

# Looking Unto Jesus!

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*Father we just want to thank You for this morning. Lord we just want to rejoice in Your house this morning truly Lord in Your presence is fullness of joy and at Your right hand there are pleasures for ever more. Truly Lord, it is better to be in the house of the Lord for one day than to dwell in the tents of wickedness for thousand days O Lord. One day in Your presence O Lord that we would rather be a door keeper in Your house than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. Lord it is only in eternity, we would know, in hindsight what a precious privilege that You have given to us that we could all come together and gather in Your name and listen to Your Word week after week. Lord we never want to take these privileges for granted. Lord Your Word says O Lord that it is through the foolishness of the message that was preached You chose to save those who believe. It is a foolish thing in the eyes of the world O Lord. It is foolishness to those who are perishing but to those of us who are being saved, it is the power of God. And therefore this morning even as we are here gathered in Your house to listen to Your Word, I pray Father that You would speak to our hearts, fill us with Your Holy Spirit, anoint us even during the speaking and the hearing of this Word that You would write Your laws by the finger of Your Holy Spirit on the deep most parts of our inner man, on the tables of our heart and in our mind O Lord so that we can walk in Your ways. That's what Your Word says O Lord, in the New Covenant, it is not the external but it is the internal, it is the Spirit of God who dwells within each one of our hearts in the bosom of every believer who has got the capacity, if we believe, to write the law of God into the deep most parts of our inner man on our hearts which You have given to us. A new heart and a new mind. Lord I pray, Father that through the ministry of the Word, You would do the same through the finger of God, the Holy Spirit, drive out every lie of the devil O Lord, drive out every stronghold of the enemy O Lord, and set us free by Your truth and cause us to experience the freedom and the joy that You promised when we walk in truth O Lord. Grant us grace to that end we pray Lord, speak to our hearts this morning, speak to us, cause us to walk in Your ways, grant us hearing ears. Open the eyes of our heart, open our understanding. As You open the Scriptures O Lord to the disciples O Lord Father, You opened up their understanding so that they could understand the Scriptures and therefore this morning I pray Lord, that You would open our understanding as well and Lord show us from Your Word, things concerning Your Son, we lift up Jesus this morning. And Lord, even as Jesus is lifted up, You draw all men unto Yourself. Therefore, this morning we commit ourselves to the hearing of the Word and to the speaking of the Word, anoint us this morning, we thank You, we praise You we give You glory, for in Jesus name we pray. Amen.*

So, we've been in a series on faith and we've understood that the object of our faith is not just the power of God, but it is to get to know the Person of Jesus Christ. It is the presence of God in our lives that is more important than to just merely experience the power of God. One of the attributes of David if you see, he says, "Lord, cast me not away from Your presence," and he does not stop there. "Do not take away Your Holy Spirit from me." The presence of God and the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives is something which we cannot take for granted. You see, every warning if you will in the New Testament is against how a believer deals with the person of the Holy Spirit. Don't lie to the Spirit, don't tempt the Spirit, don't grieve the Spirit, don't insult the Spirit, don't quench the Spirit. Every warning in the Bible is about the Person of the Holy Spirit and it is He who writes the law and even as we come to the ministry of the Word, what is being ministered is the spirit. That's the reason why the Bible says, when you hear from faith, what comes into your life is the Spirit of God. Even as you receive the Word by faith what comes into your life is the Spirit of God, the very presence of God. Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find and He says, if you ask, how much more your heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit, right. How do you ask? One of the ways you ask is when you come to the preaching and the ministry of the Word. You come by faith and when you receive the word of God by faith, what happens to you is you have an infilling of the Spirit, that happens. The Bible says, don't be drunk with wine in which is dissipation or wastage but be filled with the Holy Spirit. How do you do that? By speaking to one another, isn't it interesting. Speaking to one another with Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs making melody in your hearts unto the Lord. It is through that speaking and the preaching of the Word and when you receive the Word by faith, there is an infilling of the Holy Spirit that happens. So, receive this morning the Spirit. Of course we are talking about the Person of Jesus Christ and this morning I just want to look at one important aspect of what we should endeavor as believers to concentrate on. Let's read from *Hebrews 12:1, 2* very familiar passage and we will look at some important truth from this one particular phrase. *Hebrews 12*

## **Hebrews 12:1-2**

**<sup>1</sup> Therefore 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, <sup>2</sup> 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,** and who are these witnesses? In chapter 11 you will see the entire chapter on the heroes of faith, the hall of faith as they say and every testimony, the witness you see is the work of the Spirit in their lives or the testimony of Jesus Christ or it is the Christ in them that speaks to us.

**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.** Yesterday, we looked at a very important aspect of faith, if you were listening to the Pastor's conference. A faith that endures, enduring faith. So how does one get this enduring faith? We are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses but in these witnesses, in order for us to have an impartation of this enduring faith, what are we supposed to look for in these witnesses, the next verse will say, **looking unto Jesus**. That is the key. **Looking unto Jesus the Author and the Perfecter of the faith**, even as you read about the testimony of Abel, the testimony of Enoch, the testimony of Noah, the testimony of Abraham, the testimony of all the heroes of faith in *Hebrews 11* and also the heroes of faith through the Bible, what are we looking for? We are looking for Christ in each one of them. How the Christ in each one of them by faith overcame.

So, we are surrounded by these witnesses but what are we looking for in each one of them is Jesus. Looking unto Jesus. This is a very important thing. This looking unto Jesus is not a small phrase, it is a phrase loaded with meaning. Who is He? He is the Author, that means, He is the one who begun this faith and He is the Perfecter, He is the one who will finish this journey of faith. **Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross.** We are going through this period the church generally calls the period of lent for forty days, sufferings of Christ is what we want to remember but one of the things that we need to realize. What did Jesus through His sufferings learn? What did He learn? Obedience. You might go through the period of lent and not have learnt obedience. That would be a waste, right? So, looking unto Jesus, the Author and the Perfecter.

So, in all these witnesses what are we supposed to look at? Look at Jesus. There will be so many things in the background. You see, when a photographer creates a frame, he creates lots of things in the background but there is something which is very important for us. He wants to convey a particular thing through an image. What does he do? He creates a frame, in that frame will be so many things but all those features in the picture are to accentuate a particular idea or thought that he is trying to convey. Do you understand? So, what happens if you get lost in the background, you will miss the whole purpose of the picture. So, even as you read the Bible, there will be so many details which are given in the Bible. You see in all the details what are we supposed to look for. We are supposed to look for that one Person, the Person of Jesus Christ which is the center theme of the entire Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation. Otherwise we will listen to the entire Ramayana and the standard question is - who is Sita? We have forgotten.

So, the whole purpose is that we look for Jesus in every frame. So, if I were to look at the Bible as movie, what am I supposed to look for? Jesus in every frame. So, the whole purpose is to look unto Jesus, the Author and the Perfecter of our faith. So, if He is missing in the frame, then there is no point. So we can talk about stories, we can get inspirations but we haven't looked at Jesus, then the whole purpose is defeated. So, we have to look for Jesus because He is the Author of the faith. How do we have this impartation of this faith? We look at Jesus. So, let read now from *Hebrews 12*, what is the phrase looking unto Me? 'Looking unto Me,' is very important. To turn your eyes away from other things and to fix, everybody say fix, fix them on Jesus. I told you, right? There are many times I mentioned this. There are two awards that sports people get in India, people who are involved with sports get in India. First is what is called Arjuna award and the other is called Dronacharya award. Why Arjuna award? Do you remember the story of Arjuna? Everybody says, all the brothers and the cousins come and say, tell their guru, 'You are very partial towards Arjuna.' He says, 'You come here you fellows. I will tell you why I appreciate him.' He puts a toy and he says, you have to aim the eye and shoot the eye.

So, one by one all the Kauravas and all the Pandavas come in line and Dronacharya ask them, what do you see? The first fellow says, I see the bird, I see the leaves, I see the tree and I also see the bird. He says, you will not hit. One by one everybody comes and the final student is Arjuna. And what does Arjuna say? 'I only see the eye,' and no wonder he hits

the target. See, the problem is this. What is plan B for me? I was discussing with a brother yesterday. There is only plan A, plan B is to make plan A work. That's all. There's no plan B. How do I get plan A to work? So, what is this? Fix your eyes on Jesus, looking unto Jesus. When I teach my children any songs, especially Telugu, if they get distracted here and there, they will not get it. So, what I tell them, all the small children especially, they get distracted so easily, right? For the first three or four minutes I say, don't do anything, just look at my face. Have you seen children, can they look at you straight for one minute, without turning their heads? No. So, right from childhood I want to teach them, I'm not going to teach you anything, just stay there. All of you come and stand next to me, I'm sitting on the chair and I say, just look at me.

So, Athira is there, suddenly she will move to the other side. Evangeline she will look up and one fellow is dancing up and down and I said, Hey, wait! Everybody look at me, and again after twenty seconds, they are getting distracted. Again, I said, look at me and then I teach. Otherwise what happens? Nothing happens. I keep telling you right? In Sanskrit there is one very powerful sentence, Guru Mukhasya, Vidya Labhyerthe. if you cannot concentrate and if you are interested in so many other things you will not be focused. What does looking unto mean? To turn your eyes away from all those things that distract you and to fix. I tell my children, it is not important for you to be intelligent, smart or a genius because an unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. I have seen incredible amount of geniuses in my life, who are ultimately put on the shelf. And that is the reason why Albert Einstein says, who is a genius? Ninety-nine percent perspiration, one percent inspiration. I agree with him. Fix. So, what are we supposed to be fixing our eyes on? Even when you read the Bible, one of the things that I will encourage you to do is? Where is Jesus in this picture? Where is Jesus in this Chapter? *Isaiah 45:22*

### **Isaiah 45:22**

***<sup>22</sup>Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.***

In other words, there is only one God. Don't get distracted with so many other things asking for your attention. You get up in the morning, this fellow is there. One day during this lent I want to do twenty-one days fasting from phone if it is possible, really honestly. Throw this fellow and this computer and just for twenty-one days, also forget about food and concentrate and just read the Bible. Yesterday Pastor was talking about Smith Wigglesworth. His testimony, he did not read any other Book, other than the Bible in his life, and he was not very educated. One thing that he read was his Bible. I thought that was a powerful sentence and I said Lord, so many things I want to read, I want to read news, I want to listen to this news, I want to listen to that news. And most of the news is bad news it will not impart faith at all. All it will impart is frustration and unbelief. There are two kinds of Christians. I call them FCC, frustrated Christians club. There are members and honorary members. You know what members are right? All frustrated Christians come together and they say, we are all members. If they don't see a frustrated fellow, they say you are frustrated, we will make you an honorary member. That is Joseph and his brothers. 'Look unto Me,' put your eyes focused on Jesus. So many things asking for your attention.

Most of them when you listen to them, you get frustration and unbelief. 'Look unto Me.' This morning, the Bible says, look unto Me. Remember Spurgeon, he was depressed and miserable. He was like literally in the gall of bitterness, that what his testimony says. He was in the gall of bitterness and he was frustrated. On one cold winter morning. He was walking towards the church and there was a snow storm and he was depressed and sin was pulling him down and he did not know what to do and the cold was so bad. So, he was walking down the street and there was one Methodist church over there. He just walked into the church and that day the Pastor was not there because it was a snow storm and the Pastor did not come and the lay preacher, was a lay man, he said, 'let me do something, let me just read the Word.' So, he took out the Book of Isaiah like Jesus got. This place, *Isaiah 45:22*

### **Isaiah 45:22**

***<sup>22</sup>Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.***

***Look unto Me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is no other*** and Spurgeon was sitting like that, down and depressed, his head hanging down and this lay man didn't have much to say so he kept on repeating the same verse over and over again. After a while, his congregation also was very small that day and he looked at Spurgeon who came for the first time and he said, "Young man, you look miserable." He got a shock of his life, he just looked up and he said, "Look unto Him and be saved." That's it. At that moment the Spirit of God hit him and he came under conviction and he was saved. So, the entire focus, that is the reason why, even you look at Jesus and you read through the gospels,

you know what He says? You read the Scriptures, right? And every part of Scripture is talking about me but you don't believe Me and you don't come to Me so that you'd be saved. Look at what He says to Nicodemus. *John 3*

### **John 3:16-17**

***<sup>16</sup>For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.***

The word which I love the most in these two verses is, 'for', two 'fors' are very powerful. So, what are these 'fors'? These fors are for us so that we can look unto the person. And who is that person we are supposed to look at? John 3, the previous verse.

***<sup>13</sup>No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. <sup>14</sup> And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.***

because God so loved the world and so on. So, we looked at this particular passage. What did Moses do in the wilderness? What was he trying to teach in through that episode in the wilderness? Let's read that passage and draw out a few lessons and let's look unto Jesus. *Numbers 21*

### **Numbers 21:4-6**

***<sup>4</sup> Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. <sup>5</sup> And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." <sup>6</sup> So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.***

For there is no food, there is no water. Is it true? No. There was lot of food in Manna. Even if they didn't like the food, God also gave them meat. Manna in the morning, meat in the evening and then did they have water? Absolutely. There was a rock which was following them. Can you imagine a rock following them? Wherever they went the rock was behind them. First they had to strike the rock, next they had to only speak to the rock and what, rivers in the desert. So, this is not true. Let's move on. ***And there is no food and no water and our soul loathes this worthless bread. So, the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people and many of the people of Israel died.*** This is the scene and you know the story. Now, why was all these written? The experiences of Israel in the wilderness are for us to learn from. Look at what it says in *1 Corinthians 10:11*,

### **1 Corinthians 10:11**

***<sup>11</sup>Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.***

Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition. It was their example so that we can get admonished upon whom the ends of the ages have come. So, this is the purpose. What is the purpose, to teach us from their examples what is happening over there? What is the example that God is trying to teach, what is the lesson that God is trying to teach here? Let us read each one of those verses carefully and see what the Lord is trying to teach. ***Numbers 21. Then they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea to go around the land of Edom and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way.*** You see this word, discouraged. Other translations will use the word, 'impatient.' This is a very interesting word. This word in actual Hebrew language implies, reaping or harvesting. They are harvesting something. What are they harvesting? There is a law, whatever you sow, that also you will reap but actually what you sow, you will reap much more.

Okay, they've been sowing certain things in all these years. Let me tell you something, we also sow. Our current situation, wherever we are in is a result of lot of sowing, what I call as making choices, decisions that we have made, words that we have spoken, relationships that we got ourselves into. The careers that we have chosen for ourselves. Everything in our

life, there is one law that you can never escape, the law of sowing and reaping and the Bible very clearly says, "God is not mocked, whatsoever a man sows, that's exactly what he will reap." The point is sometimes, your four fathers have sowed and you reap, whether good or bad. David sowed some fantastic things in the spirit and his generations experienced the fruit of it. And there is a principle in *Job 4:8* this is what it says.

**Job 4:8**

***<sup>8</sup>Even as I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same.***

Even as I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble, what do they do? They also reap the same. Those who sow the wind will reap the whirlwind and this is exactly what happens. They were sowing and what were they sowing? They were sowing seeds of unbelief, constantly kept on speaking against, "Why did the Lord?" Always speaking certain things and life and dead as we know is in the power of the tongue. So they have been sowing words of unbelief and now they are reaping. So, one of the things that we have to constantly examine in our lives, yesterday as Pastor was talking in the Pastor's conference, he says, "Examine yourself if you are in the faith." Exams are coming this month. Examine yourself too, two months are over. The situation that you are in today, the spiritual situation that you find yourself in, both personally and as a family if you a head of the household. What is the reason that you are in a particular situation? What have you been sowing through the last two months? Did we believe in the promise that God gave us? Did we continue to speak the Promise into our lives? Faith has got three important attributes. Faith has to be spoken, faith has to be acted upon, and faith has to be tested. Three things have to happen.

Okay, so, if you are in a situation for example, it might seem like a situation full of trouble, maybe God is testing you, testing the genuineness of your faith. So, don't worry about that but, what if you are finding yourself in the same old rut over and over again and you are not breaking through? When you examine yourself, and you look at your life and say, "Lord the result of all these things that are happening in my life, could they have been avoided?" Absolutely! Most of the things could have been avoided but I chose and what happened is, all those years, one of the things that the children of Israel never learnt is to sow in the spirit except for three – Moses, Caleb and Joshua. All the others, the Bible says in Jude, having brought children out of Egypt, what did He do? He destroyed them in the wilderness, all those who do not believe. So, look at our lives, two months over. Look at my life, look at my spiritual situation, do I enjoy the Word more? Do I enjoy my family more? Do I enjoy my work more? How is my life?

Honestly, the kind of choices that we make, are they choices of faith or are they choices of sight? So, examine your harvest all the time, keep examining it and sometimes, one man of God says, "An unexamined life is not worth living." Examine, so examine. So, they sowed and they were frustrated. Let's move on. And the people spoke against God and against Moses. You see, this is one of major problems. I was talking to one sister the other day, she was discussing with me some issues and concerns that she has in her family and in the course of our discussion, one of the things that I told the sister, I said you know sister, in my life as a Christian and in the few years of my ministry, I have seen very few people who take responsibility for their own action, very, very few. I mean it's so rare to find one genuine person who says, "You know what Lord, I am responsible," very rare. Isn't it true? Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness for there is no food, there is no water and our soul hates this worthless bread, despising the word too. Now, the result is remarkable, the result is something which is mind-blowing. Sometimes I wonder how God looks at certain things in our lives, I mean certain sins are very, very serious in the sight of God. Numbers 21, this is what the Bible says,

***The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people.*** I was giving this example in one of the meetings. Some homes, when you go to their homes, there's a board on their gate. What does the board say? Beware of dogs. Your friend invited you, one of the things recently, I'm finding trouble with is one dog in our colony. That fellow he looks at me, he gets agitated, I don't know why. And I want to talk to him and reason with him, it's not going to be possible and I want to do certain things, call the MCH fellow and take them, but he has got a collar. So, obviously some body owns the dog, I don't know. But let me tell you what I'm trying to convey here. So, when you go to his home and you don't appreciate dogs much, even if it is a pug or a very friendly dog, what you would ask your friend, "Please tie your dog." Now, unless the dog is tied, you cannot go inside and enjoy the fellowship or whatever the invitation that your friend has called you for, you cannot do that. So, first you want to make sure, beware of dog, "Have you tied the dog?" first thing and then I will enter. Please, for me, I'm not like Pastor James okay, I cannot tolerate dogs somehow. Cannot, even till date it is impossible for me to fathom a relationship with a dog but because the other day I was frustrated with this dog, I said, "How do I deal with this,"

so I said, I'll take a stick. I took a stick, big stick, and I just tapped the ground with it, all the dogs in the colony started shouting at me, even the tommy who is more or less friendly and afraid of me. And I took that thing out to the side and I said okay let me escape these dogs somehow. I will take another route. What I'm trying to convey here is this. As long as a dog is restrained, you can have fellowship, you can enjoy, at least me with a peace of mind okay. I can have peace in my life knowing that the dog is tied, that I restraining. What happens is, here the Bible says, actual word, sent.

The Bible says, "God released fiery serpents among them." What did He do? He released meaning, something was holding back the fiery serpents and because the children of Israel did something, God removed the restraints and automatically, what came? Fiery serpents came into their live and started biting them and many of the people died. That word sent means, God did not send like this, God released, meaning He just removed the restraints. I'll give you an example from the Bible. *1 Samuel 16*

### **1 Samuel 16:14**

***<sup>14</sup>But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the LORD troubled him.***

But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, okay, the moment the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul what happens? He came out of the presence of God, the restraining hand of God, the Spirit of God was restraining all the demonic activity over his life, that was removed and like yesterday we heard in the Q and A, nature does not allow a vacuum, what happens? Automatically, all the other spirits got attracted to him and the Bible says, there was a spirit called a distressing spirit from the Lord which was allowed to torment him now. I mean this is a very important spiritual truth my dear brothers and sisters, especially young children, let me tell you. You come out from under the authority that God has placed you, your father and mother for example in your home, as long as you are under the covering of the father and mother, you know what? There is a protection because let me tell you. We know Psalm 91 right? What is that? ***He who dwells in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the almighty, I will say of the Lord He is my refuge and my fortress, my God in Him will I trust. Surely He will deliver from the snare of the fowler and under His wings you shall trust. His truth shall be your shield and your buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror by night, that means there are terrors, nor for the arrow that flies by day, that means there are arrows.***

See, all these arrows are flying, you cannot escape those arrows. It's like there are germs around, and there are germs inside your body too and there is something called as immune system which is constantly fighting those germs. There are demonic activities all around and if you want to have the spiritual immune system to ward off these attacks of the enemy, what are you supposed to be? You are supposed to be under the protection of God and what did God do? The moment they spoke against God and against who? Against Moses, the shepherd over their lives, the shepherd who was overseeing them. You know what God did? He removed the restraints and automatically what happened? The fiery serpents were released into their lives and they bit many of them. Now, what happened to this guy, the moment he rebelled against God, the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul and the evil spirit, look at it. Surely, a distressing spirit from God is troubling you. This is what we call as therapy. What do therapist do? Therapist don't deal with your disease and the symptom of your disease, they only try to placate it. So, David comes, David plays the music and for a period of time because of the anointing over David, the evil spirit goes off but the moment David goes off, what happens to him? The evil spirit comes back. You see? Another example. *1 Kings 22*

### **1 Kings 22:5-8; 19-23**

***<sup>5</sup>Also Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "Please inquire for the word of the LORD today."***

***<sup>6</sup> Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said to them, "Shall I go against Ramoth Gilead to fight, or shall I refrain?" So they said, "Go up, for the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the king."*** These are what we call as yes men. They will always say good about you.

***<sup>7</sup> And Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not still a prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of Him?"*** everybody is saying the same thing. What is this? Then maybe one fellow said, in the mouth of two or three witness everything gets established, come on this is from the Lord but deep down inside of his heart, Jehoshaphat had some kind of discernment. He looked at these fellows and he said these guys are not very genuine, I can see. Sometimes you know genuine people and you know sometimes duplicate also. They are too good to be true sometimes okay and he's like these words are too good to be true, is there another voice whom we can enquire, ***<sup>8</sup> So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the LORD; but I hate him,*** Why do you hate him? Is he

not good? Is he not concerned about you, does he not love you? No, he loves me too much. He loves me too much that he always says what is wrong with me, **because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.**” That means you already know. <sup>19</sup> **Then Micaiah said, “Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by, on His right hand and on His left. <sup>20</sup> And the LORD said, ‘Who will persuade Ahab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?’ So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner. <sup>21</sup> Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, ‘I will persuade him.’ <sup>22</sup> The LORD said to him, ‘In what way?’ So, he said, ‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’ And the LORD said, You shall persuade him, and also prevail. Go out and do so.’ <sup>23</sup> Therefore look! The LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours, and the LORD has declared disaster against you.”**

And that’s the reason Micaiah also says, “I saw Israel scattered as a sheep without a shepherd.” You know what? The covering is gone now, the restraints are taking out and what is going to happen now? The evil spirits are going to come and attack you. Young brothers and young sisters, older brothers and older sisters too. There are certain protections that God gives us, as long you stay in the protection, you are safe. The moment you go out, there are arrows, you cannot stop the arrows, they are so many ideas, you cannot stop those ideas. If you want to insulate yourself. You know that is the reason why the Bible says, you are to be insulated from the world. It’s like a salt water fish. You buy a salt water fish, when you come back home after cutting it, what do you put in it again? Salt. Why? The salt is everywhere outside but not inside. It was insulated from salt. So, as long as you stay under the protection, there are certain hedges and dogs will not come and bite you, okay. All the spirits are like the stray dogs, on the streets of Hyderabad. As long as you stay under protection, these dogs will not come to you, that is the reason why the Bible says, when Jesus was suffering on the Cross, He says, “Dogs have surrounded Me.” Dogs, demonic spirits. So, *2 Thessalonians 2:10*

### **2 Thessalonians 2:10-12**

**<sup>10</sup>and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. <sup>11</sup> And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, <sup>12</sup> that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.**

God gives you over. So, understand this. Protections. Another way you get into trouble.

### **Proverbs 23:31, 32**

**Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly;**

**<sup>32</sup> At the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper.**

**<sup>33</sup> Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things. <sup>34</sup> Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, or like one who lies at the top of the mast, saying:**

**<sup>35</sup> “They have struck me, but I was not hurt; they have beaten me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake, that I may seek another drink?”**

Ultimately it bites like a serpent. **Your eyes will see strange things and your heart will utter perverse things. You will be like the one who lies in the midst of the sea or like the one who is on top of a mast, they have struck me but I was not hurt, they have beaten me but I did not feel it, when shall I awake, that I may seek another drink.** You see that? What is this? The things, temptations, attractions in this world. Again God says, these are place where you are not supposed to be, don’t be there. Don’t choose these friendships, don’t choose these relationships. Stay away. It might look very nice, ultimately what happens? It will strike you like a serpent. To give you another example. Judges 16

### **Judges 16:20**

**<sup>20</sup> And she said, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” So, he awoke from his sleep, and said, “I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!” But he did not know that the LORD had departed from him.**

Who departed from him? The Lord departed from him. Now, he’s opened to the demonic. All these things have come and destroying him spiritually. See, stop at the first time. It is easy to say no for the first time. It is easy to say no for the first time. Next time when you compromise it will be very difficult to say no the second time. That is the reason why Daniel, he purposed in his heart. The first time he had this food from the king’s table, what did he say? No. otherwise, later on it becomes very difficult. How far can I push the boundaries and not become an addict? How far can I push the boundaries

that it may not become a vice? Say no the first time. Don't even try. When we were kids in our school, there was this anti-drug campaign. From those days itself there used to be lot of peddlers on the street. So, in the school they were actually educating us. You know what they did? They got this movie and they show this guy who was an addict, his final stage was, the guy was like a corpse, completely like this, totally disoriented, they showed that picture and that picture stayed in my mind and I said, I never want to go there. And you know what that person who was educating us said? Everybody, when they take the first thing, when they take the first puff, or the first bite, they think they can overcome it. It's easy, they will say 'It's alright bro.' ultimately, it becomes a stronghold and they don't have the strength to overcome and over a period of time, they realize that it's become a vice and they become a slave. Don't push the limits. If you push the limits, you are tempting Christ. *1 Corinthians 10:9* this is how the Bible looks at this entire episode in the *Numbers 21*

### **1 Corinthians 10:9**

***<sup>9</sup>nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents;***

You see that, tempt Christ. Don't push the limits. So, they pushed the limits, they tempted Christ, they chose the wrong ways, the restraints were removed, the serpent came, bit a lot of them some of them died and then the story goes on.

***So, the Lord sent fiery serpents and they bit the people and many of the people died. Numbers 21. Therefore, the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned for we have spoken against the Lord and against you, pray to the Lord that He may take away the serpent from us. So, Moses prayed for the people and look at the solution of God. Numbers 21. Then the Lord said to Moses, make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole and it shall be that everyone who is bitten when he looks at it shall live. So, Moses made a bronze serpent, put it on the pole, so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.*** What did he do? He just looked at the bronze serpent. Now, what is this looking? What happened when they looked at the bronze serpent; ultimately, what happened to them? They lived. If you do not look at the bronze serpent, you will die. Very simple. If you want to pass from death to life, what should you do? Look at the bronze serpent. Romans 1 we know this verse very well.

### **Romans 1:16-17**

***<sup>16</sup>For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."***

Understand that. If you want to live, look at the bronze serpent. Look at the serpent. Look unto Him. So, what should I look? What did I commit? I committed sin. So, what should I look? I should look at the Person who was made sin so that I can be made righteous. So, *2 Corinthians 5:21*

### **2 Corinthians 5:21**

***<sup>21</sup>For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.***

This is simple. The Gospel is so simple. What is that? Look unto Jesus. What happened to Him? On the Cross He was made sin for my sin. He took my sin upon Himself so that I may be made righteous. So, if you believe that you will live, otherwise you will die.

### **Galatians 3:13**

***<sup>13</sup>Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),***

So, on the tree he was hanging on the pole, He was made a curse so that we may enjoy the blessing. So, if you want the blessing, look unto Him and believe. So, how does this believing happen? Let me give an example. *Luke 23*, this is the dying thief on the cross, how he looked at Jesus. Verse 40 onwards.

### **Luke 23:40-42**



<sup>40</sup> ***But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? <sup>41</sup> And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." <sup>42</sup> Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."***

***The other answering rebuked him and said, do you not even fear God seeing you are under the same condemnation and we indeed are suffering justly, for we received the due reward for our deeds,*** meaning we are reaping exactly what we have sown. Ultimately, what is he doing? He is taking responsibility for his action. Let me tell you something, you want deliverance in your life, come to Jesus and say, "I take responsibility for my actions. The situation that I'm in, it is not my father's fault, nor my mother's fault, nor my wife's fault, nor my children's fault, nor my teacher's fault, it is mine." Deliverance happens. God sees that. He knows who truly believes. Pharaoh says, 'I have sinned', Balaam says 'I have sinned', Achan says, 'I have sinned' after so many people have died. After all that has happened and when he's found out, he says 'I have sinned.' Saul says, 'I have sinned' and two people also say, 'I have sinned.' David says, 'I have sinned' and the prodigal son says, 'I have sinned.' We indeed justly for we received the due reward for our deeds but this man has done nothing wrong and one of the practices that I want to constantly do in my life, when I'm in a situation. Lord, this situation is because of my sin, my decisions and when you take responsibility for your actions, you know what happens? Deliverance starts in your life. That is the reason why he says, "He who hides his sin will not prosper but he who confesses and forsakes, what does he obtain? Mercy." The situations will not change until and unless we take responsibility for our actions in our lives. We want to experience that faith, the transmission of power into our lives, we have to take responsibility for our actions. Then he said to Jesus, "Lord remember me when You come into Your Kingdom." And you know what Jesus says? And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly I say to you, today you will be with Me in paradise," today.

Of all the people in this world I have seen, the first person who actually took responsibility for his action is this person. This is the person, nobody else. In all my years, three and a half years, maybe Jesus is saying, you know what finally I looked at one fellow who said, you know what Lord, I am reaping what I sowed. I am responsible for this mess and Jesus says, "Absolutely, you are forgiven, your sin has been removed." That's what exactly God tells David, "I have also taken away your sin."

So, the first aspect of looking at Jesus; that He took the penalty for my sin and if you truly repent and believe. You see, so many people died, lot of people were bitten and some of them died. Why did they die? Were they worst sinners than the others? The Bible says in Luke 13 remember Pilate mixed the blood of the sacrifice with the blood of those who were killed and Jesus says, "Do you think they were worst sinners than them?" No, "Unless you repent, you will also likewise perish." The tower which fell on those people and so many people died, do you think they were worst sinners? No, unless you repent, you will likewise perish. So, many people might have died today in an accident, do you think they are worst sinners? Some young people died recently, remember Pastor was talking about the accident that took place in Greece, so many people died. Were they worst sinners than us, unless we repent we should also likewise perish.

So, this morning, first thing, look unto Jesus. Very simple, that He became sin for my sin so that I can be made righteous. He became a curse for my curse for that I could enjoy His blessing. See, very simple, that is the first part of the message. Simple, the gospel is very simple. He became my substitute. He died in my place. The dying thief rejoiced to see the fountain in his day and there may I though vile as he will wash all my sins away. So, if you confess and you put your trust in Jesus, it doesn't matter whatever the quantum of your sin and the depth of your sin, it doesn't matter. Whatever your sin, if you confess and if you repent, the Blood of Jesus will cleanse and you will be given a right standing with God. That is the first step. That is how you look unto Jesus.

The second aspect of looking unto Jesus. This is very important; again this is the second aspect of looking to Jesus. *Exodus 3* let's read a few verses. Again, another picture

### **Exodus 3:1-2**

***<sup>1</sup>Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup> And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So, he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed.***

Now, what is this? There is a bush, the bush is on fire but the bush is not consumed. What is the fire a symbol of? It is a symbol of judgment. Fire is all around the bush but the bush is not consumed. Why is the bush not consumed? Because somebody else took my judgment. Who is that person? Jesus. So, it's a picture of the Cross, it's a picture of death burial and resurrection of Jesus. How do I know it? This is not my idea. Look at what it says in *Matthew 22*.

### **Matthew 22:29-33**

***<sup>29</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. <sup>30</sup> For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. <sup>31</sup> But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, <sup>32</sup> I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." <sup>33</sup> And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching.***

What is He referring to over here? *Luke 20*

### **Luke 20:37**

***<sup>37</sup>But even Moses showed in the burning bush passage that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'***

So, who is appearing the burning bush? The angel of the Lord is appearing. Who is the angel of the Lord? Jesus Christ, in His pre-incarnation form, He's the theophany. He is Jesus Christ, what is it a picture of? It is the picture of the death, burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So, this is the picture of the resurrection, this is a picture of the Cross. Now, what happened?

### **Exodus 3:3-4**

***<sup>3</sup> Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn." <sup>4</sup> So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am."***

Moses turned aside and he looked. Let's go back to Exodus 3. So, he looked and behold the bush was burning with fire, the bush was not consumed, ***then Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great sight.*** Now, remember what is looking unto Me? Turning away from all the other things and fixing your eyes on Jesus. Now what is Moses doing? He is turning aside and fixing his eyes on Jesus. And look at the next verse very interesting. It says, when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look. Not every look is a look. The Lord has to see whether there is faith in that look or not. The Bible says, "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was very great and every thought and inclination of his heart was evil continually. So, God called him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses! Moses!" and he said, "Here I am," and He said, "Do not draw near this place, take your sandals off your feet for the place you stand is holy ground."

Now, what is this a picture of? What am I supposed to look at? Now, there are three aspects we have been hearing through the week. If you want to overcome sin, what do you need? If you want to overcome sin, how do you overcome sin, by? Anything which is not of faith is sin, so how do you overcome sin? By faith. Okay. How do you overcome the world? Whatever is born of God overcomes the world and this is the victory that overcomes the world even our faith. So, I'm refreshing, I'm not teaching anything new. Now, third thing. I want to withstand the devil. How do I overcome the demonic? Standing firm in faith I resist him. So, three things I need. I need faith to overcome sin, I need faith to overcome the world, I need faith to resist the devil. How do I get this faith? Do you understand? I want to overcome sin, I want to overcome the world, I want to overcome the demonic, how do I get this faith? I need faith. How do I get this faith? Now, the Bible already gave a clue in *Hebrews 12*. Looking unto Jesus. Where should I look? To get deliverance from the penalty of sin, I look at Jesus on the Cross, and I look at Him and I put my trust in Him and say, you know what, He was made sin for me so that I be made righteous. This is what we call as identification. He was bruised for our iniquities, He was chastised for our sins, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and by His stripe we were healed.

If you read the entire chapter of *Isaiah 53*, just go and read how many times the word His and Him, the pronouns are used. So many times His, Him, wherever it is not needed also it is introduced. Why? So that your eyes are on Jesus. So, He

became the penalty for my sin. So, when I look at Him and I say Lord, you were made sin for me, fantastic. I put my trust in You, all my sins are washed away, I've been completely made new, just as if I've never sinned. I've been given a right standing with God. Fantastic! But now I have to overcome sin. What do I need? I need faith. So, what do I do? I should still look unto Jesus. What should I look? is the question. If I have to overcome sin, what should I look? Answer is given.

#### **Romans 6:5-6**

***<sup>5</sup>For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, <sup>6</sup> knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.***

For if we have been united in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection. Knowing this. Now read that, that our old man was crucified. So, what do I do? When I look at the Cross, what do I see? I see my old man crucified together on the Cross, so that now what? I don't have to live in sin anymore I can overcome the power of sin so when I look at that, what is imparted into my life is faith. That is the first aspect. Second thing, I have to over the world. How do I overcome the world? By faith How do I get this faith? The answer is looking unto Jesus. Where? On the Cross. Galatians 6

***But God forbid that I should boast except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.*** So, when I look at the Cross, what am I seeing? I'm also seeing all the influence of the world also being taken away on the Cross. So, the influence of sin, the nature has been dealt with on the Cross. By faith I appropriate that. Second, I also see the influence of the world has been taken on the Cross. So, the world has been crucified. Third, who is the next fellow? The demonic. Let us see. Colossians 2

#### **Colossians 2:13-14**

***<sup>13</sup> And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, <sup>14</sup> having wiped out the <sup>[i]</sup>handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.***

And you being dead in your trespasses and uncircumcision of your flesh He has made alive together with Him having forgiven you all trespasses. That's exactly what He did. He forgave all your trespasses. How did He forgive you? By taking the penalty of the sin upon Himself so when you look at Him on the Cross, He has taken away the penalty of sin, but look at what happens in the next verse. Having wiped out the handwriting of the requirements that was against us which was contrary to us and He has taken it out of the way having nailed it to the Cross and what happens. Having disarmed principalities, powers, He had made a public spectacle of them triumphing over them. So, even the demonic was taken on the Cross. If I believe, so, what happens. When the devil comes and say, you know. The greatest weapon of the devil is you know what? Condemnation and guilt. When you are tempted to sin, he will say, God will forgive, it is okay. Just do it off, you will not surely die. Just ask for forgiveness later God will forgive you. Sin and ask forgiveness, or carefully sin. And he tempts you to sin and after sinning now you are feeling very bad about it and he will say, "You hypocrite, now you think God will forgive you." How convenient. Full of condemnation and guilt and many people cannot move forward because you know what, these thoughts of condemnation, these thoughts of guilt torment them.

Look at the guy who was paralyzed. Why was he paralyzed? Because of condemnation. I feel it's because of condemnation and his friends said, "Jesus will heal you," he said, "No, my sin is too much bro." They said, "You know what shut your mouth. I'm taking you any way." They went, they took out the roof and they put him down and Jesus saw their faith. And He said, "Son." Can you imagine, the first word that came out of His mouth was, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." What a statement! Who is saying that? God. *Son, your sins are forgiven you.* Who are your accusers sister? Anybody woman, accusing you? No one, *I also do not accuse you, go and sin no more.* What a statement. The accusing finger of the devil is removed. You have freedom.

That is the reason the Bible says, *"They overcame Him by the Blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony."* Who is this fellow? They overcame the devil. What is he doing? He is accusing the brothers night and day before God. All he does is accusing. The moment I sinned, you know what your Pastor did, the assistant Pastor of Grace Tabernacle Church.

This is what he is doing? You want to extend mercy to him? He is the accuser, Father says, "Absolutely right," and then there is an advocate. That's what the Bible says in 1 John 2. ***I write these things to you so that you may not sin but even if you sin, we have a*** who? ***Advocate***. Who is He? ***Jesus Christ the righteous*** and how is He able to forgive? Because He says, "Father I know what He did was wrong, now he has confessed his sin, I have taken the punishment of his sin, because I through the eternal Spirit once and for all have taken the sin of all mankind, you can forgive him because he has confessed and he's repented. Let him go."

So therefore, if you confess your sins, He is faithful and He is just to forgive you and the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse you from all your unrighteousness. What a truth. So, by faith, you know what, when you look unto Jesus, the power of the enemy is broken, the power of your flesh is broken, the power of the world is broken. If you appropriate this, faith is imparted and you are able to overcome the world, you are able to overcome your flesh, and you are able to overcome the devil. Do you understand? Three things. I was thinking, 'Lord, how do I get this faith Lord? I need faith to overcome my flesh Lord but I don't have.' You know what the Lord answered me? He said, "Vijay, very simple, look unto Me." I said, where Lord, "On the Cross! I became sin, your old man is crucified on the Cross. Do you believe it?" Yes Lord I believe, "You don't have to sin anymore. Yield the members of your body as instruments of righteousness now. Because I've taken the penalty of sin. Sin shall not have dominion over you because you are no longer under the law but under grace. Take it away."

The sting of sin is broken. And what is the sting of sin, death and law is taken, it's taken away. I said, "Thank You Lord." What about the world? "On the Cross, look at the Cross Vijay. When you look at Me, the power of the world is broken on the Cross. The prince of this world has come to Me and has found nothing in Me, even till date, nobody can challenge that statement." In John 8 do you know He says? He makes a powerful statement, "Which of you can accuse Me of sin? Which of you has a capacity and the audacity to accuse Me of sin, anybody, nobody." Sin was taken on the Cross. The old man was crucified on the Cross, the old rebel, the old Adam with all its passions and lust and its desires was taken in the Cross. So, what is Jesus saying?

"Look unto Me and be saved, O you GTC people." You don't have to sin. Sin doesn't have to have power over you. The world doesn't have to have power over you. The devil doesn't have to have the power over you. Look at the Cross. Believe! Believe this morning. Look unto Jesus.

#### **Deuteronomy 32:19-20**

**<sup>19</sup>"And when the LORD saw it, He spurned them, because of the provocation of His sons and His daughters. <sup>20</sup>And He said: 'I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end will be, for they are a perverse generation, children in whom is no faith.**

Do you know why they do not have faith? It is because they do not look at the Cross. That is the reason why meditation of the Cross is such a powerful tool, my dear brothers. Keep on meditating on the Cross, and you know what happen? When you keep on looking at the Cross faith keeps on getting imparted – 'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live yet not I but Christ lives in me. The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.' You know why? It is because I have appropriated the Cross into my life and I am looking at the Cross every day. That is the reason why you should sing that song -

<sup>1</sup>When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

<sup>2</sup>Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast  
Save in the death of Christ, my God.  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to His blood.

<sup>3</sup>See, from His head, His hands, His feet,  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down.  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

<sup>4</sup>Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small.  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Survey the Cross this morning. Look at Him and be saved. Look at Him and be saved. Have faith. Do you have faith in God? Also have faith in Jesus. Repentance towards God and faith towards Jesus. What is repentance? 'Lord, I am sorry for my sins.' God says, 'Okay, do you want Me to forgive you? Believe that My Son took the penalty for your sins.' 'Lord, I want to overcome sin.' 'You want to overcome sin? Fantastic. Believe that in My Son your old man was crucified.' 'Lord, I want to overcome the world.' 'You want to overcome the world? Look at My Son, when you look at the Son the world will be crucified to you and you to the world.' 'Lord, I want to overcome the evil.' 'Look at My Son. You don't have to live under condemnation, you don't have to live under guilt. I have taken away, I have disarmed the enemy.' The greatest work of Jesus was disarming the devil. How did Moses overcome Pharaoh and his entire army? Do you know what he did? He disarmed them. How? He put forth the stick, they also put their sticks. See for Moses, stick is not important; God is important. So what did Moses do? He took away the sticks. Once the sticks were removed, they could do the tricks only two or three times more and after that they said, 'This is the finger of God. Please leave him alone.'

How did David kill Goliath? By Goliath's own sword. He disarmed him. Think about it. Look at the statement; David says, 'I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beast of the field.' How David? You don't even have a sword. 'I will take your sword. I will use your weapon, I will disarm you.' You know what Jesus did? He crushed the serpent's head. Now all the serpent is doing is wagging its tail. You know what you should do? Take care of it, he is disarmed; he only wags his tail. It is like the teeth of the lion are taken off, all the teeth are taken out. Lion can do nothing. He can only roar. It can only intimidate. He has been disarmed completely. He was overcome on the Cross.

So they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.

Now you may ask me this question – Vijay, this is very interesting, but how do look? How is this process of looking at Jesus on Cross worked in my life? Let us see. Let's look at several passages where Jesus is the key.

#### **Exodus 15:22-25**

<sup>22</sup> So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. <sup>23</sup> Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah. Notice the word 'Marah'.

<sup>24</sup> And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" <sup>25</sup> So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. The tree represents the Cross. **When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet.**

How does 'looking unto Jesus' work in my life? He did so many things for me on the Cross, but the Cross has to do certain things in me. So in order for the Cross to do certain things in me what should I do? He gave them an ordinance, He showed them a parable, He says, 'You know what, when you guys open your mouth all that is coming out is ingratitude, complaining and murmuring. All bitterness. In order for sweetness to come out of your mouth what should happen? The Cross should work in your heart. So in order for the Cross to work in your heart this is what you have to do.'

#### **Exodus 15:25-26**

<sup>25</sup> So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. **There He made a statute and an ordinance for them, and there He tested them, <sup>26</sup> and said, "If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you."**

Or as Derek Prince says – I am the Lord your Doctor.

I remember when I went to a clinic many days back, it was a Christian doctor, when I entered the clinic the first statement on the arch in front was written, 'Jehovah Rapha' I said, 'Thank You Lord.' In other words the doctor is saying, 'I don't heal you. I can only give you medicine but my God heals you.' So what is that medicine? In order to experience this Doctor, what is the work of the Cross in my life; what should I do? I'll give you very simple truths,

First truth on which every other truth is dependent upon – *heed the voice of the Lord*. How? Diligently. Diligently heed the voice of the Lord. Now who is this voice? Basically it is teaching. Teaching is important.

Now where were they? They were at Marah. Marah means bitter. It also means rebellion. It means bitterness and rebellious. So there are two bitter people in a home who were forgiven by Jesus. But one was healed of her bitterness and the other was not. How was one healed and why was one not? I'll give you an example,

**Luke 10:38-42**

***<sup>38</sup> Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. <sup>39</sup> And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." <sup>41</sup> And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. <sup>42</sup> But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."***

Do you know what Martha means? 'she is bitter' that is what it means – she is bitter and she is rebellious. Do you know what Mary means? It means 'bitter' and 'rebellious'. So we have two people, Martha and Mary, both of them had marah in their lives. And she had a sister called Mary. Now this sister called Mary, she wanted to get rid of her bitterness. So what did she do? She sat at the feet of Jesus and heard His Word. *If you diligently heed My voice*. What was she doing? She was sitting at Jesus' feet. She was cured of seven demons, she would have been a bitter woman, I don't know, until Jesus healed her. But Martha was distracted with much serving.

So two bitter people; one is Martha and Mary. ***<sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted with much serving***, it is like typical Ruth and Naomi situation. What does Naomi call herself? Marah. Ruth is one person who dealt with her bitterness.

***<sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care... who is the problem now? You (Jesus) are the problem now. 'Lord, don't You care?' this is how I read my Bible today - <sup>41</sup> And Jesus answered and said to her, "Bitterness, Bitterness, you are worried and troubled about many things.***

***<sup>41</sup> And Jesus answered and said to her, "Rebellion, Rebellion, you are worried and troubled about many things.*** There is double rebellion in you. You have rebellion and bitterness, both. You are worried and troubled about so many things.

***<sup>42</sup> But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."***

You know what, Mary was a bitter person once upon a time, but she doesn't want to have any bitterness in her life and one day when I (Jesus) come into her house, Martha, Mary is going to take her entire life and break it My feet and fragrance is going to come out. You know why? It is because she is one person who dealt with her bitterness in her life. How? She sat at the feet of Jesus. I remember the demoniac at the Gadarenes, it says that this demoniac from Gadarenes was clothed in his right mind and was at the feet of Jesus. What was he doing now? He was diligently listening to Jesus, 'Not even a word, O Lord, should fall to the ground. I want to hold onto every word.'

I was telling my children, cling to what is good, abstain from every appearance of evil. You know how you should cling to that which is good? Imagine you are drowning and there is one small piece of wood that is floating on the waters. You are drowning and that wood has no capacity to hold onto to your weight, will you let it go? No. You will still hold onto to it with your dear life. So hold onto that which is good just like that. Abstain from every appearance of evil. Do you know what example I give them? In my life when I used to go to St. Patrick's School there was a Sulabh Complex, Swach Bharath, you know what it is. Even if you go 25 meters away from the Complex you can smell the stench. So in order to escape or avoid that smell I used to take a roundabout route. Do you know why? I don't even want to go near that. You should hate sin like that. Keep a distance from it. Abstain from it. Cling to what is good as if you are cling to your dear life.

So what did Mary do? She sat at Jesus' feet and she kept on listening and listening to Jesus and one day when Jesus came to their house after Lazarus was raised from the dead, you know what she did? She brought the best of your life and she broke it at Jesus' feet and her name changed from Mary (bitterness) to Naomi (pleasant). What is happening? Pleasantness is coming out of her life. The Cross has done its work in her life now. So what should you do? You should heed the Voice.

### **Exodus 15:26**

<sup>26</sup> **and said, “If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God**

The question is this - Where do you get this voice from? You hear the voice when you read the Word and more importantly when the Word is being preached.

### **Luke 3:4-6**

<sup>4</sup> **as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: It is not John the Baptist; it is the Voice. What is important? The voice. That is why Pastor James keeps saying, ‘I didn’t like YouTube at all because I always wanted to be a voice.’ ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight. <sup>5</sup> Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight and the rough ways smooth; <sup>6</sup> And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’ ”**

So in order for us to have the way of the Lord prepared and to have the paths straight what should I do? This voice has to do four things,

- Every valley has to be filled
- Every hill has to be brought low
- Every crooked path has to be made straight
- Everything which is rough has to be made smooth

So in order for the work of the Cross to be done in my life, when I hear the message of the Cross, four things have to happen. For He, through the Holy Spirit is going to write His Law on my heart and in my mind. What has to happen?

- All the valleys have to be filled
- All the high mountains have to be brought low, in other words I have to be humbled
- All the crooked things have to be made straight
- All the rough things have to be made smooth

Four things have to happen. I divided them into four categories. This voice has to deal with four categories/thoughts in our lives because thoughts do not originate from your mind, they originate from your heart; for out of your heart precede evil thoughts. You think what you believe. Let’s read,

### **Luke 3**

Habitual or Iniquitous Thoughts. There are valleys, like Grand Canyon. Over a period of time the canyons have been made. These are habitual patterns in your life. You walk that path every day and over a period of time the valley is made. Initially there was grass, but then you walked and walked and a nice pathway has been formed. These are habitual thought patterns in your mind.

See, we are all people of habit. We are absolutely people of habit. The moment you enter into the church, what is your habit? You take your chair/seat according your habit; some people sit in the front and some people sit at the end. We are people of habit. So when you enter into the church, as is your habit, you will choose your seat.

1. Habitual or Iniquitous Thoughts.
2. Rebellious or Logical thoughts. Thoughts are justify your rebellion.
3. Worldly or Expedient thoughts.
4. Bitter and Condescending thoughts.

Let us tackle each of these thoughts. When you hear the voice of the Lord, what am I supposed to do? When I receive a message what am I supposed to do?

I was living with my parents until I went onto my Masters; I was a day-scholar till I finished my B.Tech. At the age of 21 I went out for my Masters. So 21 years I was living with my parents. Expecting a few vacations I just ate what my mother fed me. Do I remember every meal that my mother gave me? No. She makes fantastic sambar and she makes certain dishes which are mandatory for us to eat. Greens were mandatory. So she used to prepare fantastic meals for us. Boy! Right from breakfast – idli, dosa in different styles, we had a variety of them every day. I ate so many meals. 100s and

1000s of meals. Just imagine 20 years, 365 times 3 minimum. So many meals. But I don't remember most of the meals. But what I am today in my body is a result of all the meals that I have eaten. Am I right?

Similarly, do I remember all the sermons that I've listen to from GTC pulpit? 100s of sermons I have heard, I don't remember, but what I am today spiritually is a result of all the sermons that I have consumed. And like pastor said, he is a mallu so he is a man of habit. He will not change his meals; he wants a particular diet in his food. Similarly when you are consuming your spiritual food ensure that you have a specific order in your meal. You know what Timothy says? *'Rebuke, exhort, correct with all love and longsuffering, because a time will come when people will not endure sound doctrine but according to their itching ears they will heap for themselves teachers who will flatter them, who will give them sugar.'*

We are a result of what we eat. Why do we have diabetes? The other day I was listening to an interview of a director, he said, "To create a period movie in India is very difficult now. Why? It is because if I have to create a scene of all the poor people of those days most of them were malnourished, thin and skinny. But now it is difficult to create a period movie of those days because now all Indians are fat, if I have to create a scene I cannot find anyone in India who are thin and skinny. They have pot-belly from Jammu to Kanyakumari, everyone has got a ponch." Why? It is because we have sweet outside and sweet inside. We are people of habit, my dear brothers. We consume sweet like anything. My goodness, my mother used to hide sweet. Now my wife is doing the same thing now. But I have learnt my lesson. Before anything can happen, I want to avoid. We are habitual.

#### HABITUAL OR INIQUITOUS THOUGHTS

What are these thoughts? These are thoughts which have laid an anchor in your life. You are accustomed to it.

#### **Jeremiah 4:14**

***<sup>14</sup> O Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness, that you may be saved. How long shall your evil thoughts lodge within you?***

Who is Jerusalem? You and I. what is Jerusalem? It is the teaching of peace. People who are pressing unto perfection, a church which is having a goal for perfection. But what is happening? ***O Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness, that you may be saved. How long shall your evil*** (vain, habitual) ***thoughts lodge within you?*** What are they doing? They are renting space in your mind. For free; they are not even paying you the rent. Iniquitous thoughts – 'I will not forgive.' 'I will not give up this habit.' He explains the outworking of this in *Jeremiah 13*,

#### **Jeremiah 13:22-23**

***<sup>22</sup> And if you say in your heart, "Why have these things come upon me?" For the greatness of your iniquity your skirts have been uncovered, your heels made bare. <sup>23</sup> Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots?*** Answer is – No! ***Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil.*** You are a person who will do evil, it is in your nature.

You are accustomed, you are a people of habit. So how do I break this? You know what? The way to break a habit is by replacing it with another habit. We are no longer under Law, but under grace. Our old man is crucified. That is the reason why it is said, 'Look unto Jesus.'

#### **Luke 4:16**

***<sup>16</sup> So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.***

They are addicted to the Church. What are they addicted to? They cannot do without going to church. They are not satisfied until they have met the Children of God. Until they have sat with the saints on a Sunday morning or a Wednesday evening until they have received the Word of God. It is a matter of habit. They are addicted. Are you addicted to the church? Can you do without the Church? You know what? When you take away one glass of wine what happens to him? He will grow restless, 'I want to drink! I want to drink!' Do you do that when you miss one church meeting? 'I want to go to Church! I want to go to Church! I wonder what God spoke.' Do you get restless? Are you addicted? No wonder we are defeated. Are you addicted to church? Those addictions are fantastic addictions.



**1 Corinthians 16:15**

***<sup>15</sup> I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)***

**Luke 4:16**

***<sup>16</sup> So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.***

Now this is Jesus. Jesus Himself had a custom of going to the synagogue and listening to boring sermons. Am I right? What is your custom? I am telling you, before I was called into ministry I can count on the fingers on my right hand how many times I missed church. It is an addiction which I never want to give up. Think about it.

**Acts 17:1-2**

***Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. <sup>2</sup> Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures,***

That was his custom before and after getting saved. That was his custom – to be in the assembly of the saints of God. Can you honestly say, ‘I am dwelling with Your saints. Lord, as for the saints in the land they are the excellent ones in whom is all my delight.’? Is there a joy in your heart when you meet your brothers? You know what? Now, if I have to go to different places, my heart is to go to the believing Church there and to see my brothers in a different land or a different place, how they worship so that I can join with them, because they are the excellent ones in whom is all my delight. Are you addicted to Church? They are few brothers, I can say with all my heart; Sammy is one person who is addicted to church. Not many of us, if not all of us. You want excuses as to how to avoid church. ‘Oh! Do we have to go to church today as well? Didn’t we go just yesterday?’ You ate yesterday, do you want to eat again today? You will not have the same attitude with food. That you want every day as many times as you can.

**Acts 17:3**

***<sup>3</sup> explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.”***

This was his action. In other words his life was saturated with the Church; teachings, preaching, fellowship.

**Daniel 6:10**

***<sup>10</sup> Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.***

We usually wait for the day when God will ask us not to pray. ***as was his custom since early days***. It has to start in the early days. Morning by morning, Jesus was woken up. That is the reason why – catch them young and watch them grow, is the philosophy that you should have for your children. What are you doing? Outsourcing your children to the world for their studies, outsourcing your children to Sunday school for their spiritual studies. And what are you doing? Sitting in the home and doing something else. Very important job.

Practice. *He who practices righteousness will become righteous.* Practice makes us permanent.

**Philippians 4:8**

***<sup>8</sup> Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.***

Think on these things. Think! Make it a habit.

### **1 John 3:7**

***<sup>7</sup> Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.***

You cannot go one day onto the cricket field and score a century. You cannot. Forget about it. You cannot go and hit a home run the first time you enter the field. No. Habitual or iniquitous thoughts, overcome them by good habits. Develop them. You see, the Bible says that Moses said, 'I will turn around,' what did he say? I will. What did the prodigal son say? 'I will arise!' it is an act of will. God doesn't circumvent your will. 'O I want to love You.' **Keep His commandments**, then you will love. Love will automatically come. Focus on that.

So first is habitual or iniquitous thoughts. Second, rebellious or logical thoughts. Or thoughts which justify your rebellion, 'Because I did this, because I did that,' the moment you say, 'because' it is gone, it is over, game over for you.

### **1 Samuel 15:13-14**

***<sup>13</sup> Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD." <sup>14</sup> But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" <sup>15</sup> And Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed."***

***to sacrifice to the LORD your God***; that is what it is to have rebellious thought which have a logical reason; justifying your rebellion saying, you know what, I am sacrificing this to the Lord. God does not need your sacrifice; He needs your obedience. It is a premise, the fundamentals are gone. What is the whole point showing?

It is like this, someone was telling me, there is a good man who like pigeons and what I've learnt is that the pigeons are birds of habit, every after they come regularly to the Church office, why? There is a man who feeds them grain. From the first floor Sajeed Bhai throws the grains and all the pigeons exactly by 1:30-2 PM they are there. Now there was a crow and he was looking at these pigeons and he was saying, 'How lucky these pigeons are! Nice man, because they are pigeons he is feeding them. If he sees me, a crow, he will chase me. But if a pigeon comes he feeds them, I wish I was a pigeon. Then he said, 'Okay fine, I will do one thing, if I change my color and keep quiet (can an Ethiopian change his color? No. but this fellow wanted to try) if I change my color and keep quiet somehow I feel that I can also enjoy the blessings.' So what happened, next to the building painting was going on, he was using some white paints, so this fellow went and dunk himself in the white paint and he came out baptized. It is like you went into the pool as a dry sinner and came out as a wet sinner. The sinner hasn't changed, he just became from dry to wet that is all has happened. That is the only thing that changed. Now from a black crow he became a white crow. Crow is common. The crow came out and came to Sajeed Bhai, he was feeding them and feeding himself as well every day. Now this fellow is deceiving and enjoying life. Suddenly it started raining. When it started raining all the white paint came out and imagine what happened to Sajeed Bhai; his anger and his love you cannot tolerate. He showed the crow the third eye and he ran for his life.

What is the meaning? You can change your externals, but the internal does not change. It is like this, you go to a meeting, what are you? A bitter neem tree with all bitter fruits. So you go to this meeting and the preacher, Pastor James, with full anointing he says, 'In the name of Jesus let all this bitter fruit be removed.' And all the bitter fruits are gone. You baptized the neem tree also. After a few days again the bitterness has come. Nothing has changed fundamentally. You see, your sacrifice doesn't matter. That is the reason why He looked at the Pharisees and said, 'You white-washed tombs.' You are pretenders of the first order. You have to be given an Oscar. Nothing has changed fundamentally. King Saul goes and he weeps, 'David, David, I am so sorry David. You are righteous and I am unrighteous. You will become king one day.' After a while he goes back and takes the sword again and he wants to kill David. Nothing has changed. You know why? It is a rebellious pattern which tried to justify.

That is the reason the Bible says – the axe has to be laid to the root so that your fruit will change. Iniquitous, rebellious.

The third one – worldly or expedient thoughts. This is our man Moses, full of worldly wisdom. I mean think about it, with a PhD from the University of Alexandria. He had several doctorates. Doctor of Oration, doctor of Science, doctor of architecture, doctor of sword fighting, everything, he has earned all the doctorates. Now in order to do deliverance, all

his doctrines came to one fundamental thing – look to the left, look to the right and murder. That’s all. At the grass roots this is what your worldly wisdom will do. What are you going to do? You are going to do something which is expedient and convenient which is the crookedness of this world. Expedient, if it works it is okay.

### **Acts 2:40-42**

***<sup>40</sup> And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” <sup>41</sup> Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. <sup>42</sup> And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.***

You know why? It is because there are patterns, though patterns. Expedient thought patterns. What are those expedient thought patterns? Tweak a bit here and tweak a bit there. That is exactly what Indian jugad is. The difference between our research and American research. What do we do? Take a TATA truck, convert it and give them alloyed steel wheels and put them on a train track. Have you seen how they are laying the tracks? I was shocked, what brains! One TATA truck on the railway track. But if you go to America their research is at a different level altogether. What do we do? We tweak here, we tweak there, if the flight doesn’t take off you incline it to 40 degrees and you launch it again, why? It is because you did the same thing with the Bajaj Chetak. We are expedient. What can I tweak? What can work?

One thing I keep telling my children, you have to prove yourself to me that you are worthy of a 100. I will not give you a 100. I will flunk you as many times, because I am not going to choose shortcuts for you. ‘Hey relax, they are just children.’ No. you know what, if you teach them convenience tomorrow they will go and do something else which is convenient. What is convenient? He will go and marry a girl, get her pregnant and convenient forget her because he has no convictions in his heart. Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world. Expedient thoughts, worldly crooked expedient thoughts. Let the preaching of the Cross come and lay the axe at the root this morning.

The fourth one, bitter condescending thoughts. What are these? Rough things have to be made smooth. How can rough things be made smooth? Put two believers together and let them travel together, automatically it will happen.

### **Proverbs 27:17**

***<sup>17</sup> As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.***

I remember this story, a man who died and went to heaven, and he observed that at the booth there a toll booth kind of a thing and at the tool booth there was an angel who was asking questions and only if you answer the questions you were allowed to enter. This fellow was having his heart in his mouth and somehow he reached the entrance and the angel said, ‘okay you want to enter into heaven?’ yes sir I want to enter into heaven. ‘Tell me the spelling of ‘God’ thank You Lord, ‘G.O.D God.’ ‘Okay, enter!’ so he entered. He went in 20 meters, stooped and rushed back. He told the angel, ‘Sir, my wife is coming. She is the 25<sup>th</sup> person in the line. That lady there, the 25<sup>th</sup> person, she is coming. Ask her the spelling of Czechoslovakia. Please sir, ask her that spelling. She did not go to English medium school. She tortured me my entire life, she should not come to heaven.’

You know, the most people who are bitter with each other are brothers in the church? That is a reason why Proverbs says – a brother offended is very difficult to be won over. It is not the person in the world. So what does God do? He put brothers with sharp edges in the same church. So what happens? The washing of water by the Word comes and then in the washing of water by the Word these two rough stones start rubbing against each other and then one day they will become like Pastor James and Sis. Ailsa, like brother and sister. Remember when they went to the hospital the doctor asked them, ‘Are you brother and sister?’ wow! When will they ask me about my wife, ‘Is she your sister?’ they asked the question of Abraham to my pastor, ‘Is she your sister?’ can you imagine? Pastor didn’t say, ‘She is my sister,’ they asked, ‘Is she your sister?’ when will we come to that point? *Iron sharpens iron*. That is how rough things will become smooth. Bitter condescending thoughts. Who are you? Uneducated fellow? You deserve mercy?

That is the reason why Bible says – let the poor man boast in his exaltation and let the rich man boast in his humiliation. For all flesh is grass and all the flowers in the field is like glory of grass; the grass withers, the flower fades but the Word of the Lord abides forever. This is the Gospel which was preached to you. Let’s read that,

### Romans 1:11-12

<sup>11</sup> **For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established**— Look at this giant of the faith. Look at his humility. Just in case you think that I am taking the position of a guru. No. <sup>12</sup> **that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.**

Your faith edifies me and my faith edifies you. Together we become smooth under the preaching of the Word and we get rid of bitter, condescending thoughts. That is when now when you are broken like Mary, when you open your mouth like Stephen, 'Lord, lay not this charge against them.' And he fell asleep, the Bible says. So many times when I get angry this is what I say, 'Let the fire of God come down and consume them.' But look at Stephen, 'Lay not this charge against them.' What an end, my dear brothers, what an end!

So this morning, if you want the work of the Cross to be done in your life, look unto Jesus and be saved. Do you know why? It is because on the Cross your old man has been crucified, on the Cross you have been crucified to the World. On the Cross the power of darkness has been broken over your life and if you allow this teaching to permeate your thought life and in your hearts, do you know what will happen? Out of your mouth will come sweetness, pleasantness and no more bitterness. Amen. Shall we pray?

### Closing prayer

*Father this morning we just want to thank You. Lord I pray, we have a long way to go. But as we have been exhorted in all our previous meetings, O Lord, we have been exhorted. Let there be a holy dissatisfaction, this morning, created in each one of our hearts. Not guilt, not condemnation, but a dissatisfaction, because there is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. Now there is therefore no condemnation, because we are not people who are condemned but people who are forgiven. We have been accepted in the Beloved. You have already done that work for us. But Lord You want to form Christ in us, who is going to be a hope of our glory one day when we stand before You. So that we may not be ashamed, but we may also get that commendation from You, 'Well done! My good and faithful servant.' Not a bitter servant who hid his talent, because of His bitterness who never used his talent for the glory of God, because he was comparing himself with other brothers, with the attitude of completion and condescending and strife in his heart. Lord, I pray that You will not find such people in our midst this morning. You will find a set of people who are focused on their own race; who will not look to the left, nor to the right, except to help another weaker brother. For Your Word says – bear ye one another's burdens and fulfill the Law of Christ because bearing others burdens is also a part of our race, O Lord. So that in bearing other people's burdens all the roughness in our lives will be made smooth. I pray Father, the work of the Cross will happen in our hearts and in our minds this morning.*

*Let there be no strife. As Your Word says O Lord, forgive one another as God, in Christ, forgave you. Forebear with one another, this morning Father I pray Lord that You would impart Your Spirit into each one of our lives. That we will take away the focus from our lives and look unto Jesus.*

*This morning just look unto Jesus. Don't look at the serpent bites this morning. Don't look at all the pains and the sufferings that you are going through. Don't look at the consequences of your actions. Look unto Jesus this morning. I know it is difficult, it takes faith to take your eyes off your problems and put your trust on Jesus. But do it anyway as an act of will. Look unto Jesus this morning. Have mercy O Lord, on Your people this morning. Visit us this morning with Your Spirit, enable us to look unto You. O Lord, I cannot force anybody to look, Lord. Only You can cause people to look. I can only preach. I want to begin with myself; I want to look at You, I want to survey You on the Cross. As the hymn writer says, 'The vilest offender who truly believes that moment from Jesus a pardon receive.'*

*Father, thank You Father for forgiving us. We want to receive Your forgiveness this morning. We want to confess our sins and when we confess, Your Word says that You are faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Do Your work this morning in Your people. The work of the Cross for us and the work of the Cross in us. And enable us to never take our eyes off Jesus. But fixed our eyes on Jesus this morning. And even through the days and through the coming weeks O Lord. Thank You Father, thank You, thank You, we praise You, we worship You, we give You glory. In Jesus' might 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.*

God bless you and have a blessed day.