

Hedged In!

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Father, we just want to thank You once again for this morning, Lord, the unfolding of Your Word brings light and Your Word says, if we walk in Your light, that we will have fellowship with You and the Blood of Jesus will continuously cleanse us from all our unrighteousness and therefore this morning O Lord, even as the Word gets unfolded and You bring light into our lives, enable us Lord not to run away from that light, enable us to walk in that light examining ourselves in the light of what You have to speak to us, so that we can experience a cleansing, a continual cleansing of our inner man, of our soul, of our thoughts, our ideas, our will even more conformed to Your will, of our emotions, so Lord we could be O Lord vessels of honor, ready for the Master's use even in these last days. To that end I pray that you would bless us and anoint us, speak to our hearts even in the speaking and the hearing of today's Word. We thank You, we praise You, we give You glory, in Jesus name. Amen.

I titled today's meditation as 'Hedged In'. One of the lessons that we learnt from the life of Elijah is that, the Word of the Lord came to him and he obeyed. And that is one of the reasons or rather one of the only reasons, the only reason that he enjoyed supernatural protection from God, from all the onslaughts of the enemy. There was a kingdom of the demonic that hated Elijah, wanted his head, was searching for him relentlessly, wanted to finish him off. You see, the world is calculated in its hatred towards God and His people, systematically. It is a calculated effort, you will see through the history of the people of God. The moment the nation of Israel was formed, there was a calculated onslaught of the devil to discredit the very existence of the nation. When Abraham was called if it were not for the protection of God in that He said, those who bless you will be blessed and those who curse you, I will curse. That was the kind of protection that God gave Abraham because the moment God calls you, you are under the crosshairs of the enemy. He hates you with a perfect hatred, he has that kind of a hatred. And he will use various institutions and instruments, human, governmental and every kind at his disposal to discredit you and to destroy you. The enemy comes to steal, you know it, nothing but to steal, to kill and to destroy but notwithstanding all these ideas of the enemy or the mindset of the enemy, Elijah the Tishbite enjoyed supernatural protection from God. Look at what it says in *1 Kings 18* when Obadiah finds Elijah or rather Elijah finds Obadiah.

1 Kings 18:9-10

⁹So he said, "How have I sinned, that you are delivering your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me? ¹⁰As the LORD your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to hunt for you; and when they said, 'He is not here,' he took an oath from the kingdom or nation that they could not find you

So he said, "How have I sinned, that you are delivering your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me? You know him. Elijah comes and says, go and tell Ahab, I am here let's have a meeting. As the LORD your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to hunt for you. Hunt, to finish you off, and when they said, 'He is not here,' he took an oath from the kingdom or nation that they could not find you. I mean if it were not for God. I mean, I will tell you honestly. If it were not for God who was on our side *Malachi 3* will say, I the Lord do not change and therefore you sons of Jacob have not been consumed.

Malachi 3:6

⁶For I am the LORD, I do not change; therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.

We would have been consumed long time. You think about it. Six million Jews systematically annihilated, the hatred of the devil against the people of God because he knew the time was very near for the nation of Israel to be created and he did everything in his capacity to finish them off. Hamans are rising by dear brothers and sisters whether you like it or not. There is an onslaught, a calculated onslaught. I mean if you do not sense it, we are blind in the spiritual realm as a bat. They are after us, after our children, after our posterity but thank God the initiative is not with the devil, the initiative is with us because God says, "*The gates of hades will not prevail against you.*" But there are two things as we

were studying about Elijah in the last several weeks, two words which came out of the text, kind of just gripped my heart. I want to introduce those two words to you in the light of what I titled this meditation.

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.

Then the Word of the Lord came to him saying, get away from here and turn eastward and hide. Everybody say, ‘Hide.’ Good, that’s one word. *1 Kings 17: 8-9*

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.”

Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, “Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Everybody say, ‘Dwell.’ Hiding and dwelling. Most of the problems we face in our lives is because we don’t hide or dwell where God wants us and therefore, we don’t enjoy protection from God, we don’t enjoy the provision of God and we don’t go through the preparation that God has for us in every situation that He wants us to be in. God wants to prepare us so that one day we will be used of God like Elijah to confront the prince of this age and to deliver people from the grip of Satan and turn them towards Christ. The process through which God takes us is as important as the product, the product is part of the process. You see, there is a very we all are very familiar with in *Ephesians 2:8- 10* we will read that together.

Ephesians 2:8-10

⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

You see when you go through the tabernacle, the various elements of the tabernacle, you find the bronze altar after you’ve passed through the linen wall through the gate, through the entrance and into the outer courts you see the bronze altar and then you see the bronze laver and then you see the holy place with its covering and the moment you enter into the holy place, everything is of gold. You have the table of shewbread, you have the golden altar of incense and then there is a candlestick. Very interestingly it is made, not of gold, it is made of what we call as beaten gold, which depicts or shows divine workmanship. It is like beaten gold. God is like literally working on that, what is that? A workmanship, you’ll see in that candlestick, what you have is the continuous anointing of God being poured and the continuous changing of the mind taking place so that we become anointed vessels with a transformed mind able to hold the things of God and understand His will. So, that is beaten gold, that is workmanship and in order to become God’s workmanship, there is a process you and I have to go through and therefore hiding and dwelling is important. Well, I’m not going to talk about the process, I’m just going to talk about how we should hide and how we should dwell. That’s going to be today’s meditation. *Exodus 19*, we know this verse very well. God brought them out of Egypt, what for? Your answer would be? Complete the sentence, God brought them out of Egypt so that, to worship Him, etc. There’s a very interesting verse or words that you have to pay attention to. Look at the personal pronouns that God uses in *Exodus 19*, just keep that in mind.

Exodus 19:3-6

³ And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: ⁴ You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself.

Not to serve, I brought you to Myself, you are Mine. Again, let’s read up few more verses. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice. You see that again, and keep My covenant. Look at the emphasis on the word, Mine, the personal pronoun. Then you shall be a special treasure to Me, again, above all the people for all the earth is Mine and you shall be to Me a Kingdom of priest and a holy nation and these are the words which you shall tell the children of Israel.

⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. ⁶ And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

You see the whole purpose like Pastor was talking about in the morning, he says, He loves us so much and the Bible is a love letter from God and when you read a love letter what happens? Heart starts beating. Now, it's love email, love text or whatever you want to call it. The equivalent, love instant message. So, God loves us like that, He wants us for Himself, He wanted to have a relationship with us. He wanted to live among His people, and therefore, what did He do? He said you know what, make a tabernacle so that I could come and dwell among you and then you dwell with Me and in Me. That is the whole purpose of bringing them out. The tabernacle is in the wilderness. You see, the Promised Land is not their destination, who is our destination? God is our destination. Lot of times I also think, God brought us out, so that He might bring them in, where? Into the Promised Land. No, God brought them out to Himself.

That is the reason why Moses says, "If Your presence will not go with us, even to the best of the lands, we will not move one inch from here because I understand You brought us to Yourself so that we can have a relationship with You." God loves to be with us and therefore He gave them the tabernacle. That is the reason why you have this famous, I mean I quote him quite often, famous Persian Mathematician Omar Khayyam, you know what. What does he say? 'A loaf of bread, a glass of wine and your presence is paradise in the wilderness.' That is what he wrote to his wife in Persian. He is a mathematician. Mathematicians are romantic, they are romantic mathematicians. A loaf of bread, a glass of wine and your presence is paradise in the wilderness. All I need is you. It is exactly what we say, I need you, God says, that is exact, 'I want to have that relationship with you. I brought you to Myself.'

So understand, keep that in mind. The entire purpose of the teaching of the Word of God is to ensure that we have that vibrant love relationship with God. Your devotions are not just devotions. If you miss your devotion, don't say, 'O Lord today I miss my devotion, O what happened.' No, it should be like, 'Lord, I missed You.' Lot of difference between I missed my devotion, I missed my reading and missing You. Lot of difference. That's exactly the reason why God brought us to Himself to enjoy Him. What is the whole purpose of man? Find it out. It is a catechism. That's your homework. So, to dwell, to hide, why? To have a relationship with Him. These are the two words which I want to look at, hide by Cherith and dwell with me. Wherever we dwell is where God wants us to be. See, one of the things that you need to understand, places where you enjoy, what is hiding and dwelling? These are spiritual dispositions. These are spiritual disciplines and dispositions. What are these? These are dispositions where you enjoy God's supernatural provision and protection and you grow in your relationship with the Lord and enjoy special intimacy with Him which is not otherwise possible. That is the reason why in the Book of Jeremiah it says, I remember the love of your espousals when you went after me, where? In the wilderness. You went after Me in the wilderness not in the Promised Land, in the wilderness. So, the point is, when we leave God, we walk contrary to Him. Whenever we are facing any problems in our lives, for example we are going through some situations, you know most of the time or rather the first thing that we have to tick off is, am I walking contrary to God? Is God against me, or the devil against me? You know the devil is always against you but if God is against us, then we are in deep trouble. Look at what it says in the Book of *Leviticus 26* just building up some foundations.

Leviticus 26:23-25

²³ 'And if by these things you are not reformed by Me, but walk contrary to Me, ²⁴ then I also will walk contrary to you, and I will punish you yet seven times for your sins.

Four times He uses the word seven. Seven times, seven times, seven times, seven, seven to the power of four.

²⁵ And I will bring a sword against you that will execute the vengeance of the covenant;

My goodness, I mean, He's not talking about anything else, He brings the covenant over there. He talks about a relationship again. You see, one of the things you have to tick off, am I walking contrary to God or not. If I man not talking contrary to God, if I am right with God, then no matter what I face in life, I will have the assurance, what is that Word - If God is for me, who then can be against me? The point is, God has to be for you. Now, where will God be for

you is the question. Where is God for you? He is at a place where you hide and dwell. That is the place where God is for you. That is where you are hedged in, that is where you are protected, that is where you are provided, that is where you are prepared. Protected, provided and prepared. Otherwise we will be flippantly using this verse, if God is for me, who can be against me. The point is, there is a huge if, it is a conditional statement. It is incumbent upon certain conditions that we have to fulfill for God to be for us and with us. Remember Joshua, remember the story, 'Are you for us or are you for our adversaries.' And what does God say? "Neither. You have to make a choice." So, today I want to look at one familiar passage that everybody knows, famous, all of us know it, so many times we have looked at it but I want to draw lessons from this man. I really enjoy him now, in those days I use to dread to read through that Book but now I enjoy him, even as I walk with the Lord and I'm enjoying His presence, this one Book I love to read through and I know many of us don't like to read through it but let us see that. I'm going to introduce it, what is the suspense?

The Book of Job, Job 1. Let's read

Job 1:1-3

There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil. ² And seven sons and three daughters were born to him. ³ Also, his possessions were seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a very large household, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the East.

There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil. Actually, I love the word KJV uses, eschewed evil. He had seven sons, three daughters were born to him. Seven sons, three daughters, perfect. I'm not going to have seven sons, just three daughters enough for me. Verse 3, also his possessions were seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a very large household, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the East. He was the numero uno. Forbes number one. Now as we read in the morning devotion today, the one pastor sent. Wealth is not bad, it can be a strong city, it depends upon how you use your wealth. Let me tell you something, the reason why this man was blessed is very obvious to us, the reason why this man was blessed beyond all the people in the east was simply because of the lifestyle, the spiritual lifestyle that he disciplined himself in, in that he was blameless, he was upright, the one who feared God and he eschewed or shunned away or turned away from evil. That is the reason why our prosperity has to be a result of our walk with the Lord. Our marks have to be a result of our integrity, our Job has to be a result of the work of God in our lives.

That is the reason why the Apostle John in his epistle 3 John he says, I rejoiced when I heard that my children are walking in truth, and then because you are walking in truth, he says, 'Beloved, I wish about all things that you prosper in everything and are in good health even as your soul prospers because I am enjoying, I am looking at the lifestyle that you are following, it is a lifestyle of truth and a life of integrity.' See, our blessings have to be a result of it. Like if you listened to the Nepali service, the blessing of God makes one rich, but what does God not do? He does not add sorrow to it. That is *Proverbs 10:22* for those taking notes.

Proverbs 10:22

²²The blessing of the LORD makes one rich, and He adds no sorrow with it.

So, household, our blessing. Your marks have to be a result. That is the reason why I love the testimony of that young man, who is going to Stanford, MIT, when I was listening to that. I visited MIT, now he is going to study at MIT, there is a lot of difference. Amazing! It has to be a result of your walk with the Lord. So, this is the man and the wealth that he possesses does not impress God, what impresses God and that is exactly what we have to note and keep in mind, what impresses God is this, Job 1.

Job 1:6-11

⁶Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. ⁷ And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it."⁸ Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?" ⁹ So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? ¹⁰ Have You not made a

hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. ¹¹ But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!"

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and who came now? Not Lucifer, Satan, Lucifer was good, he became Satan after the fall. Now he becomes the adversary, the opposer and Satan also came among them and the Lord said to Satan, everybody did not recognize Satan because he transformed himself into an angel of light, so everybody said, hello, hello sir, millions of angels, and he also came but the Lord said, 'Hey come here.' Of all the people, he's singled out, come here. And the Lord asked Satan, from where do you come? What is your job profile? So, Satan answered and said to Him, 'From going to and fro, up and down, walking back and forth in it. That is my duty, I'm following right from the beginning of my fall.' And then look at this word. I told you what impresses God, right? Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant." You know what, I like the word 'consider', the word 'consider' is very interesting. "Have you set your heart on My servant, Job?"

Now, look at this, what impresses God is not his wealth and not his resume. Let me tell you something my dear brothers and sisters, God is not impressed by our intelligence or lack thereof. Our talents or lack thereof, our wealth, our resume or lack thereof, our achievements in the world do not impress God one bit. What impresses God and attracts Him towards us, it is a beautiful word in 1 Peter 3 it says, an imperishable beauty of a meek, gentle and a quiet spirit which in the sight of God is most precious, that impresses God and attracts Him to us. And look at his boasting. I like the way He boasts. Have you considered My servant Job, there is none like him? There is none like You is what we sing, no one else can touch my heart like You do, I could search for all eternity long and find there is none like You. That is our song to Jesus, and now Jesus is singing. There is none like Job. What a song! Think about that. No one else touches My heart, and it should touch your heart also, Satan. There is no one like Job and what is he impressed with? He says, 'There is no one on earth, if I were to put a competition on character.'

The fastest chess player. The fastest, the greatest. The fastest runner, the richest man, the wisest person. No, you know what impresses God? "I looked at all the earth and I found My servant Moses. Moses, what is he? The meekest man on the earth." You see the competition of meekness. I mean if we were to have a competition of meekness in our church. What a church that would be. We are competing against one another, for what? To be the meekest, no brother you take. No you take. Our entire lifestyle will be of deferring to one another. If you remember the word that Pastor was teaching us in one of our Bible studies. Considering the other better than us. I mean think about a competition like that. 'The most loving husband', think about a competition like that, 'the most submissive wife'. I mean think about that. 'The most obedient children', I mean think about that. Have you seen a competition like that? O, look at the talent, no, that's what we are impressed with, right?

You see, think about that. Eric and I were having a discussion when we were there in Jamshedpur, we were having a discussion about various brothers in the church, good things okay and I was telling, one of the top five brothers I have met in my entire life, top five, if I have to measure the top five spiritual brothers in my life, I said you know what, Sam stands there, Sammy from our church. Top five, of all the spiritual people, I've met in my entire life, the top five, he stands there. You see, our value systems, our measuring rods and instruments are all unjust my dear brothers and sisters, unjust scales and balances we have in our world and even in our hearts. Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters. What impresses God therefore is blamelessness, uprightness, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And therefore, look at what it says. You know what somebody gets praised, Satan cannot tolerate and so do some brothers and sisters. Somebody gets praised, like Ziba, 'Everything okay but lame.'

Every wife struggles, every child struggles, every husband struggles. We don't like it, so immediately Satan's true colors come out. So, Satan answered the Lord and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing?" and look at the words that he uses my dear brothers and sisters. "Have You not made a hedge around him." You know the thing is that, you need to understand, "Have You not made a hedge around him." What is the title of today's message? 'Hedged In,' what did I underline? Around. I hope you noticed. What I mentioned and what I did not mention is also very important in the class. Abigail, it is very important what I mentioned and what I do not mention. Here he says, "You have hedged him around, you put a hedge around him, You put a hedge around his household and You put a hedge around all that he owns and You prospered him and blessed the work of his hands." Etc. we know those verses but I want to look at the word

'around.' What is that hedge? What is the hedge by dear brothers and sisters is what I want to look at today, this morning. What is that hedge?

You know the word hedge comes from a Hebrew word which means, on behalf of. You understand that? On behalf of. In other words, who is the hedge? You are the one who is standing there. You are on behalf of him. What is that? And do you know actually the story of Job right? God removes the hedge, in other words, God moves Himself away from that place. I was thinking about it, what is this hedge Lord? What is this hedge? What is the mystery here, the mystery of the hedge? You know, one of the things that you need to read the Bible with a mindset of the cross. You know what you should do? Whenever you read the Bible you should expect to see the cross. Okay. Let me show where this word around is used, in what context it is used to get a picture of what the hedge is. *Leviticus 9:7*

Leviticus 9:7

⁷And Moses said to Aaron, "Go to the altar, offer your sin offering and your burnt offering, and make atonement for yourself and for the people. Offer the offering of the people, and make atonement for them, as the LORD commanded."

Moses said unto Aaron, go unto the altar and offer thy sin offering and thy burnt offering and make an atonement for yourself. The word for around, make an atonement around yourself. So, what is that around? What is that hedge? The hedge is the atonement that Jesus made for us, on our behalf. Let me tell you something, if we were to put a competition between Job and Jesus who would win? That exactly what Job said, Job's own confession, he said, "I heard You by the hearing of my ears but now I see You with my eyes and therefore (what do I do?) I repent in dust and in ashes." So, when Job is compared to Jesus he is nothing, so competition between Job and Jesus, no chance. So, Jesus is there, the blameless, upright, the One who feared God and who shunned evil, what did God do to Him? He took away the hedge around Him. He allowed Him to be crucified on the Cross. He became sin for us on the Cross. He became the curse for us on the Cross. He became wounded for our transgressions, He became poor and He became naked, absolutely naked on the Cross, so that you and I can be what? Hedged about. So, what is the hedge around Job? It is the finished work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. You remember *Psalms 121*, how many of you know *Psalms 121* by heart? I will lift up my eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help, where are you expecting the help to come from? From the hills. What do you find on the hill? The Cross. You see, that is the reason why I like that song, 'On a hill far away stood an old rugged Cross, the emblem of suffering and shame. O how I love that old Cross so despised by the world has a wondrous attraction for me, for the dear Lamb of God left His glory above and gave Himself on dark Calvary.' That is the Cross, that is the hill. I wrote it down, I lift up my eyes to the hills, my help comes from the Lord God the Maker of heaven and earth, not full stop, who became sin for us on the Cross and therefore, He preserves my soul, He preserves my going out and my coming in. The sun will not smite me by day not the powers of darkness by night, why? Because on the Cross, He became the hedge. You see, the top three righteous people in the Bible. Who are the top three righteous people? Why is he called righteous? because our righteousness is based upon the finished work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. Look at what it says in *Ezekiel 14* about our great man job, the top three, these three in the Bible, the top three. Look at what it says.

Ezekiel 14:12-14

¹² The word of the LORD came again to me, saying: ¹³ "Son of man, when a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness, I will stretch out My hand against it; I will cut off its supply of bread, send famine on it, and cut off man and beast from it. ¹⁴ Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness," says the Lord GOD.

The word of the LORD came again to me, saying: "Son of man, when a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness, I will stretch out My hand against it; I will cut off its supply of bread, send famine on it, and cut off man and beast from it. Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel and Job. What does Noah mean? The man who found rest in Me. What does Daniel mean? My God is my Judge; the man who judged himself. What does Job mean? Job mean the one who is hated by this world. The word Job means the one who is hated by this world. Noah means, the one who found rest in Me, Daniel means, Dan – el means what? My God is my Judge, the one who judged himself. You know what, these are the people who are righteous. Noah, Daniel and Job, if they were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness, says the Lord why? Because their righteousness is not their righteousness, it is the righteousness that

they received as a free gift. It is a hedge that protects them and surrounds them. Therefore *Colossians 3* will say let's see verses 3, 4

Colossians 3:3-4

³For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

But what is the point? For you died and your life is hidden with Christ. You are hidden in Christ. We sing that song, you are my hiding place, Psalm 32,

Psalm 32:6-7

⁶For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You in a time when You may be found; surely in a flood of great waters they shall not come near him. ⁷ You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance.

For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You in a time when You may be found; surely in a flood of great waters they shall not come near him. In other words you will be protected. You are my hiding place, you shall preserve me from trouble. You shall surround me with songs of deliverance when? When is God going to be our hiding place? When is He going to surround us with songs of deliverance? Just like that? We don't have to do anything? Look at what it says, *Psalm 32:3*

Psalm 32:3-5

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

You see, this is David's Psalm. I believe these are the two Psalms that he wrote, Psalm 51 and Psalm 32 when he sinned against Bathsheba. He kept silent, mum was the word. What's your name? in Telugu it is mauni, mauni means silent. What's your name? Mauni. He was doing maunaragam. What ragam (song)? Nothing happened. Look ma, no hands. These murder and me, we are not related at all. And he became Bille Jean, Michael Jackson, 'The kid is not my son.' What a song! This kid is not my son. Very, very silent, you know what God did? Crushed him. He sent arrows, in one of the Pastor's conferences, he says, I think you would have heard this. When David confesses his sins and he says, 'I have sinned.' You know what Nathan say?"The Lord has put away your sins, and you shall not die." You see, fantastic listeners. How can you miss that? The Lord has put away your sins and you shall not die. That means what? You are literally hanging by a knife edge, I would have lowered the knife on you had it not been for your confession. I think he was sick with an incredible sickness and therefore he did not even want to go to war. You know when you are sick in your body, ask the Lord, don't just take it lightly, 'Why Lord, what is the reason? Why the sickness? Is the sickness for Your glory or for my discipline?'

Ask it, I mean these are scary questions, right? How many of you ever asked, you don't ask, you say, "Doctor Richard, what should I do?" Derek Prince made a fired up statement. He says, "When anybody is sick, let him call for the elders, not the doctor and when you call not the elders but the doctor, what are you doing, you are disobeying a direct commandment of God." Ask these questions. Why am I sick? Why am I sick? Why am I groaning? Why is there sickness in my body? Why are my bones going dry? Why is there sickness in my body? Why am I not enjoying vitality in my body? You know why? For day and night, what was there? ***Your hand was heavy upon me, my vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah***, pause there, contemplate. By the way, you know where Job lived? He lived in the land of Uz, you know what Uz means? Deep contemplation, that is the word Uz. Actually there are two words, the root word is Uz, the connotation means wooded, or a forest, where he is hiding. Where do you hide? You hide yourself in counsel. Contemplation, that is the meaning, okay. Hebrew is fantastic, it is a beautiful language. ***For day and night, your hand was heavy upon me, I acknowledge my sin to You and my iniquity have I not hidden from You. I said I will confess my transgressions to the Lord and You forgave the iniquity of my sin and therefore You became my hiding place.*** So, what was Job's daily routine? This is Job's routine with his children. If this is the routine with his children. If this is the routine with his children, how much tougher he would have been with Himself.

Job 1:5

⁵So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, "It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did regularly.

So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, they had a course on feasting, Udemy course, free. That Job will send and sanctify them and he would rise early in the morning and offer a burnt offering according to the number of them all for Job said in his heart, it may be that they might have cursed God in their hearts. See, what does that mean? What is that hedge? How did he get into that hedge? Job practiced a regular lifestyle, a regular and a discipline lifestyle of contemplation, confession and repentance. Write it down. A regular and a discipline lifestyle of contemplation, confession and repentance. Children make it a habit when you are young, so when you grow old you will not depart from it. When you finish your day confess to the Lord all your sins, what are all the sins that you commit. The things that you are supposed to do and not supposed to do. The sins of commission and the sins of omission and I am sure all of us, everyday would have been guilty of the sin of omission for sure. For example, give thanks, and it is a command and what did you do. You did not, so what did you do? You sinned. Did you ask God for forgiveness? I mean you actually you should keep on crediting thanks into your account. Thank You Lord, why? Just in case. Just in case, send it off, credit it into your account, whenever you have the opportunity, in all circumstances what should you do? Give thanks. See, when you do not know how to give thanks when things are going when with you, do you think you will give thanks when things are going bad with you? No, not a chance. So, a regular lifestyle of contemplation, confession and repentance and therefore, you know what, this is what we call as blamelessness. He practiced that every day. Every day he went to the cross, every day he pleaded the blood over his life, every day he said Lord, forgive my sins. And sin where, in the heart. Not ostensible sins because You see the heart. So, the first thing he practiced, that caused God to be a hedge around him, a regular and a discipline lifestyle of contemplation, confession and repentance. Let's move *Job 1:8*,

Job 1:8

⁸Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"

The first thing we talked about was his lifestyle of contemplation, confession and repentance. Second, a lifestyle of being blameless before God. The Hebrew word is Tamam or perfect. Tamam, where does it occur in the Bible the very first time? *Genesis 17:1* we know this very well.

Genesis 17:1

¹When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless or be thou perfect or blameless or complete." You know what the word 'before Me', means? Before My face, and by the way the Hebrew word for face is faces, God has God two faces, the goodness and the severity. So walking before God means, keeping in mind the goodness of God and the severity of God, point one. Second, what does the face have primarily? Eyes, eyes to examine and how many eyes does God have? What are His eyes, who are His eyes? Who are the eyes of God? Very important, you need to understand that. By the way before Me, means presence of God, presence also means before God. You will see this verse in *Psalms 51:11*, cast me not away from your presence or before your face and do not take your Holy Spirit

Psalms 51:11

¹¹Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

So, two things are combined together, the presence of God, the face of God, the faces of God, the eyes of God and the Spirit of God. So, therefore, who is 'the eyes of God'? The Spirit of God. How many eyes does He have? Seven. That means what? Every angle, the camera is there. Sevenfold closed-circuit camera. You know, they did a survey in one of the restaurants where there was a restaurant with all kinds of frames, all different arts and you know what, when they

saw the people who were there in the arena, they say, please put your plates near the tray area. Most of the fellows they left their plates and left. So, what did they do? They change the frames now and they put pictures or paintings of eyes all around, the frames are only eyes, suddenly their attitude changed, everybody started putting their plates near the trash area, why? Suddenly they had a sense that big boss is watching, eyes all around.

Examination, what does eyes do? Examine, you know you need to understand an examiner because I come from academic background. I will tell you my experience with an examiner. In our Ph.D. we have two exams, one we call as Ph.D. thesis proposal, you have a presentation, you have the thesis and you have the final thesis defense. Our examiner is invited for both these occasions. My examiner was Professor SubirSaha from IIT Delhi, mechanical engineering department. So he came for my thesis proposal and my presentation was fantastic. I made one of the best presentation, I worked on it for like almost forty-eight hours, seventy-two hours close to, without sleep almost and made a fantastic presentation and when the presentation was over, my supervisor was impressed, he did not know what I did, so he found out from the presentation, my supervisor and after the presentation was over, he came to me and he shook my hand, my external examiner also was very happy, it's a good thesis, nice proposal, fantastic etc. He gave me an A plus on my proposal, proposal okay, still not defense and then my boss comes to me, to my room and says, Vijay I've never ever attended a presentation like that in my entire life, that is a fantastic commendation from your supervisor. I was like cloud number nine. Then I wrote my thesis. You know confidence is there now, I wrote my thesis, five chapters, to the best of my ability, cited everything. I sent it, sister Ailsa is laughing, because she knows what happened.

So, I mean, I thought because my examiner was happy, I was thinking it's going to be like a slam dunk now, I'm going to get a home run, ten by ten, I'm going to wind up my thesis and three months I'm out of the university. So, I sent my thesis proposal to the professor. One month over, two months over, three months over, four months over, five months over, six months over, seventh month it comes back, proposal comes in a sealed envelope. I was like what is it, maybe he was busy, he must have gone for some conference and therefore he was not. I opened my thesis, when I opened my thesis, every line had a red ink, every line and he gave me a huge reason as to why he should not accept my thesis. My professor looked at it, I looked at it, he looked at me and said, "I am not responsible for this," he said, "Vijay what happened?" I said, "Sir, I don't know what happened." You know that day when I actually got my thesis, I was all by myself in Grace Home those day, that's what I thought, but you know what, in Telugu there is a saying, the walls have ears. I saw my thesis and my anger and my frustration came out through my words, whatever is there in your heart comes through your mouth and I use some of the choicest languages a Pastor should never use. John Manohar was there, silently standing by, he was in his tenth grade those days, and I was using abuses, I mean it was all coming out of my mouth because you know, it's an idol in the heart. Somebody touches your idol, what happens? Everything was over, my frustration, I came out and I wanted to go to the washroom, I came out of the LTD office and John Manohar looks at me, smiles and he says, "Hello sir. Hello Pastor." John Manohar has that very mischievous smile, he's got a smile we do not know what it means. He just puts his mouth like that, we don't know what it means. Inside it's like, 'I heard you, I heard you.' I went to the wash room, you know this is double trouble. Now, the examiner examined me, and the worse, my congregation examined me, and my Lord examined me. So, I came back, I had to spend about three to four months to prepare a rebuttal and to redo the thesis completely.

Examiner, and then he says, you know what when he gives you a Ph.D. he says, 'Now you are blameless.' Now, think about it my dear brothers and sisters, if an earthly examiner can drive you nuts, you have to stand before God. Think about that examination. How many red inks will he have in the poem that he wrote? So, what are these eyes? Who are these eyes? You say Spirit of God, okay. What does He do? I'll tell you.

Hebrews 4:11-13

¹¹ Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. You know I was a very bad example to John Manohar, I came and apologize to him. Immediately I used those choicest language, I had to call sister Ailsa, I said, "Sister Ailsa I'm sorry, fantastic language came out of my mouth and your sons was there

and I became a bad example before him, a stumbling block.” I had to apologize to him, I apologized to Sis. Ailsa, you know all these things happened. You will be found out. Be careful, your sin will find you out. You cannot escape from the eyes of God. ***For the Word of the Lord is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart and there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of God,*** the seven Spirits of God. It is nothing but the revelation of the Word of God, enlightened revelation of the Word of God which pierces through the soul and the spirit, the joints and the marrow, in other words as Derek Prince says, what is soul? Self-conscious, what is spirit? God conscious, what is body? World conscious. How much of your life is world conscious, how much of your life is self-conscious, how much of your life is God conscious? Underline it. Tested by the Word of God, then God gives you a certificate, blameless, perfect. That is the reason why the teaching of the Word of God is so important, we come very casually, ‘Lord speak to me’.

Look at what it says in *Psalm 139*, O Lord, you what? You search me, how? Through the Word. You searched me through the Word and showed me how much of me is self-conscious, how much of me is God conscious, how much of me is world conscious. Some of your dressings, full of the world, I mean you care two hoots, you come to the presence of God like that? Think about that? Will you go to an interview like that? That is the reason why God says, “If I am a Father, where is My honor. If I am your Master where is My respect, and yet you say, ‘How did You love us?’ Have I not loved Jacob and have I not hated Esau?” O my dear brothers and sisters. He says, “You searched me and known me, You know my sitting down and my rising up.” In other words, why do you sit up and why do you rise up? He knows. You know there is an intention behind sitting and there’s an intention behind rising, you know that. For example, a conversation is going on, you walk out like that, what does it mean? Not interested. Think about that. Jesus is conversing with us and you walk out, you’re casual. You are like my student in IIIT after forty-five-minute prostrate problem. After 8 years in my university, do you know what I found? Shirts tighter, skirts shorter and patience waning out, prostrate becoming weaker, weaker by the year.

Psalm 139:1-4

¹O LORD, You have searched me and known me. ²You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. ³You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. ⁴For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O LORD, You know it altogether. ⁵You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. ⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it. ⁷Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?

⁷Where can I run from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I make my bed in hell You are there. What is your bed in hell? Sitting before your computer and watching YouTube. That is hell. You can delete your history, but your history is recorded there. Your artificial intelligence is only artificial. What is above is real intelligence. That is divine intelligence.

Psalm 139:23-24

²³Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; ²⁴And see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

That is what is it talking about to be blameless, coming under the scrutiny of the Word of God. Subjecting yourself under the scrutiny, the analysis, the examination of the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

Psalm 19:12-14

¹²Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. ¹³Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression. ¹⁴Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.

Who can understand his errors? Answer? No one. That is a rhetorical question. No can understand his errors. That is obvious, that is why he needs someone to tell you what your errors are. You have not just one blind stop but several.

That is the reason why in the search of God there are no blind spots. Seven eyes. Perfectly He will see, every angle is covered.

So first thing what did he do? He practiced a regular life style of contemplation, confession and repentance. Second, he practiced a regular life style of probing and examination by the Word of God and the Spirit of God. That is what we call as accountability. Why do we come for the Word of God? And to the preaching of the Word of God? So that we make ourselves accountable. So that you are blameless. Let's go back to Job. That is the reason why God loved this man. He said, "Do you know what? Did you see my servant? Have you set your heart on My servant?" God says, "Hey satan, you know what? This guy is my prize." Like pastor was talking about when all the parents boast about the accomplishments of their children. Do you know what God is going to do? He is going to proudly display Job.

Can God say that about us? "Have you considered My servant, Vijay?" what a statement! That will be awesome, right? "Have you considered My servant Kruthika? Abigail? Joanna?" and all of you. Just remove the word, 'Job' and put yourself. You know what, one of the things that you need to understand, 'Job was willing to pay the price, in that he was willing to be hated by the world. He didn't care as to what people will think about him.

So first,

Contemplation, confession, repentance

A regular life style of probing and examination by the Word and the Spirit.

Third one,

Job 1:8

⁸Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"

Blameless and upright. I like the word upright. How do we understand uprightness? Os Guinness had made a very interesting statement – 'Contrast is the mother of clarity.' Compare and contrast. So when you see the mother you will know who the real deal is. You will know what the real deal is; when you know what it is not then you will know what it is.

Proverbs 21:29 NIV

²⁹The wicked put up a bold front, but the upright give thought to their ways.

Proverb 21:29 NLT

²⁹The wicked bluff their way through, but the virtuous think before they act.

Proverbs 21:29 NKJV

²⁹A wicked man hardens his face, in other words he is set in his ways, but as for the upright, he establishes his way.

What does it mean? The wicked bluff. What does he do? He bluffs his way. We see several examples in the Bible. One of the classic examples. The man who wanted to bluff his way to the blessings. Who is that man? Jacob. Classic bluff. He loved his mother's idea, he thought that was a fantastic idea. An idea will change your life now.

Genesis 27:11-12

¹¹And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth-skinned man. ¹²Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver (or a bluff) to him; and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing."

I remember, my father had a very close friend. His name was Bhujji, a very nice friend, very nice funny guy. So they used to discuss as to what they used to do in their college days. So in the college there was a guy who was being bullied and this bunch of friends were very upset that this bully was coming and bullying this person, they wanted to stand up to him but nobody had the courage to do it. So they all said, "Bhujji, Bhujji, you have to do something about it." So they had a confrontation and this Bhujji uncle, in his chest his heart was beating fast and before this bully he just stood there

and started rolling up his sleeves and flexing his muscles, showing off his muscles. That guy looked at him, studied him carefully and he went away. What was he trying to do? Bluff.

Do you know something? You cannot do that to the devil. Do you know what he will say? "Jesus I acknowledge, Paul I know of, but who are you?" You can trick your father, but not God. Look at his idea. He said, ***I shall seem to be a deceiver to him and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing.*** What do you mean 'seem to be'? you are a deceiver.

Genesis 27:21-24

²¹ Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not."

Isaac had this sixth sense if you want to call it that.

²² So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau."²³ And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him. But just before he blessed him, last chance for you to accept who you are. ²⁴ Then he said, "Are you really my son Esau?" What did he say? He said, "I am."

That is it! The positions get interchanged. Now you are Esau and what did God say about Esau? "Esau I have hated" Job is hated by the world and loved by God. Job means hated. Now what have you become? Esau. Loved by your father and hated by God. You have to be very careful. Identity theft; he was trying to steal somebody's identity. But you can't steal from God. Last chance. I mean, in other words this guy, Job, he practiced a life style of artlessness and guilelessness before God.

1 Kings 14:1-6

¹ At that time Ahijah the son of Jeroboam became sick. If anybody in your house or family falls sick, ask God. ² And Jeroboam said to his wife, "Please arise, and disguise yourself, that they may not recognize you as the wife of Jeroboam, and go to Shiloh. Indeed, Ahijah the prophet is there, who told me that I would be king over this people. ³ Also take with you ten loaves, some cakes, and a jar of honey, and go to him; he will tell you what will become of the child."⁴ And Jeroboam's wife did so; she arose and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were glazed by reason of his age. ⁵ Now the LORD had said to Ahijah, "Here is the wife of Jeroboam, coming to ask you something about her son, for he is sick. Thus and thus you shall say to her; for it will be, when she comes in, that she will pretend to be another woman."⁶ And so it was, when Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps as she came through the door, he said, "Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why do you pretend to be another person? For I have been sent to you with bad news.

That is the prophetic eye. He might be blind physically, but not blind spiritually. Understand. You are going to die, Ahab. You are going to war and you will be finish. The Ahab put the prophet in prison and said, "I will come back." Micaiah said, "If you come back the Lord has not spoken through me." Ahab panicked and said, "Okay, we will do one thing, Jehoshaphat you dress up as king and I will disguise as an ordinary soldier." The orders in the enemy's camp were very strict – 'Go after the king of Israel.' Jehoshaphat was there and everybody was after Jehoshaphat and he kept saying, 'No, no no, I am not the one.' Then they realized that this is not the king of Israel. But what happened? An ordinary soldier randomly shot an arrow. There is no randomness in the kingdom of God, by the way. No Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle. He randomly shot an arrow and it went through the crevices of the armor of Ahab and finished him off.

You can't pretend before God, my dear brothers and sisters. I mean one of the things my children have learnt over the period of time is that they can't pretend before me. Somehow that discernment is there now, thank God. Later on they might get smarter and start pretending better. It is like Elisha asking, "Where did you go Gehazi?" "Your servant did not go anywhere." "Really? Did not my spirit go along with you?"

Do you know what uprightness is? Do not pretend before God. So much of pretense in our lives. That is the reason why, you know what, in 2 Corinthians 10, KJV it says - *casting down every pretention*. Every pretense. So what do we do? Subject ourselves to God and surrender ourselves to God and ask God for grace. So what happens when we receive grace?

How many times you have read this verse right? At least 52 times * 7 years.

Titus 2:11-13 NIV

¹¹For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. ¹²It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

What is uprightness? A life without pretense. *Behold an Israelite, a true Israelite in whom there is no guile.* So the first thing what did I say?

- Regular and a disciplined life style of contemplation, confession and repentance
- A life style of regular probing and examinations by the Word of God
- A life style of being guileless, artless and honest before God and say to Him, ‘I am that man.’

Three things we have looked at. Fourth one,

Job 1:8

⁸Then the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?”!

We have looked at blamelessness and uprightness. Third thing – the one who fears God. Now we can look at the fear of God in several contexts, but today I want to look at it in the relationship with God with a specific term. Why do we fear God? What does it mean to fear God in the New Covenant context? As a new covenant believer, how do I fear God?

1 Peter 1:17-19

¹⁷And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; ¹⁸knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

I had a friend in my in childhood who used to be my neighbor. They were brother and sister, Sri Ram and Sri Vidya. And the guy was a brilliant kids (he passed away in a accident). Nice family. So he used to come to our home, we were living in the 3rd floor and he was living in the ground floor. He used to come to our home and we used to play chess and we used to hang out a lot. He was 3 years younger to me. So his father used to have a very tough schedule. He said, “You are going to anna’s (Brother’s) house only half an hour. And I will call you in half an hour.” You know how he used to call him from downstairs? He would clap twice. What did you hear? Clap. But what did my friend hear? He heard his father. We were all engrossed in that game chess, we all heard the clap and my friend was like, “Dad is calling! My father is calling.” I heard a clap but he heard his father. You see a relationship.

Kids will be playing on the street and one voice, “Hey!” a mother is calling and everybody knows whose mother called. So the perfect son will turn and say. “That is my mother.” you heard, “Hey!” he heard his mother. You heard a clap but he heard his father. And you should see the way he responds; he immediately stops playing, “Father is calling” and he runs downstairs to his father and mother. Just half an hour. My parents are here, they are the witnesses. Immediately they used to run. That is the kind of relationship they had; they used to love their father and they used to revere their father.

That is what we are talking about fearing God. What does that mean? It is a life style of knowing and revering and respecting God as Father, having a zeal for His Name. In no way should I bring disrepute to my Father’s Name. What is the Lord’s Prayer? ***Our Father who art in Heaven***, the first thing, ***Hallowed be Thy Name***. In other words I should not do anything in my life that would bring disrespect to my Father. Job is God’s son. ‘Lord, they will say that I am Your son. Not even a single sear in my life people to point out and say, ‘He is a Christian, look at the way he is behaving’.’ That is fear of God.

We have a very servile attitude when we are talking about the fear of God. No, no, no. We are talking about having reverence for our Father. Now this is talking about Jesus,

Hebrews 5:7-9

⁷who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, How did Jesus address God? “Abba!” that is closeness, “Father!” with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, ⁸though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. ⁹And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,

See, this is the process. This is what it means to fear God. In other words you are zealous for Him. We stayed in our previous home for seven years. Seven years in that previous home one thing we want to do is that we did not want to give even one chance to my landlord to say that we came into his property and messed it up. When we were leaving, you wouldn't believe it, I handed over the keys to my landlord and he said, “Vijay, can we pray?” and we sat there together and he started weeping and saying, “Lord, it was our privilege to have him in our home.” I was like, “Lord, I am not only Vijay Eathakota, I am Pastor Vijay Eathakota. The same thing I did with John Manohar should not repeat here.” You know when we parted we parted in peace. And he returned every penny of the deposit. Which landlord gave you the deposit back? They will point out 150 things – this is not right, this is not there, this is broken etc. No chance. Two reputations are at stake, first is that you are a pastor and second is that you are a pastor of GTC. And what do I have in my DP? Our senior pastor. So his reputation, your reputation and God's reputation. That is what we are talking about.

John 2:13-17

¹³Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. ¹⁵When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. ¹⁶And He said to those who sold doves, “Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!” ¹⁷Then His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.”

This is the teaching. Jesus does not cleanse the temple once, He cleanses it twice. 1st in the beginning of ministry and second at the end of His ministry.

Mark 11:15-17

¹⁵So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. ¹⁶And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. ¹⁷Then He taught, saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’”

Are you zealous for God's Name? I bear the Name of Christ, so let them not point fingers at my Christ through my behavior.

Let's go back to *Job 1:8*, so we looked at four things,

1. A regular and a disciplined life style of contemplation, confession and repentance
2. Regular probing and examinations of the Word of God
3. A life style of being guileless and artless before God, honest before God
4. A life style of knowing and learning and respecting God as the Father.

Job 1:8

⁸Then the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?”!

What does it mean to run away from evil?

Proverbs 3:7

⁷Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil.

Who are those people who depart from evil? Those who fear God and those who are not wise in their own eyes. Those people don't think that they know better than God. No. These are wise people – 'I will do what my God asks me to do.' Even if it might look foolish, because *the foolishness of God is wiser than men and meekness of God is stronger than men.*

Psalm 34:11

¹¹Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. ¹²Who is the man who desires life, And loves many days, that he may see good?

In other words I should not die before my time. I was asking the Lord, yesterday pastor was saying, 'We have very little time left.' I was praying, "Lord, it is said about David that he fulfilled all the will of God, he fulfilled God's purpose in His generation and rested with his fathers. It is possible Lord? I want to finish like that. This is my desire." The answer to that question is this, do you desire life? Do you love many days, and you want to see good? What should you do? Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceitfully.

¹³Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. ¹⁴Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it.

Not only depart from evil but do good. Seek peace and find it. I was thinking about this. What does it mean to depart from evil? It is just not departing from evil but on the contrary you do good. There are three kinds of people – the wicked and evil people who repay evil for good. The normal kind of people who repay good for good. That is what Jesus says, "Even that tax collectors will do the same thing." Even the mafia will love their own. One thing they say about Pablo Escobar, the famous Colombian drug lord, is that he loved his family. Big deal, so what if you love your family and you love your own, even mafia and drug lords can do the same. So the wicked people are those people who repay evil for good that they receive. Normal people who repay good for the good that they receive and the third kind of people, the godly and the righteous who repay good even when they receive evil.

I am going to give you an example again. A man who was evil, so that you know the contrast and you know what you should not be. What does it mean to repay evil for the good that you receive? What does it mean? Are there examples in the Bible of people who repaid evil for the good that they received?

1 Samuel 25:3

²Now there was a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel, and the man was very rich. He had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. And he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. ³The name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail. And she was a woman of good understanding and beautiful appearance; but the man was harsh and evil in his doings. He was of the house of Caleb.

In other words, just because you are from the house of Caleb it doesn't mean that you will be a Calebite. Just because you belong to the house of the faithful, it doesn't mean that you will be faithful. Think about this – beautiful woman, how did this beauty end up with the beast is something which is beyond me. I have seen a lot of cases like that, at least a few cases. Beauty ended up with a beast, how did this happen I don't know. Maybe she just saw his riches and got attracted to his riches, I don't know. Somebody said, you know what, he has got a good resume, he has got a good job, he is settled in life. It will be a good match. Maybe, I don't know. But what is he? Nabal. What does Nabal mean? Fool. His name is fool, personification of a fool. Then look at this, what it says,

⁴When David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep, ⁵David sent ten young men; and David said to the young men, "Go up to Carmel, go to Nabal, and greet him in my name. ⁶And thus you shall say to him who lives in prosperity: 'Peace be to you, peace to your house, and peace to all that you have!

What kind of a blessing is this? You are absolutely hedged in. like Job, right? Job's household is blessed. He was blessed and all that he had was blessed. A threefold blessing. They were enjoying it.

1 Samuel 25:7-8

⁷Now I have heard that you have shearers. Your shepherds were with us, and we did not hurt them, nor was there anything missing from them all the while they were in Carmel. ⁸Ask your young men, and they will tell you.

Therefore let my young men find favor in your eyes, for we come on a feast day. Please give whatever comes to your hand to your servants and to your son David.’ ”

In other words, how did you enjoy your prosperity? It is because I was there. Because we were there protecting you. We were ensuring that nothing happens to you. David is a type of Christ, the presence of God, where you are enjoying the protection of God. How does Nabal repay? Look at what it says, the next verse,

1 Samuel 25:10-11

¹⁰ Then Nabal answered David’s servants, and said, “Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants nowadays who break away each one from his master. ¹¹ Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give it to men when I do not know where they are from?”

“My bread, my water, my men, my shearers.” There is a story said about this friend, Bro. Edward Williams gives this example: friend was working on the 25th floor. And his companion was working on the ground floor. From the top floor he wanted to speak to his friend so he started shouting at him but he was not responding. So he did one thing, he took a 10 rupee note and he threw it down. The 10 rupee note came down slowly flying and fell in front of him. So he looked to the left and he looked to the right, took the money and put it in his pocket. Then he was like, ‘Okay I will send a 100 rupee note to get his attention.’ So he threw a 100 rupee note, slowly the 100 rupee note came and fell in front of him. He looked at the 100 rupee note, he looked to the left, he looked to the right, took the money and put it in his pocket. He was like, ‘Man, this fellow is not responding.’ So he took a stone and threw it, it came down and hit his head, then he looked up and said, ‘What happened?’ you see, this is Nabal – ‘My shearers, my money, my wealth, my sheep, my wine. Who are you?’ to whom do we say this? God. ‘Take this tithe and leave me alone. You said it right? 10% is Yours. What does it mean? 90% is mine.’ I like what Derek Prince said, in US and Canada, the tip is 10% of your check. So if your check is \$20, you have to tip him \$2. When it comes to money and when it comes to giving, you know what Derek Prince says? ‘God does not want your tips. Nobody who has been stingy with God has been blessed by God. How do you return to God?’

You know what it says in the book of Malachi? Bring in your plenty and your abundance into the house of God and let there be found in the house of God riches and honor, then I will bless you. So what does Nabal do? ‘Mine!’ ***Nabal answered David’s servants, and said, “Who is David?”*** how do we repay God? ‘This is mine. Keep Your 10% Lord. Thank You very much. My conscience is clear.’ You don’t give to keep your conscience clear. God doesn’t want your money to keep your conscience clear. That is free. How do you repay God? Look at how David looks at it.

1 Samuel 25:21

²¹ Now David had said, “Surely in vain I have protected all that this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belongs to him. And he has repaid me evil for good.

How do you repay evil for the good that He shows us? By not being generous to God and His people. That is the way we repay evil for goodness.

Romans 12:17-19

¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. ¹⁹ Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. ²⁰ Therefore “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.” ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Immediately Abigail realizes that this guy messed it up. She comes to David and remember what she does? She stops David. You know the story. Next day what happens? Everything is over, Abigail has stopped David, appeased him with an offering. And then,

1 Samuel 25:36

³⁶Now Abigail went to Nabal, and there he was, holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk; therefore she told him nothing, little or much, until morning light.

³⁷So it was, in the morning, when the wine had gone from Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became like a stone. ³⁸Then it happened, after about ten days, that the LORD struck Nabal, and he died.

Why? It is because you repaid evil for good. How? By not being generous with what God has given you. That is what it means to not be generous with what God has given you. You see one of the ways that we hold back. When we hold back something we are not doing anything ostensibly evil. That is the reason the Bible says – if you have the power to bless, don't withhold it, release it. Blessed are the merciful for you shall obtain mercy. I understood that verse in different, different ways now. Blessed are the merciful for you shall receive mercy.

I remember, when I was in Canada, I was walking on the roads of Montreal, it was snowing like crazy. So when I was walking towards my apartment, there comes a Jew with his yarmulke, and long robes. He comes to me and says, "Sir, can you please give me some change, I am very hungry sir." I looked at him and wondered what is wrong with this? A Jew begging on the road? I have never seen that in my life. Then immediately a verse came into my mind, *Genesis 12 - the Lord said to Abraham, "Those who blessed you I will bless and those who curse you I will curse."* I was like, 'Lord, this is Your child. He has a covenant with You whether he realizes or not. And Your Word says, 'Bless him.' You know what I did? I was a student, but whatever I had I gave him. He went and had his lunch. Several years later another Jew came into my life. Jacinth and I were having our second baby, we were going through a real rough patch those days. Pastor calls me up and says, 'There is a Jew who has heard our messages, and he wants to pay your hospital bill.' And he was the one who gave me this computer. This is very close to my heart. This is a reminder, a constant reminder of blessing a Jew. I look at Emmanuella and I remember that man. I don't want to mention his name, but it was a Jew who blessed me.

You know what, God says, 'I am no man's debtor.' You release your hand. Those who water others, will themselves be watered. Test it. Initially you might have some difficulties, but eventually you will experience the overflow of God, because God can trust you with more. How do you repay evil with good? By being generous to the people of God, because you enjoyed the protection of God. That is the reason why Paul commends the church in Macedonia, you know what, these people gave out of their poverty. Their poverty overflowed in their expression of liberality. They gave beyond their means.

That is what it means, when you withhold from giving to God's people. You know what, you are repaying evil for the good that you have received from God. God gave you everything freely right? Forgiveness is so free, but when it comes to giving how can we be tight-fisted? So the 5 things that we have learnt about Job.

1. A regular and a disciplined life style of contemplation, confession and repentance
2. A regular life style of being probed and examined by the Word of God and by the Spirit of God
3. When he is examined and probed, he doesn't hide but is honest before God, he practices a life style of guilelessness and artlessness.
4. He practices a life style of learning and respecting God as Father and fearing Him and being zealous for His Name
5. He repays good for all that he received from God by being generous to God's people

Job 1:8

⁸Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"!

What does God do? He puts a hedge around him. That is how he hedges himself from the onslaught of the enemy. And prepared himself for the coming days.

So this morning, even as we are in the house of the Lord, shall we all stand. Every time we come to the preaching of the Word of God it is just not a normal meeting, it is a covenantal meeting, it is a meeting where we make a covenant with God.

Think about these things, my dear brothers. The world will hate us. That is what Job means, the one who is hated by the world. But because he is hidden in God, he is able to withstand the onslaught of evil over his life. Shall we pray this morning and ask God, 'Lord, give me a life of discipline, in that I will contemplate, I will meditate on Your Word. I will keep short accounts with You.' There is a time in which God may be found, but later, if you neglect and you drift away from God you will find yourself so far from Him. Do not neglect those constant probing of God. When He shows you something in the Word, ask the Lord for the grace to be honest before Him. Revere Him, fear Him, be zealous for His name. Practice a life style of generosity. Generosity towards God's people. The Bible says – do not weary yourself in doing good, especially to the household of faith. For in due season you will receive the reward if you do not lose heart. It is through patience and perseverance we obtain the promise.

Closing prayer

Lord this morning, we come to You in the name of Jesus, we commit ourselves as a church to You O Lord. I plead the blood of Jesus over our lives, we thank You Lord for 15 years of Your faithfulness in our lives and even as we have entered into the New Year, as a church, I pray O Lord Jesus that You would bless us with a heart of giving. And when we withhold O Lord Jesus from giving to You and Your people, O Lord we repay with evil for the good that we have received, may we not be like Nabal; holding things for our own self. Being bogged down in our own struggles and our own problems. Enable us to look outside, out of our lives and look at the need. I pray Lord Jesus that You would bless us as a church with that heart; a heart that loves their brothers and sisters, who is willing to share things with others, knowing that the time is short. For Your Word says – those who use Your Word as though not owning it but sharing liberally with others because the time is short. The time of Your coming is short. But we want to be like David O Lord, we want to fulfill all the will of God in our lives. We want it to be written about us O Lord, that we as individuals and as a church have fulfilled God's purpose in our generation. Let it not be a dream, let that be our aim and let that be our ambition. Enable us as Your children to work toward that, of knowing and doing all Your will in our lives. Enable us to see long life and good days. Grant us mercy grant us mercy O Lord. Thank You Lord, thank You Jesus. We have come to the end of this month and we are going to begin a new month. Even as Your children go back this week I pray Lord Jesus that we will keep this Word in our hearts, we will practice a life style of contemplation and repentance. A life style which will make us accountable to the Word that we receive, a life style of being artless and guileless before God. A life style of honoring and fearing Your name in our work places, in our colleges and wherever we are. A life style of being generous, especially in the household of faith. To that end I pray that You will bless us O Lord.

Bless our church O Lord, with a heart to give. Not to be tight-fisted and look at our own lives, so that we can enjoy the protection and be hedged in, and be provided for, protected from and prepared for the coming days. We thank You Lord, we praise You, we give You glory, for in Jesus' mighty name we pray. Amen.

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