

# Can You Hide In Cherith?

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*Father we just thank You, we thank You for Your Son. You not only spoke to us Your Word through Your servants in the past, through the patriarchs and the prophets, but Lord, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We thank You for Your Son, that's why we all are here. If Your Son hadn't come, our lives would have been different, cut away from the common wealth of Israel, without God, without hope but in Your Son, You brought us all together. And this morning, we want to lift up Your Word and Your Son that is the living Word. Spirit of God, I pray that You would anoint me, strengthen me and anoint all of us Lord, that we may both hear and learn as You continually teach us and prepare us for the coming of Your Son, thank You Father, thank You Lord, for in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

Remember this (this year's promise) and it's up there too - Repent, Revive and to Resist. If My people who are called by My name will turn, that's what repent means, to turn away and to turn towards God. When we do that, He starts pouring in His life, that's what revival is. You cannot have revival personally, corporately without repentance. There's something that precedes revival, that's repentance. Most of us are looking for a revival without repentance, in the Kingdom of God, it doesn't happen. There's something that always precedes. If you want new life, fresh life to flow in, something of the old, that is undesirable, has to go out. That's constant, if you are turning away and turning and then, there is an enemy. He's called a thief. The Thief comes to steal, to kill and to destroy. We need to learn how to resist and honestly much of the damages in our lives that has occurred over the years and keeps happening is, we haven't learnt to fight, we haven't learnt properly, truly how to resist the enemy. He is subtle. When he's introduced in Scripture, the first time when he's introduced in Scripture, that's in *Genesis 3:1*, the Bible says the serpent was more subtle than all the others.

## **Genesis 3:1**

***<sup>1</sup>Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made...***

So, the first thing that is introduced about the devil is, he is subtle, he's extremely wise too because when he was made, created by God, he was created perfect in wisdom and when he lost his position, that wisdom became warped. So, don't ever think we can fight him and resist him and overcome him without the wisdom of God, without the discernment that God provides and if we don't have it, we are just being deceived, walking in deception. We wouldn't even know we are walking in deception. So, we saw a couple of weeks back, the first and the second prophecies in the Bible. The first being *Genesis 3:15* which is a declaration of war between two groups, the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman and also it is a prophecy about the first coming of Jesus Christ, the first prophecy in the Bible is this. It talks about Jesus' coming - *the Seed of the woman*. The second prophecy in chronological order is not found in the Old Testament, it is found in the New Testament in the Book of Jude. In *Jude 1:14*, Jude because in order, he is the first human prophet, the first prophecy is by God Himself, Jesus prophesying about His first coming, the second prophecy is by the third person in that order. Meaning, there is Adam, the first generation; you have Abel and Cain they didn't prophesy, the next one in that order is Enoch. Enoch actually comes in the seventh generation.

So, for seven generations, there was no prophet, seven generations. Seven generations, there was no prophet, there was no man found through whom God could speak. It took seven generations to find a man, a man who walked with God and when he speaks, this is what he's speaking about Jesus' second coming. So, all of history is caught between, Derek Prince will put it across as that Christianity rests on two mountain peaks, one is Calvary, the Cross, the first coming of Jesus Christ and the second coming of Jesus Christ. The first coming was the Cross. He came to go to the Cross. Second coming, He's coming crowned. The first time He came to judge sin, the second time He is coming to judge sinner. There's a whole lot of difference. The first time He came to judge sin, the second time He's coming to judge sinners and between these two realities which we face every day, there is a realm, like Citibank, the city never sleeps. The demonic, they never sleep. They are working twenty-four seven even now, trying to distract you, trying to put thoughts into your minds, so that you will stare fixedly at me while your minds are wandering all around the globe, that is his subtilty. That's why it is an exercise, it is a discipline. Discipline is not easy, okay and only discipline makes disciples. And some of us have grown up disciplined in our indiscipline and we struggle. But remember, he is subtle, the unseen realm, the invisible realm, the second heavens, as the Bible will call it, where there are millions and million, billions probably, of demonic entities, they deceive, they harass, they seduce humanity, they entice.

You cannot escape this reality, don't live in the fool's paradise, you have to learn to face it. There are certain things you have to accept. The demonic is real, sin is real, death is real, judgment is real. You cannot escape this. Sin, you have to battle it, you have to exercise dominion. After you are born again, you have to learn how to exercise dominion. *Romans 6:14* says, we are not under the law

### **Romans 6:14**

***<sup>14</sup>For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.***

For sin shall not have dominion over you, instead what should have dominion? We should have dominion over sin because you are not under the law but under grace. We understand grace completely different. Grace means now, bindas, cool. No worry about sin. God says, 'No. You've been rescued from the penalty of sin, now grace is so that you exercise dominion over sin.' Satan, resist him. *1 Peter 5:8-9* says, be sober, when it comes to the devil, be sober. Be vigilant because your adversary, the devil walks about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. What should we do? Resist him. How? Steadfast in faith.

### **1 Peter 5:8-9**

***<sup>8</sup>Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. <sup>9</sup>Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.***

Exercise dominion over sin, resist the devil and he shall flee from you. When it comes to the world, *1 John 5:4* says overcome. Whatever is born of God overcomes the world. When it comes to this world system, overcome. When it comes to death, *Hebrews 9:27*, when it comes to death. It is appointed for men to die once. Unless we are alive when Jesus comes, that particular saved, prepared generation, everybody else will face death. It is an appointment you have to keep, you cannot cancel that appointment, you can postpone it with so many medical things and all but ultimately, you will meet that appointment and you should be prepared, spiritually prepared, everyone should be spiritually prepared for that day, because that day like nobody knows, you should be prepared. That's an appointment, then it comes judgment. When it comes to death face it bravely, when it comes to judgment prepare. *2 Corinthians 5:9*

### **2 Corinthians 5:9**

***<sup>9</sup>Therefore, we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. <sup>10</sup>For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.***

Each one of us. So, these are realities we have to face and understand as we are very quickly, the clock is ticking away, we are coming literally to the very end of time and the Bible is very clear, if God didn't shorten those days, even the very elect will not be saved. Okay now, our sister is starting something for young girls, it is not an easy thing. You need to understand, it is not an easy thing, like yesterday FDA has given approval to Elon Musk, Neuralink, you know what it is basically? AI is coming in and basically all these things in itself are neutral but in the wrong hands it becomes extremely dangerous and that's basically what's happening. Basically, it is putting these chips into your brains so people with memory loss or Alzheimer all of them, they can function properly but you do not understand the capacity of these chips that are coming, they are like super computers. Imagine a chip like that in your brain, your mind works like a super computer and I'm telling you, the time is coming that if your child does not take that super chip, your child will be like a moron on the street and will not be accepted anywhere. We are coming exactly to the time where the Bible is saying, 'If you don't take that mark, you will not be able to trade.' And it is coming, it's got its approval yesterday by the FDA. They will first put it across, talking to you only about the good side of it, then they will make it compulsory.

Like I said, there is nothing that can withstand what is coming, except the Spirit of God, nobody can withstand these things which are coming. So, you need to understand why we spend so much time in prayer and in the ministry of the Word because nobody else is going to survive the pressure that is coming. We are focusing so much on the secular education in this world without realizing what is knocking at our door steps, it will be irrelevant. So, we are coming to that, we are coming to that point, things are happening so fast, things are changing so fast that we have no clue unless God is with us and we are with God and we are totally completely sold out for God and we are so continuously learned to be filled with the Holy Spirit, the Bible says, we won't survive. Basically, our job is to prepare as Pastors to make the comfortable uncomfortable and the uncomfortable comfortable. Don't rest in your lees as

the Bible says, because the Bible says, the battle in the end will be so intense because the devil knows, you and I do not know, the devil knows his time is very short and he will come with great wrath. So, mankind will be left with two choices, actually the Church will be left with two choices, resist or perish; overcome or be overcome. *Revelation 12:11* says, they overcame him. So, what happens if you don't overcome the devil? He overcomes you. There is no third choice, 'No, I will be neutral.' There is no neutrality here. This is a battle, overcome or be overcome. Jesus will put it across differently, He says, "Gather or be scattered." So, we will see, there is something which God says, the most important character trait the believers who live in those last days, the most important characteristic we will need is found in *Matthew 24:13*,

### **Matthew 24:13**

***<sup>13</sup>But he who endures to the end shall be saved.***

Endurance, and most people do not have the endurance even to listen to the message for fifteen minutes without getting distracted. In a classroom student, endurance. It is a facet of childhood that you haven't grown out of that mentality that you are not able to endure. Endure and God says that this is the most important characteristic a believer will need in the last days. It is endurance. Endure. So, we saw pictures, few weeks, we saw the picture of the last days nature of man Ahab, the weak man; Jezebel the aggressive woman and then there is Elijah, a different kind of a man with a different kind of spirit. If there is anybody in the entire Bible, especially the Old Testament who is different from all the others, it is Elijah. He is the man of the hour. Elijah's character, that character is there in the Old Covenant, in the New Covenant, and it says, he will come again. Okay, Elijah. When we are introduced to this man, why we need this man, why we spend time learning this man is that, God is used this man as a picture to teach us, how we become the person who will endure till the last and come through. Those days that are right here, we are living in those days. In *1 Kings 17:1* we are introduced to this man.

### **1 Kings 17:1**

***<sup>1</sup>And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word."***

And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab. No introduction. Who is he? Where did he come from? Who is his father? Who is his mother? Nothing, we only know he is from the mountain country of Gilead. That's all we know. That's who he is, that's all. It doesn't mean he doesn't have a father, he doesn't have a mother but Jesus said, "There are some who have made themselves spiritual eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom. They have family, they love their family, yet they are also detached for the purpose of God. They will not let family ties stop them from following and serving God. That's Elijah, that's the kind of people who will survive. They are loyal to their families, they take care of their families, but they also are absolutely sold out for God and they will make no compromise for that. So, Elijah is introduced to us out of the blue he just steps forward and the first thing that you see is, he's standing before the king. So, where was he all this while? Hidden, and God releases him. Meaning, your background is irrelevant. God is not a respecter of persons. You are hidden by God and God was working on you and at God's appointed time, he will release you but till he releases you, can you stay hidden. All we know about him before this point, all we know about him comes thousands of years later through the revelation in the New Covenant in *James 5:16-17* it says

### **James 5:16-17**

***<sup>16</sup>. . . the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. <sup>17</sup> Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months.***

The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours. He was just like us, just an ordinary man but with a difference. He prayed. That's where Elijah differs from us. He was a man who prayed. He was a man of his times that prayed, who saw the situation and he prayed and therefore God could speak through him. He looked at the condition of the world, he looked at what was happening in his times and he prayed and because he prayed, and he prayed with a burden, God puts a words and a solution for the situation into his heart and the next time you see him, he is standing before the king and he is prophesying. So, this is his beginning, Elijah the Tishbite, in *1 Kings 17:1* you will see the beginning.

### **1 Kings 17:1**

***<sup>1</sup>And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word."***

Elijah the Tishbite came and stood before Ahab and says, as the Lord God of Israel lives before whom I stand, there shall not be dew, nor rain these years except at my word. That's his beginning and his end, *2 Kings 2:11*

### **2 Kings 2:11**

***<sup>11</sup>Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.***

The second rapture that takes place in the Bible after Enoch. Everybody is waiting for rapture, right? Look at a man who was taken up, there was a separation that took place. So, we see him first standing before the king, in 1 Kings 17:1, we see him and you suddenly see him taken away. He will come, hundreds of years later on the mount of transfiguration, Peter, James and John will see Elijah with Moses, he will come again in *Revelation 11:3* that's my assumption.

### **Revelation 11:3**

***<sup>3</sup>And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."***

I will give power to my two witnesses and they will prophecy one thousand two hundred and sixty days clothed in sackcloth, my two witnesses. I believe these are the two people who got raptured in the Old Testament, one is Enoch and the other is Elijah. It is appointed unto every man to die once, these are not the raptured generation, they were a generation who should have died. So, two people haven't died, they have to come back. My two witnesses Enoch and Elijah. So, Enoch must have been uncomfortable being clothed in sackcloth but Elijah was because he was used to that kind of garments but Enoch also has to get used to it. In Verse 4-6, they are endued with enormous power.

### **Revelation 11:4**

***<sup>4</sup>These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.***

These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. These are the ones who are standing before the God of the earth. What was Elijah are the first words that come out of his mouth to Ahab? "I who stand before God." And again, it is repeated, stand before God.

### **Revelation 11:5-6**

***<sup>5</sup>And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. <sup>6</sup> These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.***

Because of this turning into blood, some people will say it is Moses and Elijah because Moses came but Moses died. You can only die once, you cannot die twice because what will happen in verse 7 and 8 you will see

### **Revelation 11:7**

***<sup>7</sup>When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them.***

So if it is Moses he has to be killed a second time which scripturally is not possible, you only die once.

### **Revelation 11:8**

***<sup>8</sup>And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.***

### **Revelation 3:11-12**

***<sup>11</sup> Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. <sup>12</sup> And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.***

Their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that is Jerusalem which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt where also our Lord was crucified, that's how we know it is talking about Jerusalem as Sodom and then the next verse. Now, after three and a half days the breathe of life from God entered them and they stood on their feet and great fear fell on those who saw them and they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, come up here and they ascended to heaven in a cloud and their enemies saw them. Like I said, if you actually read the Bible, there are many raptures that will take place, it is not just one, these were different raptures, a rapture for just two people and everybody will see them ascending. So, Elijah is a very, very important person. If we study Elijah, we will understand what is that God is looking for, what do I need to survive these times? What do I need? If you turn to Malachi again, *Malachi 3:1-2*

### **Malachi 3:1-2**

<sup>1</sup>***Behold, I send My messenger, okay, you have to notice, not just read. Notice the words also where there is small letter or capital, 'My messenger' and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant (this Messenger, with the capital 'M' is not John, it is the Holy Spirit), in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts. Then God asked two questions, rhetorical questions. <sup>2</sup> "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like launderers' soap.***

Two words, who can endure? who can stand? Two words which are important because if you study Scripture, now, this is not talking about the days, can you endure and allow the Spirit of God to complete His work in you? Can you stand it because it is not going to be easy because He is like the refiners fire and the launderer's soap but again the two words are used, enduring and standing and if you read the prophetic about the last days in both *Matthew 24 or Luke 21, Matthew 24:13* will use the word endure and if I'm right *Luke 21:36* says that we have to come through all this and stand before God.

### **Matthew 24:13**

<sup>13</sup>***But he who endures to the end shall be saved.***

### **Luke 21:36**

<sup>36</sup>***Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."***

So, these two words are used, endure and stand. Endure and stand. So that's where we see Elijah is a man of the hour and he's teaching us, every one of us, that's our struggle, can we come through the teaching, the life lessons, the life process God is trying to put all His children through? We don't understand these things, we will not have meaning for our lives, we will be just deceived like most people in the church. We are not talking about the world, leave the world aside, we have nothing for them, except one word; turn and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are not talking about the world, we are talking about the Church, because if you read the Book of Revelation and Christ's letter to the seven churches, five of the seven churches had that command to repent, five out of the seven, only two churches God had nothing to say. So, please remember we are not talking to the world, we are talking to the Church. So, we have this picture. Now, we will turn to *1 Kings 17:2*,

### **1 Kings 17:2-7**

<sup>2</sup> ***Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, <sup>3</sup> "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. <sup>4</sup> And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there."<sup>5</sup> So he went and did according to the word of the LORD, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. <sup>6</sup> The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook. <sup>7</sup> And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.***

This is how the journey of Elijah begins, okay. There are four stages primarily in Elijah's life. One is hidden we don't know, the next is Cherith, the next will be Zarephath, the next will be Carmel and finally at the end, we will see on one side of Jordan and he's taken and we have to see what God did with this man in between and each of these places to learn, how do I get ready for the days that are, not coming, but are already upon us. How am I going to endure? Who shall endure? Who can stand? So, there is a preparation. Elijah is being prepared and most things happen to us because we are not prepared. We are not prepared for appointments and eventualities which we cannot avoid. Somethings you can postpone, like after sin came in, what sets in? Corruption sets in, deterioration set

in, you can take it and put it in the fridge for some time or in the freezer for some time, but you cannot reverse it. Corruption is irreversible and we see that everyday when we look into our mirrors, that corruption is setting in and yet we are not preparing for eventualities that are coming, that have been prophesied. Like I said this Book, if you miss this Book, you are doomed because one-third of this Book is prophecy. It foretells very clearly.

Jesus said to His disciples, what I tell you, I tell everyone, watch and pray. Not even as dot, He said, from this Word will fall. Everything will come to pass and we are the ones who have been given that Word so that we are prepared when the time and the Day comes. So, there is a preparation, we have to be prepared to endure those day, to stand when the day of evil comes upon us and when everything is over, found standing and one thing we will always find connected with Elijah is, he stands, he doesn't buckle under pressure, he stands. We need to learn how to endure, how to stand, how to resist.

Now, the word has gone from God, through his mouth, what is going to come is drought, famine, desolation and terrible times. These are general words prophesied through the prophet to all of Israel, so he speaks to the king. You can't go all around Israel, there is no media like we have today, so to the king it is spoken because if the head hears, the rest of the body should know. So, God speaks through His servant to the king and says, this is what I prophesy, no rain, no dew, what is the result? There will be drought, there will be famine, there will be death, there will be desolation, there will be terrible times and we have been told in the last days, not terrible, there will be perilous times and a whole list is given in the Bible in three different gospels of what will happen outside and what will happen inside of man, both outside and inside, the deterioration outside and the deterioration inside, both are very clearly mentioned.

So, he says, if you are not moved by the outward witness, then be shaken by the inward witness. Lord, why am I like this. Why am I not able to hear the Word? Why do I have to desire to pray? You said, 'Watch,' I have no interest in watching? Why am I lost? Why am I distracted? Why is that, I can pay attention to everything else but when the Word of God comes, what is happening to me? Why is it that when pressure comes I buckle so easily? Why? Because we are not allowing the Holy Spirit, that's why the Bible says, who can endure? Who can stand. Why? Because He is the Refiners' Fire, He's a Launderer's Soap. So, there is a general prophesy that is given in verse 1, but if you go to verse 2 and 3, to the obedient servant of God, it is not a general prophesy, it's a very specific prophecy. What does it say? Then the Word of the Lord came to him; then, not before. After he had done what he was told to do, otherwise it is not faith, it is sight. After he's prepared, 'Elijah, go to king Ahab, say all this and after you have finished saying this, don't worry, I have prepared,' no. He said, "First go speak, first go do what I told you to do." Once he has spoken, the word of the Lord comes to him.

### **1 Kings 17:2**

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

Specific word, it is not spoken to everyone. It is only spoken to those who are obedient. Those who are not obedient you have a general word, what is it? The prophesy of disaster, not the prophesy of protection. Both are prophecies, one is of disaster, the other is protection in the middle of the disaster. General prophecy is given to all of Israel, disaster is coming, what is it? No rain, no dew. To the man who is obedient, He says, it will happen but you will be protected. He's given direction. *Hebrews 12:1* and we'll come back.

### **Hebrews 12:1**

***<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,***

Again endurance comes. There are two things mentioned over there. Weight and sin. Elijah is a righteous man. The fervent, earnest prayer of a righteous man avails much, that is how Elijah is introduced by James. He is a righteous man. See, righteous people also will be put through the fire by God, why? They may not have sins but they have weights. You may be saying but I'm very conscious about the fact I do not sin but you may not sin but you may be carrying a lot of weight which will not allow you to endure when the time comes which will not allow you to stand, because you will crumble under that weight. So, even though Elijah is a righteous man, he's a praying man, God is going to put him through the wringer. He has to get rid of weights. What does God tell him? Go back to 1 Kings 17:2, 3.

### **1 Kings 17:2-3**

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

Get away from here. So important. Listen to what God is telling this man. Get away from here and turn eastward and hide by the brook Cherith which flows into the Jordan. What is He telling him? The famous Old Testament prophet has just made his first prophetic utterance, that too before the king, the next thing he knows is, immediately he's shut down. Immediately he's shut down. Can you ever imagine anything like that. Messi scores a goal in the football world cup, and next thing the coach calls him and benches him for the rest of the match. Can you imagine that? \Sit down.' Now, Elijah has prophesied, now he has to learn endurance. God is going to get rid of weights in his life and he says, hide by the brook Cherith which flows into the Jordan and *verse 4*,

### **1 Kings 17:4**

**<sup>4</sup> And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.”**

“For I have commanded ravens,” He says, “I have commanded ravens to feed you.” It is interesting. Commanded blessings are not for everybody. Commanded blessings are for the obedient. In the midst of chaos, in the midst of desolation, in the midst of famine, in the midst of drought, God says, “I have commanded.” There are two kinds of obedience. One is called convenient obedience, the other is called costly obedience. Most are used to convenient obedience. They obey God when it is convenient. That's why when the worship begins, half the church is empty because it is very convenient but to be in church before time is costly, every day, every time the church gathers. It is not convenient, it is costly. I'm telling you one tiny part of our spiritual walk. Because like the Chinese proverb - a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. And suddenly you will realize, is my obedience convenient? Or is my obedience costly? Convenient obedience or costly obedient. Ask.

Commanded blessings are for those who have counted the cost and willing to pay the price. So to that man God says, “Turn eastward, go hide by the brook Cherith,” and I have commanded, I have commanded. We are at war 24/7. The making of an Apostle or a Prophet is not easy, every weight you will be asked to shed. You know what the word Cherith means? Cherith means cutting away. The prophet is going to be in a place and he is going to be chiseled, he is going to be cut away, he is going to be shaped, not an ordinary man, the prophet, the righteous man, the man of fervent prayer is going to Cherith, lot of things God sees what we don't see. God says, ‘You need a cutting away.’ That's not what we think.

You come, you prophesied before the kings and you are already counting your next ministry. I'm going to go on a tour of Israel. I will be prophesying in Jerusalem, prophesying in Jericho, prophesying, instead God says, ‘Go to Cherith and sit down.’ Why is he being put through this wringer? It is because we will know only three and a half years later. Three and a half years later, he is the only man who can stand before the demonic, hundreds and hundreds of prophets of Baal and Ashtoreth, all the people standing in the middle, the king and the army against him. He is the only man who can withstand the powers of darkness and he is able to stand alone because he had to go through this process and we are living in a time when principalities and powers and rulers of darkness have taken literally over every system that operates in this world and God says, ‘Will you be able to withstand?’ If you don't withstand I'm telling you, you may end up in hell because there are only two choices, overcome or be overcome because when the pressure comes, people buckle under pressure, so the last generation has to be prepared like any other generation before because there will be only two choices, what are the choices? Take the mark or die.

I will show you a portion in the Book of Revelation which was impossible till today. As I said, the Bible has been unsealed but it was sealed by time.

### **Revelation 13:15**

**<sup>15</sup>He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.**

What is it? Image. It is the image of a beast that speaks. Why is everybody panicking and saying that AI should be shut down for a season? It is because the machines will take over. This did not make any sense till this year. If the year 2020 was the year of COVID, the first lock down, global lock down preparation for the anti-Christ, the year 2023 was the introduction of artificial intelligence, the beast that will speak and we are sitting like dummies in the Church not getting ready for what is coming, thinking about a career in the world where everything will be controlled by AI. Right before our eyes things that are prophesied, impossible for mankind to understand, suddenly things are making

sense in 2023. It is coming, it is coming, it is here. It is here, right here before our eyes, it is here and once it takes over, it will take over, control everything. They wouldn't want you for your jobs because the machine will do it better than you. You want to do better than the machine or as good as the machine. You see if you considered your sex male superior to female, you were called a sexist. If you considered your race to be better than that race, you are called a racist but there is only the human species and Larry Page the founder of Google, he walked away from an interview, with Elon Musk, because Elon Musk said, 'Humans are superior to artificial intelligence machines.' He said, 'You are a species-ist.' A new word has been coined because the machine is a species, now. Right before our eyes, just a few weeks back. The machine is a species which can think and act on its own and should not be considered inferior to human beings.

We are living in those days, where there will be demons, humans and machines coming together. The only ones who will come through are the ones who have learned, like Elijah, gone through the process and surrendered how to stand. That's why our sister is starting something for girls because they are vulnerable, very vulnerable, they are very, very vulnerable. The girls are vulnerable because the reigning spirit over these last days is the spirit of Jezebel where women are no longer women, men are no longer men. Passive men and aggressive women and now you have the mess that is happening over and around the world and we have to protect our children, we have to be very careful what they see, what they watch, what they hear. They have to be men and girls of the Word and not of the world because the entire world lies under the sway of the wicked one. How is it going to lie under because there is a time coming very soon when then the entire world will be controlled by machines.

Be very sure, unless God puts a foot on the break, it will be digital currency, nothing else. You will not be able to buy and sell, everything will be monitored by machines. Within seconds, hours, years they will have an entire profile of you, how you think, they will be able to figure it out, everybody will be monitored. Like in China, you will get credit scores, if you have social credit scores where if the government approves of you, your score goes up, you can buy more but if the government does not approve of you, your credit goes down, you buy less. How will the Church come through? That is what Jesus said, "If those days were not shortened, even those who were elect before the foundation of the world would not be able to come through," because they would stumble under this pressure and give in.

So, take the Word of God, the prophecies of God seriously and Jesus said, "What I say to you, I say to everybody, watch," watch carefully. He said, keep an eye on what is happening in the world and keep a closer eye on what has been prophesied in the Word of God and we will see that we are living in those times. You want to come through? You will need all of God, not less; all of God. So, here is a man, what is he told? "*Get away from here.*" Get away from here. What is 'here'? The palace, the publicity. He is standing before the king at the palace. Get away from here and turn eastward and hide. Not reveal but hide. Once we have one gift we want to be revealed. He says, "Go hide." And where he is told to hide, the conditions are going to be very harsh. He is going to be isolated. There is no companionship in Cherith. It is Cherith which will prove to each one, if you go through that process who is Lord. Is it Christ or self? Let me tell you, most Christians will not graduate from Cherith. They cannot handle Cherith because they were not prepared, they were not spiritually, mentally prepared for this but there is no body in the Bible whom God has used ultimately in their generation who could escape Cherith, they all had to go through that.

And verse 3 says very clearly, "*Get away from here and hide.*" What is that? Hide, it is not 'I will hide you.' You hide. It is not that I will deny you; you deny yourself. It is not I will humble you; you humble yourself. It is not that I will cleanse you; you cleanse yourself. It is in Cherith that the death of self takes place. Your self-life will either die or you will leave Cherith before your time. Hide thyself. We like to sing the other song, "Hide me now..." God says, "No, you hide yourself. Shut your mouth, sit down there quietly." 'But Lord, don't You know I'm gifted?' "I know, sit down there." 'You know I can play better than Messi,' "Yes, sit on the bench there now."

Will we graduate from Cherith? Elijah the brightest light in the darkest hour, now is the time to go on a prophetic tour, show them the proofs of thy prophecies. That's why most of this T.V. fellows will pray for somebody and then he says, 'Come and give your testimony, it is not about Jesus, it is the proof of my miraculous power. I came with a headache, now when pastor prayed my headache disappeared,' and he takes the glory and on the last day, 'Jesus thank You.' This is what he should have been doing, right? "Until the Word of the Lord comes from my mouth, there shall be no rain, no dew," and rain stops, that is okay, rains come in season but from that day morning, there is no dew. So, he could go to each town and say, 'Behold the Word of the Lord from his servant, look at the ground when you woke up in the morning, was there dew? No, I am the prophet of God.'



No. He said, "Sit down, sit down quietly." He could have shown the proof of his prophecy, right? Instead do you know what God did? God shut him down, put him on the bench. At the age of twelve when we encountered Jesus in the temple, the Bible says, He was listening to the scribes and the teachers and He was asking questions and they were amazed at His understanding at the age of twelve and then the Father shut Him down for eighteen years. At twelve He could have preached, He could have given the scribes in the temple a run for their money at twelve and He told His adopted parents, "Don't you know I must be at My Father's business?" He's a young boy who knew His word, knew the Spirit, knew the Scriptures, knew His profession and God shut Him down for eighteen more years.

Elijah will later come down after three and a half years from mount Horeb, he will put his mantle upon Elisha, Elisha says, 'Can I go and say good bye to daddy and mummy?' He says, 'What do I got to do with you? And then he kills the oxen, follows Elijah for the next eighteen years, Elisha is shut down, you'll hear nothing about Elisha. Eighteen years later when Elijah is taken, when Elisha is revealed, he is a different man because for eighteen years the weights have been shed, he has been cut down and he picks up exactly where Elijah left. The mantle falling is not just symbolic, where Elijah stopped, he starts from there because he allowed God to shut him down. Can we allow God to do those things in us so that we can be prepared for that Day when it comes and the Day is here? We are not afraid. Obedience that is costly, obedience that is painful.

### **Hebrews 5:8**

***<sup>8</sup>Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.***

It was not easy, it was costly. You allow God to chip away those things in the flesh, each one of these things has to be chipped away. It is not easy. It is difficult. He will put you through Cherith, that valley. And you alone know what God is doing with you. To you alone God will show you the things that happening inside; He says, 'This is dead weight.' 'Lord, what did I do?' God says, "You didn't do anything. But there is a weight because of which I cannot do anything. It is not about you doing anything." 'Did I sin?' "No, but you've got a weight because of which I cannot work on you until you get rid of this weight." And only God knows, only God knows. Elijah is hidden, but he is being prepared. He is being lightened and sharpened. You take a reed and you sharpen it, the reed is becoming light and it is also being sharpened.

### **Isaiah 49:2**

***<sup>2</sup>And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me, and made Me a polished shaft; in His quiver He has hidden Me."***

We think arrows automatically happen. No, they don't happen. They are picked, they are chosen, they are shaped, they are hidden and in the appointed time they are released. And Elijah is hidden and God is working on him. He is working on him. You know isolation is one of the most difficult test you will have to go through before God, (not man), can appoint you to a position of leadership. That is isolation. We don't like isolation. We like to be in the crowd. Ask this question – will I be able to stand alone one day and obey God? Or will I give in to the crowd? Do you always need to walk in the shadow of somebody who is always prodding you to do something?

I keep asking Ma, 'What happened to the GSS boys? What happened to the boys? When the shadow was lifted they just fell apart.' What happened to them? Why are they irregular? They come sometimes, they don't come. They come late, they leave early. What happened to them? What happened to 12 years, 13 years, 14 years of training? It never went in; it stayed out. The same thing can happen to anyone here. You will know when you leave church. One day you leave church or God moves you somewhere or you move on your own, suddenly you will realize whether you have learnt anything or not. Did your spirit, your soul, your mind receive anything? Did you discipline your mind? Can you stand alone?

Look at this young man,

### **2 Kings 12:2**

***<sup>2</sup>Jehoash did what was right in the sight of the LORD all the days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him.***

There was a priest when he was a young man. And the priest instructed him and he did what was right in all the things of the Lord, because he was walking under the shadow of a priest. Now let's look at another time in his life, which is in 2 Chronicles,

### **2 Chronicles 24:17-18**

***17 Now after the death of Jehoiada the leaders of Judah came and bowed down to the king. And the king listened to them. 18 Therefore they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served wooden images and idols; and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem because of their trespass.***

What happened here? What happened to Jehoash? One man went missing in his life; the priest went missing in his life and he reverted to the norm. He reverted to the norm. That is why I said, by salvation you are called 'saints', but most saints cannot handle Cherith. Either they will not hide and they will start projecting themselves, and then like a meteor burn up. They were burnt out; they did not remain burning. They wanted to be revealed, they wanted to project themselves, and so they will quickly get burnt out because they could never be hidden. Or they will quit. They will rise too early and be burnt out.

Cherith is a place of cutting away. I don't know who is going through Cherith but stay in Cherith. Let the weights be removed one by one. It is a division that God does, from man unto God; from fellowshiping with men to fellowshiping with God alone; from the food of men to be fed by God Himself; from favor with men to favor with God alone. It is the test of your faith. It is at that place your faith will be built up to face that day on Mount Carmel. Remember, the destination is Carmel where you face the hosts of hell, so that the people can turn back to God.

#### **Jude 1:20**

***20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,***

Cherith will build your faith. If you come through Cherith, if you can come through Cherith. We do not know how long that season will be, for each one it will be different. For Moses it was forty years. For Elijah it was probably a year. For Jacob it was twenty years. For Joseph it was 13 years. For John the Baptist it was 30 years. For Jesus it was 18 years. First revelation at the age of 12 and then hidden. Each of them was different. We do not know. But you cannot circumvent that process; Cherith is a determined place of God for every saint. If you skirt this or you quit at Cherith, you will never finish your race. You may be saved but you will never finish your race. You cannot avoid Cherith and finish the race.

So many, even in this church, have quit. They have quit, they are not able to handle the pressure. Can you handle it? Do you know what pressure is? Can you handle it? Men, can you handle pressure; the pressure of work? Man is called to work. Can you handle the pressure of work? Adam was called to work. Sisters, can you handle the pressure of motherhood? Because the Bible says that the woman is saved through child-bearing. Meaning, motherhood is through which her sanctification takes place. Can you handle that pressure? Can you handle it? How many mothers can handle pressure of motherhood? How many men can handle the pressure of work? The gentiles recognize that God was with him, Joseph, at his workplace. Not when he prophesied and not when he interpreted a dream. But at his workplace they realized that his God is with him. Can we handle it, that you carry no weights? 'My father didn't think about me. My brothers sold me and this woman had tried to seduce me.' No excuses. At your workplace have you shut down all those excuses? Have you shut down all that weight? 'Oh I studied in a Telugu medium school. My parents did not send me to a better school.' No excuses, God is not a respecter of persons. Have you shut down all that weight and said, 'Lord, here I am'?

Endurance. Are we allowing God to build in endurance into our system? To endure? Ask yourselves. His ways are not our ways. We don't even understand, because in *1 Kings 17:6* it says,

#### **1 Kings 17:6**

***6 The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook.***

The ravens brought food for him, mama didn't cook for him. This is the first Swiggy in the Bible. Ravens brought food for him. All your preconceptions have to be thrown out. "Lord, You are isolating me, You are cutting away things from my life. How am I going to survive?" God says, "That is not your problem, that is My problem. Your problem is obedience. You are trying to sit in My seat and think about provision," God says, "That is not your problem. That is My problem." Lot of people are sitting in God's seat and therefore they find that seat too hot to handle, because you cannot sit in God's throne – 'How will I provide?' God says, "That is My problem, not your problem. Your problem is to sit in the chair of obedience. That is your problem." Never try to sit in God's chair. You will release that it is a difficult chair to sit in. His ways are not our ways. Ravens are notorious thieves.

For us who come from Kerala, if it full of crows and ravens. When you are a child and if you grew up in Kerala you don't have school, your job is to stand with a stick while your grandmother is cleaning the fish, because while she is cleaning that fellow will pluck and go. Now that thief has been ordered to feed the prophet. On top of that, that thief is unclean according to the Law. They brought him bread and meat in the morning and evening. Only twice a day. Pastor Elijah, I like your prayer life, very good discipline, now I will add the discipline of fasting also; fast one meal. How many of you are willing to fast one meal, starting today? It is part of preparation that is how He prepared His servant. God said, "You will eat only twice." He gave him only two meals, no snacks in-between and no filter coffee in the evening. If you are thirsty drink water, not sprite. Just bread and meat and he drank from the brook.

Do you have the discipline? Can you handle this? Fathers? Men? Can you handle this? Mothers, can you handle this? Can you handle homes? Like I said, my mother just passed away two days back, you should have seen her. A disciplined lady. 5 children and the eldest is only 4 years older than the youngest. I am just 4 years younger than my eldest brother. We are just 1 year apart. 5 children, 1963 in Thimpu where there is no heating, nothing. The coldest city in Bhutan. In that year 1963 with five children and working, no mixer, no pressure cooker, no gas, with 5 children and a husband who will never change his taste buds (just like me, his son) and he never missed a meal of his liking. My mother ground everything in the stone, manual grinder, to make the dosa batter. She took it from Kerala to Bhutan. 5 days journey in four trains. The one which you grind your masala went from Kerala to Bhutan for one man to eat his meal because she would not compromise either of the fact that she was his wife or the fact that she was the mother of five or regarding her student whom she taught in their hundreds.

Can you handle it? And she didn't know God but she had Christianity without Christ. Can you handle it? And it didn't matter, early morning when I woke up and go there she would say, "Run around the school five times and then you will get your breakfast." Her eye misses nothing; the water is freezing, there is no heating and you are this child who doesn't like cold water, so I would wet my feet and wet my hair and run out and she would catch me on the way and say, "Go back." "No tuitions, nothing, sit in the kitchen while I am making the dinner and read your book there, I am watching you with one eye." That was me, the one who grew up with her. That is discipline. That only thing she did not have was that she did not know Christ. That is why, like my father, God brought her to me and she stayed with us for seven years. And till the last minute she lived that way with discipline. When you look at her journal you will see that discipline. Every morning she would get up as usual, she would read her daily readings, write her notes, everything. And she was a person who was prepared for her death. Like I said, as much spiritually, she was physically prepared. She picked her saree, told my wife, "This is the saree I want to wear and this is the socks I want, which my second son brought for me. That's the socks you will put for me. My youngest son brought the Shawl from Bhutan, cover my head with that. These are the flowers I want and these are the songs I want for my funeral." She was prepared. This is discipline. That is a different generation.

And God took that generation away and we are supposed to be the last generation. And all hell is going to break loose against us and how are we going to survive? One and a half children and we are already collapsing. They had five children, six children, seven, eight children. And they did well. We didn't need T.V. there was no T.V. we did not have video games. We invented our own games. We didn't go out to eat, didn't order food from outside. None of these things were there available. These things matter, discipline matters in every area. It matters.

Even the prophet is put through that; he is going through Cherith. I still remember, when I was in class 5. I wouldn't dare ever complain to my father, it was an impossibility. Whether you complain was genuine or not it is irrelevant, you don't complain to your father, you always go through your mother. I told mom, "This is not fair. Why is that in every paper I get 2-3 marks less than the first? I know I have done better than him." See at that age I was a social justice warrior. She said, "It is because your father is the principal and I am one of your teachers. So they will say that it is partiality. So we will give you less. Learn to sit down." I didn't know Cherith was going on in my life in class 5 itself. In Bhutan it is class 5, 8 and 10 and 12 where we have board exams. At every board exam they screen and let only some go through the next class because education is completely subsidized by the government. So she said, "But I will give you an option. Class 5 is common board exam. If you can prove that you are first in every subject, except the national language, which is Zonka, then I will give you my watch."

Now watch is something nobody had. There were only two watches in the entire town; my father's and my mother's. I looked at her and said, "Watch? Really?" and she said, "Yes. Prove yourself." Board exams came and results were out, I proved myself and she gave me her watch. HMT Sona with a gold chain and all. I still remember, HMT Sona, because how can you forget when a class 5 boy gets the only watch in the town? Like I shared earlier, I walked two days with my hand raised high so that everybody would notice my watch. I couldn't bring the hand down.

I still remember that watch. You would believe, I forgot my watch in the church office, and this morning when I went to my cupboard, my wife had put my mother's watch over there and it is practically, exactly the same. The only thing is that this is Citizen and that was Sona. Even the chain is exactly the same. I said, "Wow, this is what I got in class 5. I want to wear this from now." It is exact, 50 years later you get an almost identical one. When the results came and the marks sheet came from the headquarters to the school, first thing she checked is the marks, 'I promised my son something. Did he come through?' and she checked and found out that I had come first in all the subjects, so she took off her watch, gave it to me and said, "This is yours."

Now we want everything freely. We don't want to work for it, don't want to stress and strife for it, don't want to burn the midnight oil for it. Just give it free, I deserve it – social justice warriors.

But to that prophet God says, "Go sit in Cherith, let Me cut it away." You know what is going to happen at Cherith? You know what really happens at Cherith? Our vision changes. Before Cherith we are used to seeing big things. Palaces, gates, walls, kings, royals robes, chariots and horses. Now we start noticing little brooks and ravens. We are so caught up in that dazzle of the world, we forget the little things that matter in life; our everyday life. The little things that matter. You are forgetting the little things and the little people. The prophet has to be taught to take notice of the little things. He would have seen the little birds. Why? It is because God is preparing him for a ministry. It is not the ministry he is thinking about. Probably a year later when the brook dries God will say, "Now, arise and go dwell in Zarephath because I have commanded a widow and her dying son."

See, our vision has to change. Everybody wants a platform. Elijah was given a platform and once he has spoken he was shut down, so that he can start seeing life differently. Everybody wants a platform. Everything is mega. Superstar is gone, now it is all megastar. The church has come, it has to be a mega-church and you have to be a mega-preacher. And a mega worship leader. When the Son of Man walks through the sunlight, in the heat of the day, He sends His disciples all away, sits by the well for a woman who is married and divorced 5 times and living with the sixth one who is her boyfriend. For one person.

Elijah, the servant of the Son of God is going to be sent to one widow. But he is not ready for that, he has to be cut down to size. There were weights that needed to be taken out. So it was not a coincidence that on the day I buried my mother, there was an article that was published on The Hindu. My sister sent it to me and I looked at it and said, 'Wow! Today, of all the days, it is written 'Mr. James and Mrs. James and my sister had written something about them.' Which is true. Do you understand, in a country where education had just come in and they are basically both from education background and dad was the principal. They are practically going and starting off the system. The children had to be brought from the villages.

You know I would wake up in the morning, because mom and dad slept in the front room, they gave me the bedroom, not for my sake but for the sake of the kids they were raising up in the school. Three beds put together and I would wake up and see at least 6-7 Bhutanese kids sleeping next to me. They raised me up among them. And she cooked for all of them. And taught them along with me. That is why I always used to say be careful with people like that; our words will not make difference to them, they have lived that life. Be very careful when you live your lives before them because they can see the fake from the true. So it is not easy. She lived that and taught all of them. I still remember, in the year 1988 when I applied for my first interview, I came and the principal of the school interviewed me and I was selected and I was walking down the road. I heard screeching sounds on the road and I looked around wondering what was happening, I saw cars stopping and people coming out and I looked at them, they looked at me and asked, "Are you Mr. James' son?" I said, "Yes." And they held my hand, they were officers in the government, they said, "because of your mother and your father we are where we are today." It is a different generation. Any sphere, any place you go they lived their life like that.

Let me read something to you, whenever I read something powerful I always copy it. This is Hubert Humphrey, he was the Vice President of the US during 1965 – 1969. At the Hubert Humphrey Building dedication D.C. on 1<sup>st</sup> of November 1977, Humphrey spoke about the treatment of the weakest members of society as the reflection of the government. "The moral test of the government is how the government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children and those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly and those who are in the shadows of light, the sick, the needy and the handicap."

The government rests upon His shoulders and therefore upon our shoulders. And we are judged by how we treat our little children, our old parents and the sick. Not by how we deal with normal people. Because this is where women

fight for the right to kill their babies. And people fight for the right of Senicide, the killing of the elderly. That is the age we are living in. Ask yourself. It is only for a season in Cherith.

He was isolated and entirely dependent upon God. Elijah probably sang the song – ‘I need Thee, O I need Thee every hour. I need Thee.’ In *1 Kings 19:14* he makes a statement to God which was factually wrong.

#### **1 Kings 19:14**

***<sup>14</sup>And he said, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.”***

Now you all will say, no, God said that there are 7000 others who did not bow their knees. That is the truth only known to God. That is not a truth known to Elijah. What is the truth Elijah is living in? “I am the only one.” But he still refuses to bow. What if you are the only one in your generation? What if you are the only one in your class? What if you are the only one in your office? Will you bend you knee? Or will you stand? Elijah thought he was the only one left in the entire nation and he still refuses to bow under pressure. Do you know what prepared him? It is Cherith that prepared him. God told him, “Hide” not abide. Hide in Cherith. Not abide.

But after sometime, you know, people will start liking Cherith because the food is free, water is coming. We are like Peter; Elijah comes, Moses comes and he says, ‘Let us make three tabernacles and dwell here.’ After sometime people will start getting comfortable. No longer do they want home food, they want mess food, because they are used to the mess; because their life is a mess. Comfortable. Why is God dealing with us at Cherith?

#### **1 Kings 17:8-9**

***<sup>8</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, <sup>9</sup>“Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.”***

There is a widow there and her son, scraping at the bottom of the barrel. Do you know what it means? Look at *Revelation* and see how Jesus describes the seven churches.

#### **Revelation 3:1-2**

***“And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, ‘These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: “I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. <sup>2</sup>Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.***

This church is a widow. She has got a name that she is alive, but she is dead. Look another church, the final church, it is unbelievable. Whenever I look at *Revelation 3:17* I am stunned.

#### **Revelation 3:17**

***<sup>17</sup>Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—***

***and do not know...*** this is what scares me. I mean how can you not know that you are wretched? How can you not know that you are miserable? How can you not know that you are poor? How can you not know that you are blind? How can you not know that you are naked? That means, you are completely deceived. The deception of the age. This church is so completely deceived and God is saying, not that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked, but that you do not know. You do not know. How much more can you be self-deceived? You do not know that you are wretched. Not that you are wretched, but that you do not know. You are sitting there in church saying, ‘I am so comfortable, I don’t need anything.’ God says, “You do not know your actual reality.” You do not know. It is a dangerous place to be in. A church that is a widow. Another church that is a widow. What is that? You’ve got a reputation of being alive but you are dead.

And God has put you in Cherith, for what? So that God can send you to them. Like I said, don’t think career. Cherith is a place where we don’t change our circumstances but we change. When you are in Cherit, which is a hard place, isolated place with a little stream bubbling by, no other resources, you have to depend upon the ravens, strange ways of God to take care of you, your circumstances don’t change, but you change. We are always praying for our circumstances to change, ‘Change my location. Change! Change! Change!’ God says, “No, you change. Once

you change, I will change your location.” But if you change your location before you change, you know what you are taking? You are taking your blindness and misery to the other place. Nothing changes. Only location changed. You can never run away from your problems because it will run with you. Everybody is trying to change location, but they are not allowing God to change them.

In the meantime, do you know what is happening to the land? Terrible times, terrible times. There is no rain, no dew, people are scrambling for water, famine has started. All are wondering. What did God do? He shut the prophet down. There is famine in the land, there is draught in the land and the prophet is nowhere to be seen. When you need the prophetic the most, the prophetic is missing. And who hid him? God did. *Psalm 74* talks about this,

**Psalm 74:7-9**

***<sup>7</sup>They have set fire to Your sanctuary; They have defiled the dwelling place of Your name to the ground. <sup>8</sup>They said in their hearts, “Let us destroy them altogether.” They have burned up all the meeting places of God in the land. <sup>9</sup>We do not see our signs; there is no longer any prophet; nor is there any among us who knows how long.***

There is only one man who knows, there is only one man who knows how long this condition will continue. You know what? God shut him down in Cherith. Why? It is because they despised the Word of God. They despised the House of God. And therefore God has no prophetic voice to speak to them. He shut him down. You would know, until famine hits, how desperately you will need the prophetic voice because you would know which way to turn. If God doesn't speak to you, you would know what to do. God spoke to Elijah and said, 'Turn eastward.' He heard clearly, "Turn eastward. Go to Cherith, sit down there and I have commanded provision into your life." Once that season was fulfilled in his life; what God wanted to achieve in his life in Cherith, the Word of the Lord again came to him and said, "Arise!" let's read, what does it say?

**1 Kings 17:9**

***<sup>9</sup>“Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.”***

“Dwell” not hide. Every word is important, because only when you are in that situation with God, every word can make a difference. 'Hide' and 'dwell' are not the same. You don't hide in Zarephath, and you don't dwell in Cherith. There are a lot of people dwelling in Cherith, they are so comfortable they have already decided, 'This is where I am going to stay.' God says, 'This is only for a season to hide you, to get rid of your weight.' But your dwelling place is somewhere else. The words are different. “Dwell there” but the provision is from a completely different source. I am telling you, even today there was a prayer request about fear, the fear about provision is what makes you do most things. Nobody is pursuing what God wants them to do. They are pursuing provision and they pick and choose their careers and colleges and everything according to that. We are provision-driven people. Not God-led people.

But there is a God who says, “I have commanded.” So when everybody is scrambling for food and water one man is sitting happily, drinking water and ravens bring food; one raven comes with bread and the next raven comes with meat and drops them. I don't know how much provision they brought, but they brought for him every day, morning and evening. Did you see? You can get used to Cherith also.

**1 Kings 17:7**

***<sup>7</sup>And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.***

It doesn't say that the ravens stopped. It says that the brook dried. Brooks, rivers, waters are important in the Word of God and in the world. Hyderabad is a wonderful city now, in these past 7 years, because we have plenty of water. Did you notice two things that happen now? Power never goes, water never goes dried; plenty of ground water and plenty of Manjeera water keeps coming. Water is life. You can survive without food for 40 days, but you cannot survive without water. And the Spirit of God is called water, they all drank from the Rock that followed them, which was Christ.

Many are living in a dry and parched place. The brook has dried. They are not drinking of the Spirit anymore. And many of you, I look at your faces I know, by the time the benediction is over and you get out of the door, the message is forgotten. It will not make any difference in your life, because you have still not surrendered, and your age is irrelevant. You still haven't surrendered. What you have is convenient obedience. Not costly obedience. Very convenient. Until you know Jesus as Lord, not just Savior, but as Lord, He can never direct you. And you will be swept

by the flood that is coming. And it is coming. Nothing can save us from that, except God. Nothing. We will be swept away by the flood, the pressure will be so much. Like people in their 10s and 1000s who had no illnesses at all and were strong, they went and took the vaccination because they had no strength to say, 'No'. More than that, the test of money is coming, education is coming, you will see all your friends in your offices and everywhere in a few years time, all have taken a neurolink chip and you realize that they don't need you anymore, 'You can take your slip and go, because this one is 100 times better than you. Why don't you also take the chip if you want a job?' It is coming, I am not joking. It is coming. They have already started calculating how many millions of jobs will be lost as AI takes over.

Do you know how many IT jobs have been lost in India in this year? It is counted in 100s and 1000s, they won't let you know. People have been laid off, they don't need you because machines work better than you. And you want to work better than the machine? Then be part of the machine. If you don't have the Word of God you will not come through. One man came through, his name was Elijah. There was Ahab, there was Jezebel and there were the sorcerers and the magicians who ate at her table, overpowered the whole nation with sorcery and witchcraft, one man stood there and they couldn't do anything to him. Do you know why? It is because his obedience was costly. And not convenient. I am not a prophet of gloom and doom, I am just telling you what is written and what is happening before us.

His brook dried. There are many waters in the Bible, there were waters of Marah, people complained because the water was bitter. The waters of Meribah, the waters of afflictions, the waters of Gal, the water of life. And for Elijah, Cherith went dry. Think about it, he was sent by God, appointed place, obedient servant and the brook dried up. When you see that, what do you say? If the brook hadn't dried up, Elijah's ministry would have dried up. He had a God-appointed ministry in another place. The only way God could make him move was to let the brook dry. He is not a disobedient man; he is an obedient man, extremely obedient man. We don't understand places and situations in our life. Isolation is only for a season, so that we are cut away from self so that God can send us to people. That is ministry. That is ministry, God sending us to people.

"Who is there?" God is asking. "Here I am" is the answer. Like I told you, when I went to that place and met all the young people everybody is learning a foreign language, not to go to Harvard and Princeton and to go to all those places. But to go to the eastern nations to do student missions. Join in a college there. You will easily get. Join the college and earn a degree and in the meantime try to witness to their Muslim friends. Costly obedience. What about your career? Career will follow. Costly obedience.

Today everything is on salary. People are unhappy. Bible says, do you have clothes on your back? Yes. Do you have food on your table? Yes. Are you content? No. why? It is because salary is very less in the company. 'Pay-package is not appropriate to my skills.' How are we different from the world? What is our mission? 'Oh I have a vision' no sir, you have an ambition. You are confusing one with the other. Ambition is of the self. Vision is given by God.

The vision given by God, to Elijah is to turn the hearts of these people back to God, but you are not ready for that. First you have to go to Cherith because you have some dead weights to get rid of in your life. You have certain things which I have to chip off before you can be ready, because you can get comfortable in Cherith too. But there is a widow over there and her son dying. I have to send you. When we get so comfortable and isolated in a place, after some time, you will be like, "Okay, every day the raven comes with food and my brook is not dry. You know what? I must be special. I must be special, everybody's brook had dried. But my brook hasn't dried and the ravens come every day morning and evening. Delivery is on time." You start thinking that you are special, God says, "You are not. You must be obedient and your obedience is for a purpose. I need you to go somewhere else where there are people who are suffering."

I am telling you, lot of people in Christendom they have no compassion for anybody. One thing written about Jesus is that whenever He saw the crowds He had compassion. Do you know why we do not have compassion? It is because we are so caught up with ourselves. We are idolaters worshipping ourselves; most people you meet are more worried about a pimple that comes on their nose than somebody who is dying on the street. Honestly, they worry about those things. And Elijah can fall into that trap and become like that Pharisee, 'Thank God I am not like that man.' Remember his prayer? 'I am not like that man.' We do not realize that the world outside is desperate. That is why one mystery is there in the Bible, which is never revealed. What is it? No man knows the day and the hour of His coming. He says, let every generation live in the light that today is the day.

Let me honestly tell you, it is 11:42 AM right now, if the Lord is coming at 12 noon, all your priorities will change. Yesterday, like I said, I was alone in my office from morning till evening and reading my mom's dairy. I was down, really, really, down. And I asked this question, 'Lord, why did she go through this in the last eight months?' because she went through a lot in the last 8 months. Then He said, 'She needed it and you needed it. You both needed it. She had to completely come to that point where she had to reconcile herself with Me. And I wanted you to reconcile with your mother. She needed it and you needed it.' Both of us, because I had a lot of issues with my mother. But you would know, the last few years, especially the last 8 months was absolutely different. That is why I was so upset, I didn't want to let her go. I don't think ever in my life I have loved my mother the way I loved her the last eight months.

It was like a reverse, she was no longer the mother and me the child. It was the other way round. She was the child and I was the parent. Every issue was resolved. Morning and evening, the first thing and the last thing was always her and I told her a 10,000 times how much I loved her and I kissed her like a mother does with her baby. I kissed her all over and said, 'Amma, I love you, I love you. You are not going to die like this. You shall live. Amma, I love you Amma. I love you.' You know what? We don't realize the only thing that matters is relationships, and we are building lives without relationships, we have no time.

I heard yesterday, I do not know how true it is, I heard through the grape wine, one of my siblings, the elder sibling asked his wife, 'will you go and take care of my mother for 10 days?' she said, 'No!' another one was asked, 'Will you go and take care of my mother?' she said, 'No! I did not take care of my own mother, I put her in a nursing home. Why should I take care of your mother?' but you know my wife? She did. I look at my mother's dairy, she wrote – 'Good morning Father, thank You for Your grace and mercy. Santu (that is what she calls me) came at 5:30 and he gave me my coffee and eggs. Ailsa came afterwards and gave me her oats' and then she writes, 'Ailsa has gone out,' she would let her go anywhere. Towards the end she would always say, 'Ailsa don't go, don't go. Stay with me. Where are you? You stay with me. Come down and stay with me. You just sit here and pray with me.' When I look at the journal, it is a person's journal and the person is no more. And in her journal you see names mentioned over there, a record for your history in someone's journal.

What I am asking is – what are we building? I told you, the same thing happened with my father too, my mother was working, father retired, he was spoiled by my mother and his mother. Men were never allowed to enter into the kitchen and my father had never entered into his mother's kitchen. All the days of his life he had never seen the kitchen because men were not allowed to enter the kitchen. So he had never seen the kitchen. And then my mother took care of him like that with all the children and all her duties. Then he retires and he comes to Kerala and he has to build our first house. He doesn't even know how to light a gas stove or heat water. And I am starting my M.A. first year, he has never eaten outside in a restaurant. He doesn't know what to do, I do not know what to do. How do you leave a man like that? My mother isn't there, she is 3000 miles away. And my college is 80 Km away. Not 1 or 2 Kms. I said, I have to take care of him until something else is done. So I travelled 160 Kms every day to college back and forth. My bus was at 7:25. Before I left I had made my father's breakfast and his lunch. His breakfast was dosa and his lunch was rice, avail, sambar and fish curry. All pounded with hand and stone, manually and at 7:25 I reached my bus stop. After college, another 80 Km I came back, go to the market, clean the fish and make the curry for him. That is why I cook well. Everything my mom cooks I can cook for my father. And I cooked for my mother.

Today everybody wants to put their parents into nursing homes and old age homes and all. Are you thinking those thoughts? Your content of your character is how you treat the little ones, the inheritance from God, and your older ones. You will be judged.

There is a widow that is dying, her child is dying. Elijah, you are getting too comfortable at Cherith. And his brook dried up. The toughest call was on Thursday. It was Thursday, we rushed her to E.R. they looked and said, "We have to tell you the truth. Chances are very little. This is what we can do, but very slim chances that she will make. But if we have to do something, we have to do this thing, make all these interventions, she would have to go into the ICU, she will have to go onto the ventilator. These are the ventilator charges, this is the ICU charges. And the changes are slim." What do you do as a son? I said, "Put her on the



ventilator, put her in the ICU and I will sit beside her.” I am not going to stand there and say, “It’s okay, let her die.” You have to take calls in your life. It cost me a packet for 5 hours. But when I stand before God I want to stand without guilt, ‘I did my best for my mother.’

You want to live a life without guilt? This is not about a career, this is not about money? This is not about success, this is about life. And every one of you, if Jesus tarries to come will have to take those calls in your life. Maybe it is about your child, or it may be about a parent. You will have to take a call – is my career or my child important? What is more important? When I stand before God, is He going to tell me, ‘Wow, you have a wonderful career’? Or would He say, “You sacrificed. Your obedience was costly. But you raised up a child and protected the child and gave your time for the child.” Or for your parent, or like my wife for a mother-in-law.

When I look at things that happened in the last stages of her life, I see how it was all God-ordained. Two Nepali kids come to take care of my mother. My mother is a tough lady. It is not easy with her, I am not white-washing anything. She was a tough lady. I can understand why she is tough, it is because she doesn’t put up with nonsense, because she never put up with nonsense in her own life. So she doesn’t like sloppy people, lazy people. The only person with whom she was challenged in her life was my wife, she told her, “You are more hard-working than me.” And you have these two Nepali girls who have come over there. One is a Christian, one is a Hindu. By the time few weeks were over, the Hindu had become Christian and they loved Amma. And Amma loved them. Suddenly you have a kid who came as a Hindu, 20 year old young kid, sitting everyday by her feet and reading her Bible to Amma in Nepali. You wouldn’t understand why it was so different. It is so different for my mother and me, because thirty years of her life she grew up in that community, teaching their kids. So that face and that language was a comfort to her.

Did you see on Friday, all the people who came for the service at home? Half the crowd was Nepalese. They didn’t know her but they came. Did you see how many scarves they were putting on her? Nepali scarves. God was telling me, ‘You know what? Thirty years she gave her life for those people. Now at her death they will give her respects to her. I will send them. She laid down her life for them.’ And they were there. I didn’t expect any of them to come. Suddenly I look and see that half the crowd is Nepalese. They didn’t even know her, but they represent a community to whom she gave thirty years of her life.

I am telling you, there are things which our young generation which is running after pleasure, running after entertainment, running here and there. We are not allowing God to chip us off of this sloppiness and laziness and self-worship and idolatry. John’s final words in his first epistle says – *little children, flee idolatry*. Women need to grow up and become mothers, have a heart of a mother. Not just birth babies. The heart of a mother. Men need to grow up and have a heart of a father. Go read *1 John*, there are children, young men and fathers. About the fathers only one thing is written – *they knew Him from the beginning*. They understood His heart.

Elijah is being transformed. There is no record of Elijah getting married and having children. But God, in Cherith, is making a father of him. Israel has a king, but Israel does not have a father. Elijah will become the father. That is why when the separation of Elijah takes place, the chariot comes and Elijah is taken in a whirlwind what is the cry of Elisha? ‘My father, my father’.

Before the last and the terrible day of the Lord, He will turn the hearts of the children to the fathers. That is what God needs. He needs fathers, He needs mother. It is not about birthing children. It is about a heart. And that is what happens at Cherith; the self- life is cut away. Our children do not need more money, more clothes, more toys and more education. That is not what they need. They need more of God and more of your time. Our fathers and mothers did a better job with more kids than we do with few. And we have better resources, we have everything. I show my wife sometimes and tell her, ‘This is the way dosas were made earlier. Ground everything manually with stones.’ And the consistency for dosa and idli is different, it is not the same. We never went to the store or ordered batter on Swiggy. We made it. There was no phone

and no YouTube to learn cooking. You asked your mother and learnt. Today mamma is Swiggy. Swiggy mommy.

Watch over your children. Let them eat what you cook and what is healthy. The days when we grew up, if you ate in a restaurant, there were only two reasons: 1, if you were out of town, or 2, your mother doesn't know how to cook. It was an insult if you ate at a restaurant. You go to all the old towns, you see the restaurants are where the buses pass by and where the bus stops. Right? Nowhere else, only where the bus passes by and where the bus stops for passengers. A local going there and eating was a disgrace. They would go for tea, but to eat there was a disgrace. Today children eat things which are only outsourced. Mothers have forgotten what cooking is. Whatever you put in the head, the body has to carry. If the body is unhealthy, it doesn't matter what you put in, it will go down the drain. Mothers, learn these simple lessons. Learn to hide in Cherith. There is no fame there, there is no glory there, there is not much fellowship there. It is an isolated place, but when you come out of Cherith, you will have a genuine ministry. To the dying, to the ignored. To the weak, to the miserable. You know what you will do? Your Word will feed them day and night until the famine stops. Their children may die but you have the power to raise them back to life.

Do you know where that came from? It is because you have allowed God to work in your at Cherith. If you circumvent Cherith there is no Zaerphath. There is no power, there is no life. And you will never reach Carmel where you will be able to resist the powers of darkness and trample them under your feet. There is a pathway ordained by God and that is Cherith. And that is where I believe most of you are struggling; you don't like this cutting away. Elijah's great, great, great, spiritual grandfather's name was Abraham. One day God will come to Abraham in *Genesis 17*, and say,

### **Genesis 17:1**

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

Walk before Me and be blameless. And to walk before Me and be blameless I have an ordinance for you. What is that? Cut away. Circumcision is instituted. Cut away. If you don't cut away, you will never be able to walk before Me and be blameless.

So tonight, go home, go into your prayer closet and ask, 'Lord, what is in me that You dislike?' If you are sinning, repent. But people who are not sinning carry weights. "Lord, what are the weights that I am carrying that will not cause endurance. Would You please help me get rid of it."

This morning, please stand up. We will stand up. It is surreal, Pastor Vijay's conference was already arranged, otherwise he would have spoken. I didn't know whether I would have spoken today. This is what happened to me 27 years ago, when I lost one of my children. It was also on a Thursday. My mom also went on a Thursday. That year when I lost my child, on Friday the pastor called me and ask, "You are supposed to lead worship. Can you?" and the Lord said, "You will." And then when my mom went on Thursday, first time I wasn't sure, even last night I was like, "Lord, will I be able to? I am really down. Really, really, down that Amma went." Ask my wife, those kids, those kids cried and cried, you wouldn't believe after you all left on Thursday night, when you all left home, Salome and Aasma slept on the floor next to Amma, saying, "We will not allow Amachi to sleep alone tonight." Till morning they were sleeping on the floor next to the freezer box. "How can we allow Amachi to sleep alone her final night on earth?" Such nice, committed simple people. They howled, they cried, and they went home yesterday and our house was empty. Just two of us. All of a sudden it was like, "What happened?" the house is empty, Amma isn't there. Our life revolved around Amma, morning till evening. I call my wife a 100 times, 'How is Amma? How is Amma?' Ailsa said, "Rush back Amma is not looking good." Amma, amma, amma. We will get used to it, because we are not people without a hope. We are people of a hope. Right?

That is why when you face these things, you value your salvation. Then you realize that the only thing that matters is, 'Lord, let our children, our grandparents, our parents know You,' because you cannot lose them there. You can be separated from them, but you can never lose them. Put that at the priority of your list. Say, 'Lord, I am an obedient vessel. What will it take me, from You, to see my loved ones saved and into the Kingdom? Here am I. They are lost, I

am not.' Surrender your lives, not for a career. Let God give you a career. Not for a profession, not for success, not for anything. "Lord, there are people in my own household that are perishing and I am the only witness. Would You allow God?" ultimately the only thing that will matter are souls. You take nothing with you to heaven but souls. Daniel prophesies, those who turned people to righteousness shine like stars forever and ever. Those who turned them.

Let that be your prayer this morning.

#### *Closing prayer*

*Father this morning, we just come to You Lord. We want to thank You Father. Thank You, thank You, thank You Lord. We want to thank You for the incredible mercy and patience and love towards us O Lord. This morning, as a son Lord, I want to thank You for my mother. That You watched over her, and You safely saw her through Father. And her last eight months, physically yes suffering, but the most peaceful days of her life Lord. It was so manifest Lord. She became calmer and quieter and there was peace on her face. Visible peace, even when her spirit departed that peace was still there upon her face Lord. I thank You Father. Nothing more we ask of You Lord, that all our loved ones, their names should be in the Lamb's Book of Life. That is all we ask. For every one standing here. For every unsaved loved one, I pray, touch them, touch them, touch them. The world will pass away, the lust thereof. But he who does the will of God will abide forever.*

*But it is not the will of God that any should perish, but repent and come to the knowledge of Christ Jesus. There are so many standing here today, they have so many in their homes who do not know You. And I pray, touch their hearts, turn their hearts and empower each one to be a witness. It doesn't matter who they are, a son, a daughter, a son-in-law, a daughter-in-law. It is the daughter-in-law who brought her mother-in-law into the Kingdom O Lord. And I pray Lord, it doesn't matter who they are, let Your love flow through them and they would come through into Thy Kingdom. One thing and one thing alone will matter, it is written in Revelation 20 – anyone whose name was not found in the Lamb's Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire. Only one thing mattered, was their name there or not. And I pray, the joy of everyone standing here is to find their own names and the names of their family members, their loved ones in that Book.*

*Thank You, thank You Father. Once again I thank You for everyone, for their love and their concern and service for my mother Lord. Bless them and keep them. We thank You Lord. For in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

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