, about Joseph.

Psalms 105:17-19

¹⁷ He sent a man before them—Joseph—who was sold as a slave. ¹⁸They hurt his feet with fetters, He was laid in irons. ¹⁹Until the time his word came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him.

He had a promise, he is going through the process and then the word of the Lord was testing him constantly. Can you imagine? He gets the dreams at 17, and you make him king, this peacock is who is walking around with a multicoloured coat, who is going and telling his father all the time what his brothers are doing, do you know what kind of a king he would have been? He was not ready. He had to go through the process from the father's house, to the pit, to slavery in Egypt, to the dungeon, then he was ready.

That is the same thing – Moses, who thought he could do everything, when God came to him he said, "I can't do anything." And God asked him just one primary question, "What is in your hand?" 'My shepherd's staff.' By now we know what happened. But read these two verses,

Exodus 4:17, 20

¹⁷ And you shall take this rod in your hand, with which you shall do the signs." How will you do the signs? With this rod. This is the rod. With this rod you shall do the signs.

²⁰ Then Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the rod of God in his hand.

So what is this rod of God? The rod of God is the sum total of the experiences of Moses for forty years in the wilderness which God will use for the rest of his life to lead His people and bring them out of bondage. That is your wilderness experience. The rod of God. Take it and get My people out. For forty years that is what he has been; the shepherd. God said, 'In the wilderness I have prepared you. That life in the wilderness where you have learnt to become My man, that is what will do signs and wonders.' Do you know what wilderness is? Wilderness is the place where the old man dies. The old man will never enter into the Promise Land. The old man will never enter into Heaven. He has to die. And the place where he dies is called the wilderness.

You know David? All those years David, before he ascended the throne most of his life was in the wilderness. Do you know what God says in *Psalms 78*?

Psalm 78:70-72

⁷⁰ He also chose David His servant, and took him from the sheepfolds; from the wilderness; ⁷¹ From following the ewes that had young He brought him, to shepherd Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance. ⁷² So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.

Where do you learn these things? To become king God used that wilderness to prepare David to become His king. Do you see that? The pattern has never changed for anybody. I know, because I am your pastor I know, even many listening online, you are going through your terrible wilderness, many of you. You do not know what to do. My question is – if sin has not driven you into the wilderness, if it is God, hang in there. Allow Him to do His work. There is something incredible that happens which is recorded in the Gospel according to Mark. Some miracles are repeated in different Gospels.

Mark 6:31-33

³¹ And He said to them, “Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.” For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. ³² So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. ³³ But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him.

Where are they? All in the wilderness. And Jesus looked at them, the Bible says that He has compassion on them. He says, “Let us feed them.” Therefore the difficult two questions, the little boy gives his lunch, Jesus multiplies it and they were all fed. When they were all fed and finished and depart, one commandment was given to the disciples. What is that?

John 6:12

¹² So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, “Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.”

Why? Because that is the bread you received from God in the wilderness; the lessons you learnt. Don't lose even a fragment, because it is holy. That is what prepares you for the life ahead. Don't drop it, carry them all. If you read the entire Gospels, Jesus ate at many places, He never asked them to pick up the fragments, only in the wilderness, because there are wilderness lessons.

Isaiah 40:3-4

³ The voice of one crying in the wilderness: when you are in the wilderness there is a voice that is crying: “Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth;

In the wilderness you will see this thing, all of us, in the bad old days, who grew up watching movies, you don't realise that these patterns were always shown in movies. It is actually a mirror of human reality. One rich proud woman gets married, she gets lost in the wilderness or something and when she is being fed something in the very simple plate and all, first she will proudly push it away, 'No!' she is hungry but she cannot eat that because it is below her dignity. So what was in came out, high mountain was discovered. He says, 'It will be brought low.' Finally when your stomach starts hitting your backbone, you go quietly when everybody is pretending to sleep and you take the leftovers and you eat. What happened? In the wilderness the mountain was brought down. When the wilderness experiences come, when famine bites, when isolation comes, when you are despised, when you are rejected, all these things will be discovered. And God will say, 'Deal with those things because only when these things are dealt with, then only I can come with My true glory into your life. I want to come, I want you to experience Me, but all these things are standing in the way.'

You have to deal with these things. That is what he is telling Saul, “Saul, Saul, why are you kicking against the goads?” So you might be in the wilderness, as a young man you might be in the wilderness. Maybe there is a young man here, all the 5 girls he has proposed have rejected him. 'Lord, is anything wrong with me? Why does everybody say No?' Lot of young people are there, man or woman, anybody. Maybe it is in your marriage, you are going through the wilderness; you are like God in the book of Isaiah, 'I've waited all day long for my husband, but he never comes home' or 'He comes home but he never sees me.' Or it could be the other way round. It could be a home, it could be in the office, it could be

your business, it could be a school or your college. I know what it is; I grew up for many years in my life as the only brown Indian student among 500 others who were not of my origin, not of my language, nor my colour, nor of my tongue. They were all fair and had clear skin, not hairy like me. And here am I with hairy arms and they called me a bear –“Baaluu aande cha! Baaluu!” that is how I grew up.

People go through all this, everybody. You do not realise why these things have to be dealt with, it is because sometimes these are the reasons why you do certain things, and God says, ‘I don’t want you to do things. I want you to do things for the right reason.’ Remember the Nizam of Hyderabad, the world’s richest man that he was, but when he was Nizam and he wanted to buy a Rolls-Royce they refused to sell the Rolls-Royce to him. Why? Because he was an Indian and British were ruling India, they refused. So he used a white agent and bought around a 100 Rolls-Royce and left them in his garage to rot. Why? To show them. What a waste of money! Every high mountain shall be brought low. You do not know why you do the things which you do. The reason, the wilderness will reveal it. God puts us through the process.

A highway for God has to be made. But before the high way that can be made for God in His splendour and His glory and His fullness can come, there is a voice that is crying. Listen to that voice. It is the voice of the Holy Spirit, in John, telling us, the voice in the spirit of Elijah telling us, “Get rid of that pride. Fill those valleys. This road is very rough. Make it smooth, this is too crooked make it straight.” He comes. Through another Old Testament prophet He says, “I am the plumb line.” You know after the mason has done everything he puts the plumb line. He looks and he checks and keeps smoothening it and fixing it, ‘It is not straight yet.’ God says, “I am the plumb line. You are not straight yet.” ‘Lord, why me?’ “It is not about you My child. It is about Me, I want to come in and stay in you in all My glory.”

Do you know your destiny? Do you know your destination? ‘Hagar, Hagar, where are you coming from? Where are you going? That is the only house that knows Me, go back to your mistress and submit to her. Don’t die in the wilderness. Go back.’ The questions God asks. In the wilderness, please remember there are other voices too.

Luke 4:3

³ And the devil said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.”

Who said? The devil said. When you are in the wilderness it is not just one voice. There are other voices. Be careful, learn to discern who is speaking. That is why I said, be very careful. Don’t confuse Logos and Rhema. Rhema will never contradict Logos. The Word of God is my surety. *By two immutable things God has sworn Himself* – God does not lie, God does not die. Read the book of Hebrews, two immutable things, unchanging things God has sworn, the Bible is His Word – ‘I do not lie’. If Logos and Rhema contradict, God is a liar. And He never dies, forever and ever and ever. He has sworn.

So be careful, there are other voices in the wilderness. And they can come with nice clerical garments. Do you know why America fell? It is because the Church fell. Not because of any other reason, as long as the pulpits were true and preached the Word of God America was strong. But when the pulpit was compromised and deception came in America went down. They are still trying every other solution; political solution, economic solution, military solution. Nothing will work. If America has to rise, come back, the pulpit has to be set right again. There is no other way; for God the solution is spiritual. It is true as an individual too. The solution is spiritual. Come back to God, come through the process. Come through the process, there is no other way.

So, in the wilderness who is there? The devil is also there. That is why I said, if you have a problem don’t run with it, because wherever you go the problem follows you. You can’t leave your problem and go to Washington D.C. “Oh! I have got so many problems in Hyderabad, I am praying to God to open a door in D.C. you reach there and your problem has reached there before you. When you reach there you will wonder, ‘How did it reach here?’ deal with your problem. That is why He takes you to the wilderness. So God asks this question, Jesus asks,

Matthew 11:7

⁷ As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John (that is Elijah, a prototype 200 years ago): “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?”

First question – when you went to the wilderness, what did you expect to see? To be convince? Or to be convicted? ‘I have all these ideas, Lord I am waiting for You to convince me.’ Instead you are getting conviction, after conviction. The voice in the wilderness. What did you go for in the wilderness? ‘He led them into the wilderness to humble them, to test them so that they might know what was in their heart.’ So Jesus is asking the people, Elijah came right? John came right? And they all went through the wilderness. What did you go into the wilderness to see? First question – what did you go to see? To be convinced in your rebellion? Or to be convicted of your sin? A reed shaken in the wind? But he never shook in the wind, he was steady all those months and weeks, he never changed his message, his message was always the same. It didn’t matter who came, the message was always the same. He never shook. ‘Oh let me change.’ He was never a people-pleaser. He always preached the same thing from behind the pulpit in the wilderness – ‘Repent! The Kingdom of God is near.’ In simple language, ‘Change! He is coming.’

Matthew 11:8

⁸ But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses.

What did you go there for? When you went to Church, what were you expecting? A message that will tell me and keep me very comfortable in soft clothes? ‘Brother, believe brother, believe. Oh I see. Yes, that is Mercedes E class that you are driving, I see brother, I see.’ That poor fellow came on a bicycle. ‘Oh! You are going to get 6 figure salary. If you believe brother, put a 1000 rupee offering.’ What did you go to see? Some fakeo, who wears soft clothes? He says, “No, that is not John.” He is asking us these questions. What were your expectations today when you came into the house of God? ‘Oh pastor loves me. I call him paapu, he is going to give me something nice.’ I am going to give you very good things which will change your life for eternity and I love you, honestly.

If you were to get into my mind and into my heart I think of nobody in my life, except my family and my church, day in and day out. Nobody else. There is nothing else in my mind. I only think about my family and my church, nobody else. But I am not a reed that will shake in the wind; I will not change the message, I have to give you what you need and what I need. What we need, not what you want. Because when you reach eternity, you will realise.

All these prosperity gospels, which are packed to the brim, give you what you want, not what you need.

Matthew 11:9

⁹ But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet.

I have been telling for days and days together, one-third of the Bible is prophecy. And the final book is entirely prophecy. And a blessing is pronounced not only that all Scripture is profitable, but in *Revelation 1:3* it says – ***Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.*** That is why we decided, the Lord decided, ‘Go on a verse by verse study on the book of Revelation so that you can be free in My sight; you have prepared My people. And they are blessed if they receive it.’

What did you go to the wilderness for? Whom did you go to see? A prophet? More than a prophet. Oh there were many prophets before him; from righteous Enoch onwards, prophet after prophet after prophet, and they prophesied about Him in so many ways, about the first coming of Jesus Christ. Until one more than a prophet came, that was John. He came and said, “Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world.” The last generation that emerges out of the wilderness will be different because they will see Him with their eyes. Behold the Lion of Judah has come to take me home. What did you go into the wilderness for?

What did they go out to see and to hear?

Matthew 3:1-3

¹ In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ² and saying, “Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand!” ³For this is he who was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, saying: “The voice of the one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.””

Did you see that? That is the voice – make the way straight. We are not straight yet. There are so many areas in our life, you may think that you are very patient man, until wilderness hits, then the impatience will come out. You think that you are a very kind man, but when you are led into the wilderness your unkindness comes out. You think you are very loving until you reach the wilderness. Can you pass the wilderness test? Will we die in the wilderness? Or will we come out from the wilderness? There is a promise given. We saw that promise, it is fantastic right? We saw that from *Revelation 1:5*, promises of God, yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Some promises are temporal, some promises are eternal. If only in this life you have hope in Christ Jesus, you are the most pitiable of all men.

1 Corinthians 15:19

¹⁹ ***IF in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men the most pitiable.***

Temporal promises, hanging onto it. What about the eternal promise?

Revelation 1:6

⁶ ***and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.***

What about eternal promises? But pastor, I have never received a promise. Oh really? What does *Hebrews 11:6* says?

Hebrews 11:6

⁶ ***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.***

Those who diligently seek Him. Not casual seeking. Did you diligently seek Him? Everyone who has been diligently seeking Him has been rewarded with a promise. It didn't matter who it was, the promise should have gone to Reuben, but it went to Joseph. So your age doesn't matter, where you were born doesn't matter. The number doesn't matter, nothing matters. Do you diligently seek Him? They were 7 in Jesse's family, but the 8th one received the promise. And he was in the wilderness.

Seek Him diligently, you will have a promise. And your destiny?

Hebrews 11:9-10

⁹ ***By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;*** ¹⁰***for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker in God.***

If you know your destiny, it will show in your life. Simple explanation of the two verses. If you know that you are going to Heaven it will show the way you life on earth. You may have everything but you are attached to nothing, because you now that when you die you take nothing with you. So you are not worried about losing or gaining things, either way, because you know where you are going. That is what it means- *he lived in tents*. That one word 'tent' why? It is because he was looking up, he knew his destination. He knew where he was going. So that is the process God is putting us through.

So understand, whether is it your marriage, whether is it your home, whether it is your office, or your business, whatever you are going through don't misunderstand what God is doing and get mad at God. Don't end up like Naomi, what an awesome name but terrible character, 'My name is pleasant but call me Marah. God is against me.'

God is for you, honey. For your sake He touched the fields of Bethlehem, caused it to spring up, there is harvest time, brought this news to Moab where you had run away in disobedience so that you could come back and He could redeem you. He is not hard against you; He is for you. I was hoping in the wilderness that you will learn the lesson, you didn't. But the Moabite girl did.

That is what I said, those statements we make are not statements, whether you like it or not, whether you believe it or not, God is good all the time and all the time God is good. And when like Job, of whom 40 chapters are written about the sorrows and the suffering he went through, will hold onto the Word and hang on and say, "Even if You slay me I will still serve You. No one else. He is the one who is purging me in the fire when I come out I shall be pure as gold." He

understood the purpose. At the end of it he says, "Earlier my ears have heard about You, I have come out of my wilderness, and now my eyes have seen You."

Malachi 3:3 this is what God says,

³ He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness.

You are a royal priesthood, He has made us kings and priests. You are the sons of the New Covenant Levi, you are the priests. He says, "If you have to be a priest and offer sacrifices to Me, I have to purge you first." **And purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness.** Do you know that the whole flooring in Heaven is gold? And do you know the nature of that gold? It is transparent. Do you know that? Read the book of Revelation, how is the flooring in Heaven? Transparent gold. What is it talking about? It is talking about the saints, they have come through as purged gold and they have nothing more that is hidden in their lives; they are transparent before God and man. They are hidden.

That is why when people say that we are a cult, I say, there is nothing that we preach that is hidden in secret, everything is open. Cults do things in secret, they have secret membership, secret timings. Ours everything is open. Right from the he first message that was preached on 1st of June 2008 till date everything is there in public domain, transparent. That is how we have to reach at the end. Gold purged. No dross, nothing. God led them into the wilderness. Let me change that word, the Father led His children into the wilderness, but they didn't like that wilderness. All the way they fought with Him in the wilderness. *1 Corinthians 10:5* gives the record.

1 Corinthians 10:5

⁵ But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

That is the story of the church too. When you reach eternity you will realize that many reached Heaven, but they did not reach Heaven the way they should have reached Heaven. Their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. What God had come to give us in His fullness most did not receive it; they fought Him all the way. Do you know what is interesting? Go back and read the subsequent 5 verses. There are many things but 5 things are mentioned about what they did in the wilderness that made God mad. It is not just about what they did but they did not even repent about it. First, they lusted after evil things, then the sexual immorality, then idolatry and they tempted Christ, then the fifth one is interesting. When you read the fifth one you should fall on your knees. ***They murmured, they complained.***

Do you know what complaining in the wilderness primarily is? You are questioning the integrity of God. The whole nation murmured. When I look at that murmuring part I pray, "Lord, help me Lord. Help me Lord."

The final book in the Old Covenant is the book of Malachi. It is a very interesting book. Malachi is with which it ends and by the time to come to the last chapter it talks about Elijah coming again and turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, otherwise the dreadful day of the Lord comes. But before that there is an interesting chapter,

Malachi 3:13-15

¹³ "Your words have been harsh against Me," says the LORD, "Yet you say, "What have we spoken against You?" You see God is listening to every conversation, you can't help it. Even if you put wax in His ears He can still hear. Sarah laughed in her mind and He asked, "Why did you laugh?" 'I didn't laugh.' "But you did, because I saw. Your lips were closed, but inside you were laughing."

¹⁴ You have said, "It is useless to serve God; what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked as mourners before the LORD of hosts?" You have, maybe in privacy you have said, 'What is the point? Ministry! Ministry! What did I get out of it?' (No I didn't say that. That one thing I am very, very careful) do we say, 'What is the point?' 'Week after week after week I have been going to church, I have been faithful in tithing, still hand-to-mouth.' God says, "Your words have been hard against Me." 'But look at the wicked. That fellow never goes to church, every second word is a curse, but he gets the promotion.' God says, "Your words have been harsh against Me." **¹⁵ So now we call the proud blessed, for those who do wickedness are raised up; they even tempt God and go free."**

Do we complain? Do we murmur? Then there is another group, in the same chapter,

Malachi 3:16

¹⁶ Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on His name.

They are also same citizen, of the same office, going through the same process, but God is listening to them, because they feared God. God says, "Write down their words, these are the ones who are coming through the fire. Write their words down."

¹⁷ "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him." ¹⁸ Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.

What is the difference between these two groups? They are going through the same wilderness but how they reacted was different. One group is grumbling and murmuring, and the other one has zipped their lips. So, this morning, which group do we fall into? We are going into Communion now. We have grumbled, murmured, complained. If questions are asked in a proper tone and right frame of mind it is okay, God has no issues. But if you are shaking your fist against God, be careful.

We are going into Communion; this is a Table that God has set before us, to judge ourselves. He said, "If you judge yourself, you won't be judged with the world."

You cannot short circuit; there are no shortcuts out of Egypt to the Promise Land. There is only one way God will take our His children. The two choices are before us, one is a choice we saw in *1 Corinthians 10:5*,

1 Corinthians 10:5

⁵ But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

You can choose to die in the wilderness, or the other choice is *Luke 4:14*,

Luke 4:14

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

Jesus came out of the wilderness in the power of the Holy Spirit. Two choices before everyone. As we officially celebrate the end of 15 years, whatever you are going through, everyone has two choices; either you can die in the wilderness, or come out in the power of the Holy Spirit. Three and half years later, Elijah will come in the power of the Spirit. There is one man standing on the Mount of Carmel, against the King, the people and the powers of darkness. One man. Ask the question – where did this power come from? Why could God endue a man with that kind of power? It is because he came through the wilderness.

Do you know what Joseph went through? 13 years and he didn't do anything wrong. You could be in the wilderness because you did everything right. But still you have to go through the wilderness. No exemptions to this rule; even His own Son, in whom no deceit was found, had to go through the wilderness. Joseph had to go through the wilderness – from the pit, to slavery, to prison. Do you know what it was like? See, we read Scripture but we don't read it carefully. Even when he is raised up, he comes through the wilderness and in one day he is raised up and he becomes prince of Egypt. Even there, years later when his brothers comes and he doesn't reveal himself, when he gives them a feast it is written that he is eating by himself as governor, why? It is because he is a Hebrew and Egyptians don't eat with Hebrews because Hebrews are an abomination. So how do you think he was in Potiphar's house? How do you think it was for him? What kind of a life? All alone, every meal, 13 years. $13 \times 3 \times 365 = 14,235$ meals. Despised. It doesn't matter how far you go up, it doesn't matter, he is sitting and eating alone. No fellowship.

You are in the wilderness, nobody cares. There are a lot of people who may feel like that. Nobody cares for me, despised, isolated, nobody gives two hoots about me. That was Joseph. You are in your wilderness. Nobody loves me.

Everybody has forgotten me. That is the time a woman comes and offers him herself. In the wilderness a voice comes and he says, "No." In the wilderness.

The last stages of your wilderness journey will be the darkest. Hang in there, don't quit. After two years travelling in the wilderness, the children of Israel came to Kadesh Barnea and they can see the Promise Land. And the fruits of the Promise Land have been brought before them. And then they crumbled, deliverance was just there; they could have gone in and taken it. Just two years in the wilderness and they would have lived in the Promise Land. But at that point they fell, they grumbled, they turned around and rebelled against God. You look in the Bible, the story is the same for everybody. That is why when you are going through your wilderness when it looks darkest and the most terrible, hold onto your promise, cling to the Cross and say, "Lord, even if You slay me, I will only serve You. No one else."

The worst part of it was that for a false accusation, throw into the prison, thrown into the dungeon and then a little later come two people from the palace. Listen carefully, one day he looks at them and said, "What is wrong with you?" they say, "We had a dream." If you or I, were in Joseph's place, do you know what we would say? "Dreams? I also had a dream. What dreams? They never come to pass. Do you know what happened to my dream? First I was thrown into a pit, then I was sold as a slave into Egypt and then thrown into the prison and I reached here. What are you creaming about? These things don't matter." He didn't say that, but he is holding onto his promise and said, "Tell me your dream, because dreams come to pass. I haven't quit on mine. Don't quit on yours." He is holding on and hanging on to the faithfulness of God. And the dream comes true. And as the man is going he says, "When you go to the Pharaoh, will you put in a word for me?" and that is the last terrible two years, in the Bible it is written that the Butler went and promptly forgot Joseph.

He thought, 'One person at least will remember me.' But he also forgot, 2 years. The last stage of your wilderness journey is where you will be tested the most. Everybody in the Bible, everybody, it is the same story. Forty days and forty nights in the wilderness, fasting and what we have are the records of the temptations at the last hour of the wilderness. Enormously powerful temptation coming upon Jesus, by the devil himself, is at the end, hoping to break Him. But Jesus comes through. 13-14 years running from king Saul, keeping his righteousness, running and running and running, then at the last stage of his wilderness, he comes to his home town called Ziglax. Everything is burnt, everything is lost, everything is taken, all the soldiers give up on him and pick up stones to kill him. This is his darkest hour. What will he do, fall or rise? One word is written there - ***But David encouraged himself in the LORD his God. 1 Samuel 30:6***, after that it is history.

Lot of people give up at the edge of their breakthrough. He is faithful, the One who promised is faithful. Why I spend so much time talking about the wilderness is that you cannot but go through the wilderness. That is promised to every child of His. But in the wilderness turn around and learn the lessons of the wilderness. Learn what He is trying to teach you. What do I have to get rid of in my life? What sin? What weight? Purge me, cleanse me, refine me, bring me through. But when I come through, let me come through in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus came through in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Joseph was lying there in the dungeons, in chains, in one day; it says – *hastily, the Pharaoh said, 'Bring him,'* hastily they washed him and cleaned him, shaved him and changed his robes and he is standing before the Pharaoh. He explains the dream and Joseph gives him counsel, and the Pharaoh looks at him and says, "There is nobody in the kingdom like you; the Spirit of God is speaking through you. From today there will be no one other than me above you. Everything is in your hands." What happened? In one day he was lifted up.

Same thing with Elijah. Cherith, Zarephath, Cherith, Zarephath, sitting there, lonely, isolated, "Lord, I had a dream, I had a vision. I remember standing before the king. I don't know what is happening?" then the Word of the Lord came. "You are ready. Go and meet king Ahab, ask him to gather all the people on Mount Carmel." Elijah's hour has come. Before that and after that no other man has brought fire down from Heaven, and turned an entire nation back to God. So through the process a person is being prepared.

Nobody sitting here can skirt the process. So you and me have two choices; either die in the wilderness, or come out in the power of the Holy Spirit from the wilderness. As Joshua told the people, "Choose today whom you will serve." "I set

before you life and death, blessing and curses, you choose.” God is saying the same thing; you can either wander here and die. I brought you out, I won’t take you back. You can either wander and die, or learn the lesson and come out in the power. It is not the ministry that is important; it is the minister that God is trying to make all of us into. Ministers of His grace, ministers of His truth, even His own Son.

In your home, in your office, in your church, wherever you go, He is doing a work in us. Allow Him to work in you. He is the Author and the Finisher. Faith is not an idea, faith is a life. You shall walk by faith, you shall live by faith. Faith is a life. He is the Author and the Finisher of our faith. Shall we stand?

Closing prayer

Father, this morning, above all, we want to thank You for Your patience O Lord. You have been so patient with us. With me and with all of us. 15 years and 20 days earlier I too was in the wilderness. I didn’t know what to do. That is when You said, “The time has come for you to start My church.” You had to take me into the wilderness, before I would see light and obey You. Today, Your people stand before You here in Your house and online around the world, but it was the work that began in the wilderness. So for everyone here, You have a destiny and a destination for everyone standing here. And many are in the wilderness. I pray, in the Spirit they will hear the voice crying in the wilderness, “Prepare, prepare the way. The straightway for the Lord. Get rid of that sin that easily entangles. Get rid of that weight, you don’t need that where you are going? It is just a hindrance, it is a stumbling block. Somebody here wardrobe full of clothes, give it away. Give it away, you don’t wear it, you won’t give it. It is a weight! Give it away! Whatever it is, I have no clue, only God knows. I know my weights. You know your weights. Let the Spirit show. We are the children of Abraham according to the promise. The richest man of his times living in a tent, because he was looking forward to a city whose foundation and builder was God. Put away that ego today.

Go back, I don’t know who it is. You need to go back and say, ‘I humble myself. Forgive me. I have rebelled against God and against you.’ It could be a child, it could be a wife, I don’t know who it is. It is a mountain which has to be brought low. For somebody it is a valley, depressed, discouraged, abused, ignored, despised, isolated. It is a valley. You will sink in that valley. Let the Spirit of God come and fill it up and pick you up. For if any man or woman is in Christ Jesus he is a new creation. And it is written, all things have been made new. Like Joseph come out of your dungeon. The self-inflicted chains have been taken out now in the name of Jesus. The fetters that have crippled you are taken out now in the Name of Jesus. That Spirit of self-pity, orphan spirit is leaving now in the name of Jesus. Know who you are. You are God’s own child. It doesn’t matter what people say, what matters is what God says. It doesn’t matter if nobody knows your name and will not even call you by name and calls you names instead. For it is written about you – ‘I have engraved your name on the palms of My hands.’ And that same God, your Father says, “No one can pluck you from My hands.” Come out of that valley, for it is dark in those valleys. Come out. Break those chains of lust, spirits of lust, demons of lust. They are just using your body. You think it is you, no. You are a victim. Maybe you opened the door, but you don’t know who all came in. Now they have taken your body. Many standing here.

In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, let every unclean spirit leave, in the Name of Jesus let it leave. For it is written – you are the temple of the living God. If any man defiles that temple God will destroy that temple. But He has not come today to destroy, He has come to cleanse and to build. Allow the Spirit of God to cleanse you, and the blood to wash you and set you free. For this purpose the Son of Man came, to destroy the works of the devil. Let restoration take place in your lives, in homes. Let young people be set free. Let them have dreams and visions. Let them know their destiny and their destination. Let them prophesy, for the time is near. Let this generation be a different generation. Let the Spirit of supplication and prayer rest upon the young ones. Let a generation rise that knows their God. Touch Lord, touch Your people Lord. Touch Your people, touch us. We are moving into a different paradigm Lord today. You are shifting us, You are moving us. We believe. We believe. My final prayer to You, my Father, is this, let no one die in the wilderness. Let them come out at Your appointed time in the power of the Holy Spirit, to be a sign and a wonder and above all a witness of the living God. Thank You, thank You Father. Lord, we praise You, we worship You, we glorify You. Thank You Father, thank You Lord. For in Jesus’ name we pray.

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.