

When He Comes He Looks for Faith

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Father, this morning, this first Sunday of this 11th month, we look to You Lord. We look to You. We believe for Your grace. We believe for an abundance of grace. We believe that Your grace is sufficient for us. We believe, we believe. Because the Word of God says that You came full of grace and out of that abundance of grace we have received blessing upon blessing, Father. Today, once again I pray that faith will arise, even now, not later, not tomorrow, but now. And Your children will stand in faith and will stand in grace and they will realise that Your grace is sufficient, more than enough. I commit everyone, Lord, even online, everyone. Touch every ear, touch every heart, speak to us Lord, let the hearing of the Word bring faith, so that we have the faith that pleases You. Not other faith, but the faith that pleases our God. Thank You Father, thank You Lord. Speak to us this morning, teach us, we are in the last of the last days. We need more, not less teaching. We need more, not less, faith. So speaks to us, bind every spirit of distraction, every spirit of laziness, slumber. I bind them in the name of Jesus and I speak an alertness in the spirit of everyone, because You are the God, the Judge of the quick and the dead. Let everyone be quick, O Father, today. We just thank You. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Hallelujah!

One of the things Jesus taught us to pray is – *Thy Kingdom come*. When we pray that pray, if we understand Scripture, we will understand that before His Kingdom will be manifested on Earth, a lot of things will happen, a lot of things which none of us will like. But it will happen, because unless those things happen His Kingdom cannot come. The whole world's attention is riveted on a small piece of land in the Middle East, smaller than Telangana, but everybody's eyes are there. And it has to be there, because what we are seeing is the Old Covenant and New Covenant prophecies and for those actual prophecies to be fulfilled the ground is being set. All these things have to happen, it couldn't happen in another age, because the thing is that, if it had happened in another age, the world wouldn't know.

Like I told you, there are tens and thousands, probably millions of people in India who went through World War II and did not know that World War II took place, the greatest event in human history. But now it is not possible. We are living in a time when Daniel prophesied in the book of Daniel where knowledge will increase, we are living in an age that is called Information Age. Not only does it increase but it is also accessible to everyone. So these things have to happen. When these things happen we need to realise that God is speaking to us, because prophecies are being fulfilled, or the ground is being set, both Old and New. I'll give you two verse, I picked them up from both the Old and New Testament,

Zechariah 12:2

² "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem.

Then you come to Jesus' own words,

Luke 21:20

²⁰ "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near.

There was an actual application of this in 70 AD but there is a future application that this is going to happen again. And it is almost like a chess game, the pieces are all falling into place. And you see the nations, Russia has turned against Israel. We saw that last week, they turned against Israel, Russia is on the side of Hamas. And Russia is a very important player prophetically, because the king of the north will come. Turkey has withdrawn their council from Jerusalem yesterday. Turkey is a very important player. Iran is a very important player. All these nation, China, everybody is moving. And you see anti-Semitism, meaning the hatred of the Jews is at the highest ever, everywhere all around the world the hatred for the Jews without cause.

Why would you want to hate the Jews? What did they do? You are talking about the Palestinians. But what did the Palestinians have to do with anybody? There are so many causes with which you should be upset about, which has been going on for longer than that, but nobody seems to be bothered about that. But this is demonic and it is real because it has to happen at the highest. Okay? So parallel, on Mondays and Fridays, we are studying the book of Revelation, the most prophetic book of the end times. And probably this week we will reach *Revelation 4:1*,

Revelation 4:1

¹After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

Inspection of 7 churches are over and then the next thing is there is an open door and after this you don't see the church till *Revelation 19* where she is getting ready for the wedding feast of the Lamb. So from *revelation 4* onwards it is all about Israel.

So when we get so excited about Israel and watching riveted on News you need to realize when the attention goes to Israel the Church won't be here. Make sure you are in there. Because this is not information, these are real things that are happening before our eyes. Don't get blind-sighted.

Mark 13:28-30

²⁸"Now learn this parable from the fig tree: Do you know what the fig tree is in the Bible? It is Israel. That is why Jesus came to the fig tree and looked for fruit and Jesus didn't find it and He cursed it.

When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near—at the doors!

When you see these things happen. Remember, *Luke 21* is the prophetic chapter about the end times. And He says, 'Look at the fig tree, when the fig tree is budding.' But it is not budding now, it is blooming; 75 years have passed by since it started budding 1948, May 14, that is when it has happened. So when you see these things happening please remember it is at the doors.

³⁰ Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.

This generation that sees these things happening will by no means pass away till all these things take place. So that generation has to be very, very careful. And in verse 35-37 this is what Jesus says,

Mark 13:35-37

³⁵ Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning— ³⁶ lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. Do you know what 'sleeping' means? It is spiritually not alert. It is not about physical sleep. You can be sleeping and absolutely prepared and He will take you. You can be wide awake and totally unprepared and you may be left behind.

³⁷ And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!"

So that is the setting. That is how we have to look at all these, that is how we have to be prepared, that is how we have to keep our attention. So don't get blind sighted in what is happening around, in your own lives. Now let's go to the text. Let us go to *Luke 18:1-8*,

Luke 18:1-8

Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, ² saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. ³ Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' ⁴ And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, ⁵ yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.' " ⁶ Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. ⁷ And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? ⁸ I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

Our issue is that when we read this we teach this as about prayer, (though that side is also true), about men ought to always pray and never give up. And as to why we should always pray, pray, pray. But if you look at the context the prayer is about Jesus' second coming, where the elect are crying out day and night, 'Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus!' that is the prayer; a prayer that never quits. For 2000 years His elect's one cry which has been common through the centuries is, 'Come Lord Jesus! Come Lord Jesus!' and it says that He will come speedily. It will be so sudden. It is not He will come fast, but it will be so sudden. And when He comes the only question is this – will he find faith on Earth?

Will you have faith? Will you have heard the Word and prepared for His coming. Will you have faith? Or would you be caught without faith? That is the whole question. That is what we preach from the Word of God, that is why we preach because the only way it can come is by hearing; hearing and hearing and hearing. Faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word and hearing God. We have to hear what God is saying and we put our trust in what He is saying and prepare accordingly, that is what grace is given for. Let's look at another verse, all familiar verses,

Luke 22:31-32

³¹ And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. Satan will come and God will give permission to sift us. ³² But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

This is Jesus' pray – that our faith should not fail us. Because if our faith fails everything else fails. Our entire salvation is based on one thing – what we believe. Our faith should not fail us. He says, you will be sifted, you will deny me, everything, but I have prayed one thing – your faith will not fail you, you will come back. And when you come back strengthen your brothers, because your testimony will be a testimony that will strengthen lot of people.

Like I say, there are two people in the Old Covenant from the book of Genesis, one is Jacob and the other in Joseph. Joseph doesn't give us much encouragement because he never fails. But Jacob gives us very good encouragement because he is failing and failing and failing and ends as a superstar. So he gives us a lot of hope. So Jesus says to Peter, 'When you come back strengthen your brethren.'

So please remember, if my faith in Christ fails, if my faith in God fails, everything else will start falling apart. That is why faith is so important because without faith it is simple not possible to please God. Let's look at another portion,

Matthew 9:27-29

²⁷ When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!" ²⁸ And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." ²⁹ Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you."

Imagine, two blind men followed Jesus. To follow Jesus when He is walking on the road, and if you are blind you have to be listening very carefully because you have to distinguish between many footsteps and know which footsteps you are following. They are not seeing-men, they are blind men. **"Son of David, have mercy on us!"** this is their prayer. **And when He had come into the house,** He got into the house and they understood that He had got into the house because His footsteps stopped and then they turned, the sound changes from the road to the house the sound of the footsteps will change. And they also got into the house. **The blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them,** now He is asking them this question. He flips the coin, He says, **"Do you believe that I am able to do this?"** "I understand your cry, you want to see. You are blind and you want to see. But the question is – do you believe that I can do this? Whatever you are going through, the record is here (prayer requests), different people, do you believe that Jesus can do that? Do you believe? That is the question. See, when He finished the Sermon on the Mount, when He came down, there was a leper. He never doubted that Jesus could do that. He knew Jesus could do that, but he knelt down and said, 'Lord, if you are willing,' then Jesus said, 'I am willing.'

So the question is – you may believe that Jesus can do anything but you do not believe that He is willing to do it. Because if God is willing to do this, then it has to be according to God's will. So one of the things, by learning and hearing the Word of God is that we start understanding the will of God. And often now people like me who come to that age when we retrospect and look at life backwards we will realize that so many prayers were not answered, not because God was not able, but it was not His will. So that is why it is a good prayer, 'Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in my life' leave the earth alone, it will happen whether you pray or not, just pray, 'At least in my life, Lord, let Your will be done.'

So Jesus asks this question – do you believe that I am able to do this? **They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." ²⁹ Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you."**

He says, 'You will see only according to your faith, even this morning. You will not see beyond the level of your faith.' Everyone sees here, everyone who is saved here will see. But we won't see at the same level. We will see only at the level of our faith. The more you believe, the more and more your faith grows stronger and the more you will be able to see. That is why it is important that we grow in our faith. Lot of people are not able to understand the Scripture. Lot of people going through life is not able to see.

Do you know why they are not able to see? Simply because you will be able to see only according to your faith. Because in life it is the other way; it is according to sight. In the Kingdom of God it is according to faith. And there is only one way that faith will come. Faith comes from hearing and hearing from the Word of God. That is the first thing – the Word of God is the first and then by hearing when the Word of God is being preached then by believing and then by meditating, then by confessing and then by doing. As you go through this over and over again your faith increases and you start seeing things better and better and better. So the question Jesus asks is – when the Son of Man comes will you be able to see? When He comes will you be able to see? Will you have the faith to see? Will you be able to hear? He will come with the trumpet sound of the arch angel. Will you be able to hear? Will you be able to see?

Don't worry about His second coming. Second Coming is different; it says that every eye will see. Like lightning flashes from sky to sky every eye will see, because He is coming to judge. We are not talking about that one. We are talking about the Church. Will we be able to see? That is the question. It is not to scare you, but it is also to scare us. That is why it is important, like we keep hearing from the two voices that you hear from this pulpit, one-third of the Bible is prophecy. One-third of the Bible is prophecy and most of the prophecies are connected with Jesus' Second Coming than His first coming. And if you do not see, can you imagine, if you do not see.

If you are a Jew and you do not understand Isaiah 53, you will be struggling for your life even now, because you did not see, you didn't receive your Messiah when He came. And instead, you rejected your Messiah and you opened your foolish mouth and said, 'Let His blood be upon us and upon our children.' It is still there upon them. God will protect them because even when they are unfaithful He is faithful but He will only protect a remnant. They will keep dying; for the past 2000 years the Jews have been dying and dying and dying, till today they are dying. And do you know when they will be rescued? When they look at Him and they will receive Him whom they pierced. So we need to realize that if you do not see you will be stuck.

So we have Scripture. We will look at three primary portions in the four Gospels; Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Let's imagine we have a hall with three cameras and then there is a drone with a camera from the top. But all these 3-4 cameras are taking pictures of the same events and the same person, but because it is from different angles it looks different. So Matthew, Mark and Luke are talking from the same point, only John is the drone one because he straight away begins from God. John's Gospel is not like that other ones; he talking about in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. So he takes the drone view. Matthew is from far away he goes to the beginning genealogy and Luke goes a little further and Mark is a little more focused, in 15 chapters the whole thing is over. So that is how we look at them. But they are talking about the same thing.

So whenever you study certain portions in the New Testament which is repeated, it is good, if you have a computer, even if you don't have a computer if you have just a piece of paper cut it into three and put them side by side into three portions and read them all together. It is good to study. Like the parable of the sower and the feed of the 5000 is there in all five Gospels. And if you read and study it separately and together so many things will come, because God is trying to speak to us. And if we don't search He will not speak. If we don't take His Kingdom and His Word as primary diet in our lives He is not going to speak. He knows who puts His Kingdom first and who puts it second and those who don't think about the Kingdom at all. He knows, but whoever puts it first He will start speaking to us, because we need to hear.

SO you have Matthew 24, you have Luke 1 and you have Mark 13 where it is basically the same and Jesus is talking about the last days. 3 cameras, same picture, three different angles. We will look at Matthew 24, but that is not what we are studying but keep this in mind, because as the time is rolling we need to do some power stirring and bring you back to the Kingdom of God because by 1 in the afternoon you are gone.

Matthew 24:1-3

Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. Can you believe it? ***Jesus went out and departed from the temple,*** and that temple, the last remaining walls you see still see the Jews going and crying over it.

² And Jesus said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” And it was fulfilled forty years later. Everything was destroyed, except that wailing wall as they call it.

³ Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

So they came to Him privately. Remember, disciples go to Jesus privately, or He teaches them separately. He doesn't not speak to them as He speaks to the crowds. So be a disciple, even if you are all alone in your study or wherever you are studying your Bible He will teach you. He will never leave a disciple untaught. If he leaves a disciple untaught neither is he a disciple nor is he a teacher. So they asked Him three questions first question is – You said something. When will these things be? What will be the sign of Your coming? It is not 'signs of Your coming; it is 'The sign' of Your coming? And the end of the age? Jesus gives a very detail answer, not for them, but for us. Because these answers matter only to those upon whom the end of ages has come. It didn't make much difference to them, because they had to read it according to their times and they taught, 'Okay, Jerusalem has been destroyed' and that is how they read it. Let us see His answer, what does He say,

Matthew 24:4

⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you.”

O the first thing He says is, 'Be careful! Be very, very careful.' We were talking about fake news in the last days, now that AI has come in and fake news has gone into infinity. Now you have AI sermons. There are no pastors, the congregation sits and everything is by AI in the west. Now this is not an AI sermon, I prepared. So Jesus says, ***“Take heed that no one deceives you.”*** So the question is – How do I take heed? How do I prepare myself? How do I be careful that I am not deceived?

So the question is - how does deception come?

What you see as the modus operandi of the Deceiver and those who knowing and unknowingly serve him. There are two groups; those who knowingly serve him and those who unknowingly serve him. So we will go to the very beginning where the first salesman comes with his sales speech,

Genesis 3:1

¹ Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. So remember, deceivers are very cunning. They are very clever, very cunning. They are not wise, but very clever. ***And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’?”***

So first thing, he said to the woman. Now that doesn't mean that the deceiver only speaks to women, no, he speaks to the men too. But in that context what does it mean? The deceiver will always try to speak to the softer side of you, the emotional side of you. The pitch is to the emotions. Not to your reasoning, not what you have heard from God, but it will always pitch on your emotions. So you will see messages in churches where people are jumping and dancing, a little later nothing is happening. Life is still the same. So you know this was a very good salesman; he pitches the ball very well, everyone is very excited.

And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’?” We will leave this but just look at the picture of how deception takes place.

- The enemy will not speak into your life where God has not already spoken. He doesn't have to speak in the other areas because you are already deceived there. So he won't waste his time because he is a very busy person. He speaks where God has spoken. So be very careful about where God has spoken, he will come and speak there. That is how he brings a lie.

How does deception take place? Because God has spoken and that is the truth and the devil comes and starts questioning of what God has spoken which is a lie and if you believe the lie you are deceived. If you believe the truth you stand on the truth, you are free. This is how it happens every time. So what Jesus says is – take heed that you are not deceived. So the question is – how should I take heed? And Jesus gives the answer, it is all there in the Bible. Actually the whole world is deceived now, the enemy is at work with full force.

2 Thessalonians 2:10

¹⁰ ***and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish***, (why? because of one thing. What is that one thing? They did not receive the love of the truth. That is the only reason) ***because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.***

So if I don't want to be deceived, what is that? It is not that I receive the truth, because that takes time. First I have to receive the love of the truth. Let's see we have a baby here, so many babies are born in the world. So many babies and many are aborted, killed, abandoned, so many are there. So for a baby to grow normally everywhere the father and the mother have to receive the love for the baby. If you don't receive the love for the baby then the baby is going to have a difficult time. So truth is a very big word, it will take us all of eternity to understand truth. So what do we need to receive? In our hearts we need to receive the love of truth. And in very simple way, in this lifetime, God has given us His Word and He has said, 'My Word is the Truth.'

So here God has spoken and He has spoken in so many different people's lives; we see the examples of those who stood by truth and those who deviated from the truth, what happened to all these people. The whole history of mankind, from Adam onwards, is given, to whom God has spoken. So that is important, what did God say?

The simple question each one of us should ask, young and old, in every situation, every eventuality we will face in life, the simple question to ask before I take any decision is – what did God say? 'Oh! This (Bible) was written so many years, 2000 years ago, but we are living in the 21st century, what did God say?' you need to realize that the Bible covers everything. Either in fact or in principal it covers everything. Like I said, we were in Jharkhand and Tuesday after the meeting, Wednesday morning I was with the young people and that night we had a revival meeting. So the young people had questions. Young people always have questions. And if you, young people, do not have questions then you are not young, you are very old now.

Young people always have questions, so when I made this statement, that for any question you have you should ask yourself – what did God say? Because it is covered here. And one young girl asked, 'Uncle, what about exams?' that is a question, right? You all, students, have to write exams. So they said, 'What does the Bible say about exams?' exams, like the exams that you write. I said, 'Once upon a time there was a young man called Daniel and he was in the Undergraduate program in the king's university. He was enrolled for a three year program. At the end of the time there was going to be an exam. And the Bible says that when he was examined he was found 10 times better than all the others and the reason is that because he decided to honor God. It is not that he didn't work hard, he did work hard, he cannot be a lazy fellow. All of them worked hard. But what made Daniel different?

So how do you tackle exams? Simple thing, you put God first in your own context. Daniel decided that he will not defile himself. When this young man took a decision in the university mess, in our language, he didn't know where his decision would lead him one day. But he didn't look at all those things. He realized that this is how he needs to study and this is how he needs to write his exams. And the rest was God. So if you ask, these are the simple things.

So any one of you can pick anything you are going through, any topic, any subject, any issue, it is covered in the Bible. And there was a question about work, jobs. I said work and career are two different things. The Bible doesn't talk about career. The Bible talks about work. Whatever your hand finds, do it with all your strength as unto the Lord. Career is a human word. We are more career-oriented. God is work oriented. If you are career oriented you will miss the Kingdom, because your career should be chosen by God. But God will pick you are career only if you have work ethics. So career really doesn't matter. If you want to look at it in terms of career the question you need to ask is – what are you looking for? For a normal, average young person it is money. Right? After you get money, then you want glory. But not glory first. It is money. If it is

glory then every young undergraduate should be preparing for IAS. No. Very few in the entire population write those exams. Everybody is after money.

Like the question I asked my students in Bhutan. All sitting over there, I asked them, 'What are you planning to do?' everybody said, 'Write royal civil service exam' there are hardly any posts in that small country. I asked, 'Why do you all want to be collectors? Why is that everybody wants to be a collector?' So I said, 'Okay I will give you homework. This weekend you go and come back next Monday with your answers when you come to class.' I said, 'You all boys, do you cut your hair?' yes sir. I asked, 'Who cuts your hair?' Indian barber. I said, 'You go and ask him this Saturday how much money he makes and come back.'

So the next class I asked them, 'How much does the barber make?' they said, 'After all his expenses he makes around 30-35 thousand (in those years).' By the way, how much does your collector make? They said, 'Around 20k, Sir.' I said, 'Good! Now you got it?' but does anyone want to be a barber?' No. here, does anyone want to be a barber? Does anyone want to allow your child to grow up to be a barber? 'When God sent His Son, He was a collector' NO! He was a carpenter. So simple thing is that let God choose your career. You should have work ethics and if God chooses your career He will take care of you. You won't ever have to worry about it, He will take care of you.

But imagine, you are a barer, you are an electrician, you are a plumber, you are a carpenter, all these things, nobody wants to be any of these things. Imagine I am a believing barer, chosen by God to be a barber and I have got all these customers coming in and I am praying in tongues and giving them the witness. How many customers a day, do you know? Do you know why we say that largest church in the world is in China? It is because God inverted the order. Because when Maos took over China all the Christians were blue-collared, big workers, landlords and business owners and all. Mao killed a lot of them and then took everybody's property and everything and threw them into the streets. So in one day it was inverted. Now all the Christians were scrambling for work and the only work left was scavengers, working as housemaids and servants. But the thing is that, every house now was opened for the Gospel.

Yesterday's rich woman, when she is washing dishes today and singing songs, they look at her and ask, 'You lost everything, what is the reason for your joy?' and they are able to testify 'Christ!'

But we are not thinking Kingdom, we are not thinking witnessing, we are not thinking testimony, because the Kingdom is not our objective. I am not saying that you shouldn't have a great career, but it doesn't matter. Let God pick your career. So everything in life is defined by the Word of God and you should have the guts to go to God and ask, 'What do You say?'

This is the guard against deception, if you do not know what God is saying in a particular situation, then you will be deceived. There are two ways in which deception takes place. First is ignorance. That is why God says, 'My people perish because of lack of knowledge.' You do not know what God has said. Like I keep saying, faith comes from hearing and hearing from the Word of God. It doesn't first come from hearing; it comes from the Word of God. So if you do not know His Word. You don't go for hearing first, because if you do not know your Word your hearing can be manipulated. Because there are many voices out there, that is why the Bible says, test the spirits. The Bible never says, test the Word. It is written, *'Heaven and earth will pass away but not a dot from My Word. I have magnified, exalted My Word above all My Name.'* He never says, 'Test the Word.' But He says, 'Test the spirit.' So the issue is that if you are not reasonably well-versed at least in terms of the principles of how God works, the Word of God, your hearing can be impaired; it can be manipulated.

So it is from ignorance that people perish. God's people perish because they do not know what the Word of God actually says in the particular context. Honestly tell me, you can randomly pick any topic in life and throw it, you will realize that there is an answer for it in the Bible. Any topic. Because if any topic in a person's life, any person's life, any part of the world, of every age, is not covered in the Word of God, you and I cannot live by faith. It is not possible to live by faith because faith encompasses every area of our lives. And faith comes by hearing and hearing from the Word of God. So God will not make from us a demand which His Word does not supply.

How do I live y faith, if any particular area in my life is not covered? Then God is a liar. The Bible says, 'No. God is not a liar. God never lies.' That is why everything has to brought, first, to the test of God's Word – what did God say? Very simple.

Because the only way you and I can live an overcoming life is – whatever is not of faith is sin and whatever is of faith is not sin. Very simple. So this is the simple question – what did God say?

So the first way is ignorance; we get deceived. It is like blindness, ignorance is blindness; you stumble and fall because you did not know. The other way you get deceived is that you reject what God has said. Why did Israel go through all that they have gone through? It is because they rejected what God has said. God sent His Son to His own but they rejected Him. On top of that they opened their mouth and cursed themselves; with the most innocent Blood they cursed themselves. Yet God is faithful and He still has mercy upon them and a remnant will come through.

So the question is – what did God say? Why are people deceived? God says, ‘Because they do not receive the love of truth.’ It is not the truth, we are all on the road of truth. ‘I am the way, the truth and the life.’ But we need to receive the love of truth.

Matthew 24:5

⁵For many will come in My name, saying, “I am the Christ; and will deceive many.”

Please understand this, you can be deceived only by those who come in His name, and not by the others. Others do not have the power to deceive you because they do not have access to truth. Truth is connected with Christ. So there will be many who will come in the name of Christ. Deception can take place only in His name. There is no deception in Islam; it is just blindness, absolute blindness. Religion is blind, they don’t know Christ. So the deception that we have to be careful about is within the body of Christ. I have to be careful what I preach. That is why people ask me, ‘Why do you take so much time and put all this Scripture over there?’ One: so that I am not deceived. Two: you are not deceived, because it is according to the Word of God and not the fancy of any man. The power of God is in what he has spoken. So we are not relying on education, knowledge or eloquence; we are relying on what God has said.

So the next thing he says is, ‘Many will come in My Name.’ then He comes to verse 6 and 7 and says,

Matthew 24:6-7

⁶And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.

So He talks about wars and rumours of wars. We also need to realize that this is talking about now. Like I said, 100 years back, when the Second World War started, I think, in 1939, half the world did not even know that there was a World War going on. Now a small little conflict, like the conflict in Manipur, the whole world knows. So He uses two things, there will be wars and rumours of wars. And He uses two terms here. ***⁷For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.*** There will be two kinds of primary conflicts. One will be ethnic conflict, the other will be political or national. So in Manipur you have a situation, it is ethnic. It is an ethnic conflict, within a state, within a nation between the Kukis and the Meitei. It is ethnic. While what you have in Israel it is political. It is a political war. It is between the Muslims and the Jews. It is between Israel and the Muslim nations.

You have another war taking place between Russia and Ukraine. It is both ethnic and political. It is both, because there are Russian population people in so many parts in Ukraine and that is why Russia went in over there because they want those parts to be part of them. So there is an ethnic and a political battle going on. So God says that these things will all happen right before our eyes. But the end is not here. It says you need to realize that when you see these things happen you will hear. Read in verse 6, it is important, it says ***you will hear***. This is important because 100 years back people did not hear.

So when prophecy is written it is applicable in a time when you can hear. Like I said, Saturday morning when you wake up, you heard that there was an earthquake in Nepal. But if you have been to that place, I have preached in that place. It is one of the most remote areas of Nepal, very remote area. It took me about 36 hours to reach there. You hear about it in today’s world. And the question is, few years back if that had happened we would not have known. There was no communication, we would not have known. So ***you will hear***. So it is written to specific periods of time where communication is possible.

And then He says about three things. What is that? ***And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.*** Did you see that? If you go to the parallel in Luke you will see that He talks about terrible signs in the heavens, and on earth three things. What is that? ***famines, pestilences, and earthquakes*** and in the heavens you will see all kinds of signs. And He says, these things will happen. An earthquake happened on Saturday, famine is there is so many parts of the world. And wars and pestilences.

Then He comes to verse 8 and He says,

Matthew 24:8

⁸ All these are the beginning of sorrows.

The actual word is – these are the beginning of birth pains, or labour pains. What does it mean? If there are birth pangs, there has to be a birth. Something is going to be born. Heavens, nature and human relationships, everything is going through pangs because something incredible is going to be born. What is going to be birthed? The Kingdom of God is coming. And the sons of God are going to rule. So all of creation, Paul will say in the book of Romans, is groaning for the sons of God to be revealed, something is going to happen. The things with labor pains is that as the time of delivery gets nearer and nearer the contractions increase. So you will see a sudden acceleration. Before Turkey got up from the ruins of the earthquake, Afghanistan was hit. Before it went off the headlines, Nepal is hit. There is a rapidity of what is happening. Wars were all focused in Ukraine and Russia, now Ukraine is saying, ‘Please don’t forget us,’ because everybody’s eyes are there on Israel. And everybody is getting ready, will it turn into World War III, when all nations start getting involved in it?

So you need to realize that the contractions are increasing. Now you need to understand something. When all these things happen, they don’t mean anything to the entire gentile world or even to Israel. Only we know what is coming. The only Indian News paper I read online that had an article was Deccan Herald that is published in Karnataka, which talks about the evangelicals connecting with what is happening in Israel with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Only one News paper. Nobody has any clue, because they are not privy to this information, not even the Jews. Jew is sitting there and waiting for his Messiah to come, he has no clue. We have been given information. So we need to realize that we are blessed, we are privileged. So the question is – what are you waiting for? All these are but the beginning of birth pains. What are you waiting for to be birthed?

What are you waiting for is the question. What are we waiting for? And then in verse 9,

Matthew 24:9

⁹ “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake.

Did you see that? Two entities alone, one of course is Israel, because His first covenant is with them and then the believing Church. I don’t say ‘church’ I say the believing Church. Do you see the hatred against Israel and against the believing Church? Did you see? All you have to do, all those who work in IT companies, is be very vocal about what you believe on sex, gender and marriage and you will see that you are hated immediately. Speak, ‘This is what I believe. This is what I believe about sex, this is what I believe about gender and this is what I believe about marriage.’ You speak up on these three things and because you are Bible believing, they will call you are radical fundamentalist. All because this is what you believe.

I will tell you, if you are in the IT company and you are very vocal about it, I guarantee you within six months you will lose your job. They will either tell you shut up or get out, ‘We will terminate you.’ Even in colleges and schools. The schools where these children studied with the name of the Shepherd is now talking about pride. So God says, they will hate you. And their hatred is unreasonable. You are not saying anything about them, you are only saying about yourself. ‘This is what I believe.’ They say, ‘You don’t have the right to believe like that.’ That is what they mean. You do not have the right to believe like that; that there are only two genders; that marriage is between man and woman alone. You don’t have the right to believe like that.’

We do not know what hatred is. Jesus says, 'You will be hated.' Why? 'Because of My Name. I said so.' And you stand in the market place, your college, your school, your workplace and you speak up. And Israel is hated only for being Israel. Anti-Semitism.

Matthew 24:10

¹⁰ And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.

These two things go together, offence and betrayal. That is why Jesus always said, 'Guard your heart against offence. It is impossible for offence not to come.' Even Jesus said that, 'Offence will come. It is not possible that it won't.' the only way you can not offend anybody is, one: by saying nothing and always smiling. Even if you smile all the time they will ask you, 'Are you mad? Are you smiling at me because of this? What did you see in me to smile?' So it is almost impossible not to offend anybody all the time. But He says, 'be careful because many will be offended.'

And what does offence do? It betrays. So simple thing Jesus says, 'Guard your heart.' Offended people betray. See, Cain was offended because Abel's sacrifice was received. He was offended and his was not. We do not know how powerful this thing called offence is. Because God Himself warns us over and over again, God says, 'Be warned, because offence will lead to betrayal and hatred even among the closest of relationships. And one of the things which I always noticed is, I am not making any judgment on anybody, when children are growing up, when siblings grow up loving each others, fighting with each other and making up and everything. But things change when they get married. Once when another stranger, an alien comes into the marriage, I don't know what happens, that old relationship just goes. Now I am not saying that you shouldn't get married, that is not what I am trying to tell.

But what happens is that then offence comes in. Now let us say you say something to your own brother or your sister, what you said 100 times earlier, in high degrees, nothing bothered him, but now after marriage it bothers him because his wife was bothered and she inflamed him. Offence comes. This is how things happen. The devil is busy, because he knows; he knows Scripture, he knows that God has ordained things. When God says, 'Guard your heart against offence,' then he will try to create offence. So we have to be aware, because in the last days God says that many will be offended. So you pray, 'Lord, please, let me not be one of those. Let me not be offended by anybody or anything anybody says. I am a dead man. I died in the waters of baptism, I am not offended,' because only the old man can be offended. New man can never be offended because the new man knows who he is. So how can he be offended? That is one of the ways you know which one is out. The old man of the new man.

Matthew 24:11

¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

Why did He put this over there? Because in this climate, you know bacteria doesn't grow in all climates, bacteria and fungus grows in certain climates. When it is dark and humid and all bacteria and viruses they just multiply. So you have this kind of a situation; you have the maximum number of Bibles in the world than any other time, but most of the Bibles are unread. Ignorance of the Word is a killer and all these things about wars and rumors of wars and famine and pestilence and death and betrayal and hatred. In this climate prophets will thrive. Which prophets? False prophets, they will thrive. Remember, before the fall of Israel and Judah, there was one Jeremiah and hundreds of false prophets. Jeremiah would say, 'Repent and turn to God.' All the others said, 'Peace and safety.' So this is a climate in which false prophets will come, they will keep you very comfortable. They will give you nice floss cotton candy sermons, they will tell you about, 'My brother I heard this from the Lord, about your prosperity,' and all these things, but when the Day of the Lord is knocking at the door who wants prosperity?

Imagine the two angels went to Sodom and Gomorrah and told Lot, 'Borther, I have a word for you. The Lord asked me to tell you that you are going to really prosper in the days to come.' And then the next day sulphur and fire comes down. If you look at the messages you see on the net and everything, you wonder which planet these pastors are living in. they don't seem to be from earth, because all the prophecies are connected with earth. But their prophecies are about another planet; they are not preparing their people for anything. See, at least I have the responsibility of warning you – this is what is happening, this is in the light through which you have to see, this is happening in the Middle East, it has all been foretold, but this is not about Israel, this is about us. Before God will turn His eyes to Israel a Church has to be prepared and to be

ready, deal with your issues in your life, deal with unforgiveness, deal with offence, deal with hatred, all these issues and be sure that you are walking by faith. Because in this situation they will thrive, the false prophets will thrive. The cults will mushroom and all secret meetings will all take place, special revelations will be given which has got nothing to do with the Word of God, because the atmosphere is ripe for all these things. So be careful. And then comes verse 12,

Matthew 24:12

¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

What will abound? Lawlessness. You see, this is the statement which is made by lots of people which is very true. Law enforcement can do nothing once the majority of the people are lawless. Now you see the kind of stuff that is happening in the US, especially the two states, California and New York. You will wonder, what is happening? It is because the people, the young people have become lawless. And the laws have been changed and nobody is arrested. So you can loot shops, you can beat up people, you can even kill people and you can come out on bail. Lawlessness. Now we understand and we worry about lawlessness on the streets. We do not have to worry about the lawlessness on the streets, we have to only worry about our own lawlessness.

Now the most interesting part of the law and lawlessness is the Church. Especially churches like ours. There are other churches where lawlessness is not allowed. I am talking about this church. Let me ask you this question – can I compel you to come on time? No. can I compel you to come prepared? No. Can I compel you to praise? No. Can I compel you to worship? no. can I compel you to read the Word? No. can I compel you to give your offerings? No. can I compel you to give your tithes? Can I compel you to fellowship? I cannot compel you to do anything, therefore you will know whether you are lawless or not. Simple, we do not know how lawless we are inside, these things don't bind on me. So if you are always late to church, consistently, without reason you need to take a check – why am I lawless?

You don't listen to the Word at all, you never pray, you never thank God, you never praise God, you never do any of these things, and you know, you never tithe, you never give, you never do any of these things. You need to understand that something is wrong inside, you know what, I don't have to look at the streets of New York or SFO or any of these places, I just have to look into my heart, lawlessness is abounding in my own heart. I am a lawless person. So the simple question we need to ask, because we are not talking about the laws of the world, we are looking at what God demands from us.

Matthew 24:12

¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

You might look at it and say, 'Oh thank You Lord, Matthew 24:12 was written in English and not in Greek.' But if it is written in Greek do you know what the word 'love' is? It is Agape. So it is not talking to the gentiles, and it is not talking to the Jews. It is only talking to the Church because no gentile can have agape unless you are born of God. Agape is only given to God's children. It is the love of God given to those children who are birthed by God and the warning to us in the last days is that the agape love of God's children will grow cold, because they will become lawless. So it is a warning to me, it is a warning to you. It is not a warning to the people in the world. It is a warning to us, because this is possible only for the born-again children of God, because others do not have access to agape. It is accessible only to us. So therefore I have to check my heart. That is why the Bible says to the church in Ephesus, 'Do the things which you did first. You have fallen, you have left your first love, come back to that, come back, do those things and the love will come back.'

So we have to be very, very, careful because these are warning given to us. And what will happen? When love grows cold people will start falling away. That is why in the last days, before the anti-Christ will come, there is a great falling away. You cannot fall unless you are standing, meaning this is again not written to the world; it is written to the church. People in the Church will fall away from faith; believing in Christ, actually standing there firm. Therefore we have to be very, very, careful and I am glad that everyone is here, you came to church, thank God you came to church, thank God you are listening to the Word, thank God you don't miss, because we need to be warned over and over again, not only that but the Bible says, as we see that day approaching we gather more and encourage one another to love and to good works. Why? It is because the Day will come upon us unexpectedly. Then comes the next verse,

Genesis 24:13

¹³ But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

So in Jesus' entire discourse on the last days, there is the most important quality that He requires, therefore I need, and you need it. What is it? It is endurance. Endurance is the most important. He lists from Matthew 24, verse 4 to 12 He lists the kind of situation that is going to happen and in that terrible situation heavens and earth and human relationship and family background and everything, He asks, 'Will you endure? Will your love endure? Will your faith endure? Will your prayer life endure?' *Men ought to always pray and never give up and when the Son of Man comes will He find faith on earth?* That is the question that He is asking. The things that you have to come through at a personal and a society level. It is written, the whole thing is written in *1 Timothy 3:1-4* this is what we have to come through.

2 Timothy 3:1-4

¹But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: ²For men will be lovers of themselves,

If you go abroad and if you read notices kept in hotel rooms you will be shocked. All the notices are warnings about what you should not do if you go out. You have to be careful. 20,30,50 years back you could walk on the streets without fearing anything, now they are warning you.

²For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

So the Bible says that this is the kind of situation in which you are going to live in the last days. Question, you have to come through this, will your love endure? Will your faith endure? These are the questions God is asking. The question is – do I have the faith that will endure? Of all God's characteristics towards us, His holiness, His righteousness, His love, His mercy. Something that is connected to all that is His mercy endures. His mercy is not a normal mercy, it is an enduring mercy. His faithfulness towards us is not a normal faithfulness, it is an enduring faithfulness. Israel is not destroyed even after 2000 years of unfaithfulness because even when they are unfaithful and we are unfaithful God is still faithful because His faithfulness is an enduring faithfulness. The enduring quality. So in *Matthew 10:22* this is what God says,

Matthew 10:22

²² And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

Think about it, here everybody, there is nobody sitting in this room who is hated by all. There is always somebody who loves you, and the few people may hate you. There is nobody sitting here who can say, 'I am hated by all.' But if you are actually hated by all, the question is – will your faith endure? Will you still be loving? Will your love endure? Can you be very sure? That is why God puts us through tests and trials so that we will know. Otherwise we will never know. We will never, never know. We are put in such terrible situations and as we go higher and higher the flames will increase so that we will know that our faith will come through. And no generation will be tested like this except the last generation. The previous generation did not have to go through this. But the last generation, be very careful, because the last generation will have to go through this.

Mark 13:13

¹³ And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

Luke 21:19

¹⁹ By patience possess your souls.

These three words are interchangeably used in the Bible, endurance, patience and perseverance. He says, 'You know what, when these things happen, endure it. Don't quit. Be patient. This is the test. So we have to be very, very careful. Like I said, very soon you will go out and you will forget everything. But I pray that you don't forget everything, you would at least remember the important things, if not anything, just remember – 'I need to endure'. And one thing we have taught you in 15 years is how to endure a 2-hour sermon. So you cannot say that you do not have endurance. Now the thing is that you have to apply the Kingdom of God into your real life. So if you come to *Luke 8, verses 9-11*, Jesus talked in parables and this is the parable of all parables; the mother of all parables.

Luke 8:9-10

⁹ *Then His disciples asked Him, saying, "What does this parable mean?"* So the difference is that, they are a crowd and you are a disciple. So to the disciples He says this, ¹⁰ *And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.'*

So please be very careful. Don't assume that we see, because the Bible says – ***seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.*** First be a disciple, then Jesus Himself will unlock the mysteries, which means the hidden things of the Bible.

And then he explains. This is the parable of the sower.

Luke 8:11

¹¹ *"Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.*

What am I doing now? I am sowing, and I hope some seed has landed. Where has it landed? Let us see.

Luke 8:12

¹² *Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.*

We can ignore that group, but if you notice about everybody, everybody hears. We are all hearing now. That is common, you hear. But the devil comes and takes away the Word out of their hearts. Where did the seed fall? They fell on the wayside, meaning on the road. Where is the road? It is your heart; there is full traffic, traffic is going on 6-lane high way. It is going on and on. The Word of being dropped into your heart but the traffic is going, all the tires are crunching the seed – shopping, shopping, shopping, online shopping while sitting in the church. And the devil comes and takes the seed away. If only you could believe. So God says, ignore them. There is no point wasting time over them because they don't believe. So we come to verse 13, the second kind,

Luke 8:13

¹³ *But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; (but there is a problem. They received with joy but they have no root) and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.*

They believe for a while but they have no root, it doesn't go deep; neither their faith nor their love goes deep. In the time to temptation they fall away.

Matthew 13:21

²¹ *yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.*

So what is the word 'temptation' in Luke mean here? His faith is not able to endure, his love is not able to endure because tribulations and persecution arose because of the Word. And immediately he/she stumbles. Why? Because they are offended. That is why I said, Jesus never lies. He always tells the truth and we try to tell you, it is not like what you think. The faith life is difficult, he who endures till the end shall be saved. It is not what you think – name it! Claim it! Blame it! It doesn't work like that. If you have been fed a very soft kind of a Gospel, you know what will happen? When tribulations and persecutions arise you will fall away.

James 1:12

¹² *Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

You have to be approved; you have to go through it. But the problem with the second group is that, their depth was very shallow. Lot of people, their knowledge of God is very shallow. It is like babies. Babies know their father, but their

knowledge is only two things – either daddy is good if he gives me chocolate. Or he is bad because he scolds me. He doesn't know beyond that. Very simple. Very simple, not complicated at all, daddy is good, or daddy is bad. Nothing beyond that. Why is daddy good? Because he bought me chocolate. Why is he bad? Because he asked me to do something. No depth at all. And when tribulations or persecutions come they will stumble and fall away. Be careful! Don't be a child.

Will you endure? Will your relationships endure? Because everything is going down.

Luke 8:14

¹⁴ Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.

You know what happens? The cares and riches and pleasures are the thorns. What do thorns actually mean here? We are so occupied with the temporal. see, the difference between the judgment of God in the days of Noah, in the book of Genesis, that is in chapters 6, 7 and 8, and the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah, that is in *Genesis 19*, and Jesus when He talks about it He doesn't mention anything that is happening over there. He says, 'The last days will be like that days of Noah and the days of Lot. And He mentions 8 characteristics. Buy and sell, eat and drink, marrying and giving in marriage, building. Meaning, they will be so caught in the temporal that when the eternal comes they will be totally unprepared.

That is what He is talking about. And that is my fear, because whenever I get a prayer request, my requests usually begin around 5:30 in the morning. People know when I wake up, sadly they know when I wake up. I mean, the first one hour they don't disturb me, but after that they will be like, 'enough of your rest, now let us disturb you.' But when I look at the prayer request, I am not saying that you shouldn't ask for those things, but it is most always temporal. You are so much caught in the temporal. my simple question to you is that – we live in the temporal world, we have needs, but my question to you is this – all your prayer requests which you have in your mind, other than the very godly ones which are written once a week like salvation of loved ones, if you look at your prayer requests, how much of it is temporal? And how much of it is eternal? How much of the Kingdom of God come into your temporal? That is the question.

See, in *Luke 8:14*, they heard, but the problem is that they heard and we all heard and we are hearing and all will go out. We will all go out. Either we will be choked with the cares because some of you have lots of cares and they are real cares. Debt is a care, future of children is a care, all these things are cares. Either you will be choked with the cares or you will be choked by pleasures. Some of you don't have a care in the world; so you are careless. You should actually be careful because you have no cares, but you are careless. So you get choked because you get caught up in the temporal. and that is what God is talking about. Therefore there is a warning to this group in *Luke 21*, the other parallel chapter about the last days, remember.

Luke 21:34

³⁴ But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly.

That is what happened to the generation of Noah, it came suddenly. This man is preaching and preaching and preaching, nobody is listening, they are all coming to watch what he is doing. They are helping him build the ark, everything they did, but one day they realize that he has gone in and the door is shut. 'Hey Noah!!' he said, 'I am sorry. I cannot open the door it has been closed from outside. I can't open it.' The next thing for the first time in their life they see something, one drop from Heaven. 'Arree! This man has said, 'Floods are coming, water is coming.' A little later there are rain drops and it becomes a torrent and water is rising. Some of them must have said, 'We have built our houses high, my apartment is sitting on the 23rd floor,' but the problem is that this water is not going to stop. The water is rising and rising, even if you, on that fortunate day, had conquered Mt. Everest, it covered even that. There was no escape. Did you see? They were caught unexpectedly. So was Lot's generation and his household was caught unexpectedly. And that is what God is talking about – do we have that faith that will endure? Or are we so much caught up in the temporal?

If you are actually worrying about your sin and about your lack of conviction, you are standing on holy ground. I am telling you, because people write to me, 'My heart is hardened, I have no conviction.' You are standing on extremely safe ground, because you are aware of the eternal. You are not thinking about the temporal, you are thinking about the eternal, 'Lord,

this is what I am struggling with,' you are actually standing on safe ground. And that is what God is talking about. Where are we standing? And then comes the fourth group, group four.

Luke 8:15

¹⁵ But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

How did they hear? They first **heard the word with a noble and good heart**. Meaning their heart was very meek, because if you have to receive the Word of God you have to have a meek heart. You have to humble yourself before God and His Word and never look at the vessel, because some vessel may be some poor pastor who comes from a village in tatters but when he speaks the Word of God, if you are not humble, you will not receive the message from his mouth. So you need meekness, which is why when Peter and Andrew and others went and spoke about Jesus, he said, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth? A preacher from Nazareth?' if I were to tell in the morning, 'Today, there is a change, today we have a speaker and he is going to speak in Telugu. He is from Suryapet.' You will be disappointed, 'Suryapet??? We? Hyderabad people should listen to a pastor from Suryapet?' and then he comes here and speaks in broken English, because he realizes that we do not understand Telugu, so he speaks in broken English, but the message is actually from God. Would you humble yourself and listen very carefully to get the gist of the message?

A lot of people don't listen, they don't listen to what the worship leader says, without realizing God can speak through those words, they are not looking at the words of the lyrics, they are enjoying the tune. They are not listening because their heart is the issue. I told you, love is from the heart, faith is from the heart, loyalty is from the heart, all these things come from the heart. Then you receive in your mind with better understanding, you increase it. But everything is from the heart. But with the heart a man believes. Love God with all your heart, first. These are all heart things. So the **noble and good heart** basically means that you can take these people, you can put them anywhere, under anybody, they will listen. They will listen because they have surrendered to God and they know the value of His Word. So when the Word of God comes, which is the seed, **having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it**. They keep it.

They keep it, they won't forget it. They keep it. But that is not the key, the key is that they **keep it and bear fruit with patience**. That is the key, they endure.

What is the fourth group's characteristic? They endured. They persevered with what they have heard. 'Yes I heard today and the Spirit of God was speaking to me. He was telling me this. I need to go back home and work on this.' They don't quit. They are very serious about this, they persevere, they are patient and they endure through it all. So this is the key.

He is using a farming thing and James would come across this way, in *James 5*,

James 5:7-11

⁷ Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. ⁸ You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

⁹ Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! ¹⁰ My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. ¹¹ Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

This is the thing, the thing is that – the end intended by the Lord for everyone sitting here is perfect, absolutely perfect. You are I, in our wildest dreams cannot think about an ending like that. Not even in your wildest dreams. It is impossible. It is impossible even to understand what end God has for us. But to receive it you have to endure till the end. Lot of things in life, like I said, bro. Bhanu and I, we are the only two grey-headed people, those of us who have come through and we look back into our lives. It is only in retrospect effect that we understand that most of the things we thought were the worst things that has happened in our lives, was actually the best things that have happened in our lives. You will not know until you hang in there and hang in there and say, 'I am not going to quit this. I don't understand,' you are saying

like Job, 'I don't understand anything but even if You slay me I will still serve You. I don't know anybody else to serve. I don't understand what is happening in my life but I am going to endure. I am going to come through all this.'

Only then in retrospective effect you will understand. God gives you a dream, God gives you a vision. It is a vision about 12 sheaves and 11 of them bow down and one is standing up straight. What do you understand? And then you see the sun and the moon and the stars, everything is bowing down to you. You don't understand. What do you understand? If you are a 17 years old boy you don't really understand what it means. You got so flattered that you got two good dreams and you went and told everybody and everybody got mad at you. But after that everything changes, all hell broke loose in his life. But what he is doing is that for the next 13 years he endures. He doesn't quit, everything the devil is trying is to make him quit. He refuses to quit. Then in one day, we have heard it so much that it becomes redundant, but the Word of God is never redundant. One day he goes to sleep a slave and the very next day he goes to sleep as the prince of Egypt. In one day everything changes and then he looks back that the end intended by God was so good. He never knew it.

If we endure, only in eternity we will reach the end intended by God. And that is where this is so important where we don't quit. We don't give up. So the question is – what do I need? I need endurance. I need enduring faith and I need enduring love. And the question is – how do I get this endurance? We want this, right? How do I get this endurance? Remember, this is first and foremost only for those who believe. If you don't believe you can believe today; receive, repent, believe on the Jesus. It is the simplest thing and the most difficult thing. It is the easiest thing if you are humble and the most difficult thing if you are proud. That is why the Cross is the level ground. Everybody has to come through that. Salvation is very easy and yet very difficult. If it was so easy everybody should have made it. No, most people won't make it. But, this is for believers. Once you are saved, if I am part of the last day's generation on whom the end of ages is coming, what do I need to surrender? What do I need to endure? Love and my faith, these two are the most things. My love and my faith should endure till the end. What should I do? How do I get this?

First and foremost, if you haven't done it yet, and even if you have done it many times it doesn't matter, keep doing it. You have to do it. Make a very firm commitment to the Lord. Do you know what it means? You go on your knees and you tell the Lord, 'Thy will be done in my life. Here I am!' until that happens the rest cannot happen. God cannot work on unsundered lives. Last week and the week before that I preached from *Deuteronomy 30:19*, where He says, 'I set before you life and death, blessing and curses, you choose.' You can imagine? God says, 'You choose.' He won't choose for us, He will show us and says, 'Choose life,' and He says, 'I am your life.' But I have to choose. So if God won't choose for us, the devil doesn't choose for us; we make the choices. The entire purpose of tribulation, trials and testing by God, (He doesn't tempt us but He allows trials and testings in our lives) is to see that we make the right choice and stay in that choice. And the devil will tempt us to make the wrong choices. But can you believe? We choose.

So surrender is a choice. After 11 chapters of all theology, in the 12th chapter the Holy Spirit speaks through Paul, 'I beseech you, meaning I beg you. I beg you.' Who is begging? The Spirit of God through His servant. I beg you brethren, in the light of God's mercies. What is that? You make a choice, would you please offer your bodies. Would you surrender? Go down on your knees and say, today, 'Lord, I surrender. I surrender. I am tired. Here I am.'

We talk about the greats in the Bible. Most of those greats in the Bible surrendered young and there are a lot of young people sitting here. So many young people sitting over here. Solomon in his old age he realizes, 'You know what? I goofed up.' And he tells the young people, 'Why don't you surrender when you are young?' so that your lives don't get meaningless when you grow old. I thank God that I surrendered to God as a teenager, in my under graduation 1st year. Next year I will hit 60 and I am just starting, I am not finished yet. I am starting. And I thank God that my life was and is not meaningless. Surrender early, because God cannot do anything unless we surrender, because He gave us the freedom to choose. And He will tell us what to choose but we have to finally choose. And the first thing I have to choose is to surrender. You hear about Joseph, you see the end of Joseph, but how does it begin? It begins with one statement when his father calls him, 'Here I am.' That will define his life. Potiphar will call him, he said, 'Yes lord, here I am.' Prison warden called him, he said, 'Yes, here I am.' Pharaoh called him and he said, 'Here I am.' It defined his life.

So you have to ask this question – have you really, any time in your life, from your heart, surrendered? I remember specific instances in my life, I remember many years ago when I was much younger and every hair on my head was black, I still remember the day I went on my knees and I said, 'Lord, I don't understand Your Word, but I surrender. I don't understand

Your Word but I surrender.' We are trying to understand so that we can surrender. God says, 'First surrender and then you will understand.' Lord, I don't understand, but you know what, I just surrender.

So Joseph says, 'Here I am.' David says, 'Is there not a cause?' Daniel purposed in his heart. These are all young teenagers. These are not old men, these are all young teenagers. Daniel purposed in his heart. There is a commitment, a decision towards God and Jesus appears to a young man called Saul of Tarsus who will become the greatest apostle ever. His first question – who are You? Second question – what do You want me to do? That is the first thing.

See, if you haven't surrendered, when you fail and fall and stumble, there is nobody to lift you up. But every man of God in the Bible and in history who has surrendered, they will fail, they will stumble, a righteous man stumbles seven times but you know, there is a Hand to lift you up because you have surrendered. First, He will cause you not to stumble. That is also there in *Psalms 37:23-24*. But if you stumble and if you fall, even if you fall seven times He will still lift you up. Why? Because by choosing to surrender you gave Him the permission to lift you up. It is a surrendered life that fell. But when an un-surrendered life falls, who is there to lift you? There is nobody to lift you.

So every time Abraham fell, and he fell terribly in ways which no man should fall, God lifted him up. But when Lot fell there is nobody to lift him, Lot had never surrendered his life to God. Remember these things, these are important things. Children in the last days, be very, very resolute in your commitment, in your heart every day.

And the church in Antioch suddenly grew, new believers came in, Barnabas was sent by the Apostles in Jerusalem to encourage the church, so Barnabas from Jerusalem goes there,

Acts 11:22-23

²² Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. ²³ When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord.

This is one thing he said, you know what, with all my heart, I am so happy that Antioch has come to the Lord. By the grace of God people are saved. Now set it in your heart that whatever happens you will continue with the Lord till the end. When you understand, when you don't understand, good times, bad times, terrible times, purpose in your heart that you will continue with Him. This is what is needed. God looks for a commitment. All these calamities will happen; persecutions, hatred, lawlessness, famine, pestilence, all these things are going to happen and are happening. But the question is this – are you committed? What we have are uncommitted Christians. Even if the church is 5 minutes away, 10 minutes away, 15 minutes away, what stops you from coming a little early and sitting here and praying? What stops you?

After all it is a Sunday, honestly we try to make it as easy as possible for people to serve God, right? On a Sunday, it is the Lord's Day, we call it the Lord's day, but let it be the Lord's Day and not your day. We make it so easy. If it is the first day of the week, the first day should define the rest of the week, right? Why don't you make a commitment? Lord, I am here. Just do it between you and God. Little things matter.

Hebrews 11:1

¹ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

That is the issue, because you have so much of faith preaching going on 24/7 which has got nothing to do with the faith which the Bible is talking about. When the Bible is talking about faith, it is connected to things not seen. Do you know what Bible means 'not seen'? it is eternal. It is not temporal. There is temporal there but it is primarily talking about eternal. If your hope is in this life, you can use faith for these things as well, that is the naming and claiming faith. That is fine but that is also not okay.

Remember, faith is the evidence of things hoped for,

1 Corinthians 15:19

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

So lot of people they believe in Christ for salvation, but after that everything is earth-bound. Therefore what happens is that they are the most miserable of people. Or the most to be pitied, one of the two, because things don't happen they lose their joy, because everything is under Heaven. So it is not eternal. Their eyes are not fixed on the eternal. Their eyes are fixed on the temporal. If your eyes are fixed on the eternal, it is not that the temporal does not matter, the thing is that, if it is a yea or a nay you are not so much bothered. May a little regret for a little time, but after that it will pass, because anyway your eyes were not on the temporal.

So the second thing we need to ask ourselves is – if you want to endure, where are your eyes? Where is your hope? Where is your faith? On the temporal or on the eternal?

Colossians 3:1-2

¹If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ²Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Ephesians 2:6 will say – *you were raised*. That is a reality with God. God has raised us up with Christ and seated us in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. That is *Ephesians 2:6*, that is true according to God's Word. It is true for Him. But the question is – is it true for me? So '*If*' is there. That is why '*if*' is there. ***¹If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.*** Now the question is – what am I seeking? Am I seeking those things which are above? Basically seeking those things which are above meaning, what does Christ want? What do you want? Lord, what do you want? Am I seeking You?

Second, ***²Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*** Another translation will say, ***Set your affections on things above and not on the things on the earth.*** Now these are commandments of God by which you can live a life that endures, that overcomes. Set your mind, your affections on things above. So ask this question – what does it mean?

See, we live in a market economy. From the time man fell it is a market economy. Market is defined by gain and lose. That is how you have to look at it. So you have to bring that into eternity, simply ask this question – if I do this what do I gain in eternity? If I make this decision, what do I lose in eternity? Do not bring temporal first. Because in life everything is based on gain and loss. That is how we make our decision; gain and loss. But why don't we bring the same principle into the Kingdom of God? If I take this decision what will I gain in eternity? If I take another decision what will I lose in eternity? You can apply that to everything.

That is what I said, that is where careers are important. It is a choice which God has to make for you. God has to make a choice for you. If I had chosen a career, it would have been completely different. You see, when all these thing were happening in my life, in the early 1990s, it didn't excite me so much because the thing is that I did my PG, I worked for 2 years, I topped the entrance in EFLU and got a scholarship and then in the first shot I clear NET which means that I was qualified to teach in a university, but at the back of my heart there was a tug, the Lord saying, 'I called you in 1988.' So when these things were coming I am really not able to enjoy it because years back I went on my knees and said, 'Here I am.' And every paper work that is coming into my hands was telling, 'here I am not.' So the thing is that these things will come.

You will try to rationalize it. I am not saying that I did not struggle. I went through this struggle, rationalizing, 'Of course I will serve You. You know, it is so nice, I will teach in this English department, in this university and I will try to witness to my students and I will have a Bible study in my quarters.' But you know that you are just fooling yourself, that is not what God said. So ultimately I folded them all up and put them away and said, 'Here I am.' I didn't burn my certificates because you need it for the passport, otherwise I would have.

So the question is – when you make your decisions do you look at eternity? Career, marriage etc. Think!

2 Corinthians 3:17-18

¹⁷Now the Lord is the Spirit; (whether you like it or not the Lord is the Spirit) and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Now if the Spirit is Lord in you, what you experience immediately is liberty.

¹⁸ But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Here the 'mirror' of course is the Word of God. We are being transformed. We look at it and get excited, 'Wow! I am being transformed from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.' But the question is – how does He do it? It is the explanation of this which is given in *2 Corinthians 4:16-18*. How does this happen? This is theory, let's look at the practical,

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light affliction, (this light affliction is not light in the temporal; it is actually terrible affliction) *which is but for a moment*, (for him it was not a moment; it was most of his life. But he is looking at everything in the light of eternal. If the perspective is temporal he would have said, all these afflictions which went on year without end. No, his perspective was different. Why is he able to say that? It is because he is not looking at the temporal; he is looking at the eternal) *is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, (so what the Holy Spirit is doing in the previous verses will actually happen only when all this is happening. But how does it happen? Verse 18 is your perspective) ¹⁸ *while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

The question is – how do I not look at the things which are seen? Because I have to look at things which are seen. How do I not look at things which are seen? ***For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*** Do you understand what it is talking about?

As a pastor, as a shepherd, I don't look at the things which are seen; all the things when you get angry with me, you get upset with me. I don't look at those things, because if I look at those things I also will get angry with you. I look at things which are not seen; I need to carry you to the other side. So I have to guard my heart that I will never, ever, get offended by my sheep, whatever they say, whatever they do. Those things are seen. So whatever my sheep have said in all these years in ministry it doesn't bother me at all. Why? it is because I will not look at the things which are seen; I have to look at the things which are not seen. What is that? These sheep have to be carried across. And if I get offended, if I get angry and mad at them, if I am offended, I am bitter and I am unforgiving then their lives are in trouble. And I cannot do that.

So this is how you look at daily relationships. Wives who are married to unbelieving husbands, men who are married to unbelieving wives, parents who have unbelieving children. You have a whole set of relationships over there who work under unbelieving bosses, or bosses who have unbelieving employees. We are all look at the eternal. If I deal with this, how is it going to be? You need to understand, how is Joseph right after the governor, he is no. 2? How is he dealing with Potiphar? How is he dealing with Mrs. Potiphar? How is he dealing with his brothers? What is his perspective? "I need to get these people saved. Therefore I am not going to remember what they did to me. What they did to me is what is seen. But I am looking at what is not seen."

So in relationships, in decisions, in everything you have to be very conscious about this fact that there is temporal and there is eternal. My question to you is – why do we forgive? 'He did this to me, I can never forgive.' But why should we forgive? So that, not only that we will be forgiven but that person's heart is opened up for the Word of God to reach. Otherwise we bind him with our unforgiveness. Because whatever we do we are binding and losing. 'I can never forgive him,' you bound. And what you bound on earth it shall be bound in Heaven. No. In everything we are looking at eternal, we are not looking at the temporal. We have to be careful, because if you live in the temporal, what you miss out is eternal. So Jesus is the only Person who is absolutely true, absolutely not guilty, everybody is cursing Him, nailed Him on the Cross and He is not looking at the temporal; He is looking at the eternal and says, 'Father, forgive them. They don't know what they are doing.' Did you see this? Are you seeing the eternal?

The inward man, so don't ever look at the outward man. Most ladies are bothered by the outward man. Their own outward man when they look in the mirror and also about the man they want to marry. They are so bothered about the outward man. but who is bothered about the inward man?

Galatians 5:22-23

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Leave all the rest aside, if love is not there the rest will not follow. But the question is, you have to look at your inward man and realize, Jesus said that in the last days lawlessness will abound and agape will grow cold. You have to ask yourself, look at your inward man and honestly do a check, 10 months are over, look back and see, 'Am I a more loving person today?' That is what you have to check. I was explaining, how faith and love come from the same heart but don't work in the same way. Enduring faith produces patience. Love doesn't work the same way; love suffers long and is still kind.

So the question is – are you more kind today? This is the inward man, this is what is important. We are not talking about your salvation. We are talking about the last days. We are talking about the eternal – how we are going to be judged. And the fruit is there inside, it is the inward man; the hidden person of the inner man. And that is the question. Are you meeker today? Are you meeker in how you answer people? Or are you still a fighter? Each one knows, you don't have to ask somebody, you know where you are. Instead of worrying about the temporal thing, like there is a pimple on my nose and my hair is whiter today. Why are you so bothered? It will come and go, it doesn't matter. The outward man. We have to look at this, love. And this is the most important thing. The Bible says, three things are great in the Bible – faith, hope and charity. And love is the greatest. So if I can get the greatest right, then everything else will fall into place.

And that is why we were studying and we saw, we only looked at one verse in that, *1 Corinthians 13:4 – love suffers long*. That means, is your love enduring? Your love cannot suffer long unless you have people around you and with you who make you suffer. And that is God's plan. You don't want cherubim around you. You want people who are a test for you love. And the question is not whether they make you suffer long, but the question is – is your response still kind? Why? It is because you are looking at the eternal.

Think in this room, we are all GTC, one family with so many misunderstandings, probably. Let me ask you this question – in a twinkling of an eye when rapture takes place, let us hope and believe that all of us are taken up into Heaven, will any of those misunderstandings really matter? We will be so ashamed. Do you know what we will be ashamed of? We will be ashamed of our misunderstandings. We will be very happy about our understandings. In a split second, when we are taken up, we will be so embarrassed, 'Is this what I thought about him?' and he will think, 'Is this what I thought about you?' but nobody is thinking about eternity. Do these things really matter in eternity? That is why Jesus said, be careful about this devil, know his viles, know his tricks, be careful about offense, be careful about unforgiveness, be careful the things which are important in the Kingdom of God. These are eternal things. Be careful! Be careful! Guard your heart! Guard your heart! In *1 Corinthians 13* we saw, right? If you read verse 7 where it talks about love,

1 Corinthians 13:7

⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

And the key is this 'all' 'all' 'all' 'all'. 'Lord, let a day come in my life when I can bear all things. Endure all things.' We need to understand – he who endures till the end. There is something (Love) that endures all things. That is why the Bible says – '*Love never fails*'. Faith will fail, because faith is always connected with hope. Your hope could be wrong. 'I had hoped for my birthday that my husband would give me this, but he gave me something else.' It can fail. But the mistakes wives make, or the husbands make is that, they say, 'You don't love me.' No. your hope failed. His love is still enduring, he still got you something. Or in his characteristic way, because he hasn't changed, he forgot.

See, faith will fail because faith has got to do with hope and your hope can be misplaced. Even with God, some people expected resurrection but they did not get a resurrection, instead they now will get a better resurrection. So in life, because we are caught in this trap called temporal and eternal, your faith can fail. But something (love) will never fail. On one side, because of the increase of lawlessness, when agape is failing you have to ask yourself, that is why I am very careful in my response to what is happening in the Middle East. I love Israel because Israel is God's people, but I feel sorry for the Palestinian people; sorry, not because of what they are going through but because of what the devil has done to them. They are such brain-washed people, blinded people. What is the answer? The only answer is the Gospel. They are blinded, Islam blinds people. Children are fostered right from the beginning to hate and to kill. That is why of all the religions in the world I don't like that one, I am sorry I don't like that one. It is because of the nature of that religion and

the teachings in it. I like Hinduism, I don't have any issues with the core of Hinduism, I find that people are very tolerant, they listen to the Gospel.

So you need to understand, if you look at them you feel sorry, what a mess! What a mess! So we have to be very careful that we don't hate. So the question is, when Agape cools down, when it is not enduring offense will rise. Many will betray one another. We have to be very, very careful. But the question is – where is my eye? Is my eye on the eternal? The greatest person in the Old Covenant, not in terms of position, but in other parameters, the greatest in the Old Testament is Moses. Okay, yes John the Baptist for proclaiming Jesus and pointing out Jesus; while others showed the shadow and John saw the substance. In that way, yes John was the greatest. But in terms of serving God, as a servant of God, the greatest was Moses, the book of Hebrews talks about him. This is the man who endured.

Hebrews 11:27

²⁷ By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

seeing Him who is invisible. This is the first key. If you want to endure in this temporal world, on one side it will become more and more jazzy, glittering and all that, the height of opulence and innovation, the kinds of things and the way the world is going is unbelievable. It is literally where ultimately God will have to step down before they reach the point where we will reach immortality. Before they could eat from the Tree of Life He kicked them out of the Garden. And the entire innovation is basically moving towards that; that man wants to be God. The innovation is unbelievable. Any field you take, any field you take it is unbelievable. That is Egypt, this world system. Moses forsook it.

So when you forsake Egypt, this world the world system will get angry. The question is, the only way you can really endure is by seeing Him. So ultimately faith sees Jesus. It sees Him. Do you see Him? And that is what God is trying to put us through. That is the purpose of faith; the object of your faith is the Person. That is what I was trying to tell them at the memorial service meeting. I was trying to tell them, unlike any other religion ours is not a religion. It is entirely tied up to a Person; His birth, His life, His death, His resurrection. It is entirely tied up to a Person. There is no Person like that, so our salvation cannot be tied with any other person.

Our salvation is tied up to a Person; His birth has to be a virgin birth, meaning no man, it has to be of God. So He is born without sin and is not shaped in iniquity. So His birth is so important. You take that prophecy – 'a virgin shall give birth' and put 'woman' over there, you are in trouble. He cannot save us. So His birth is important. His life is important; He was tempted at all points and He did not sin. It is important. And then on the Cross He became sin for us and He had to die on the Cross, because thousands of years before the Cross was ever invented, it was written – *Cursed is the man who hangs on the Tree*. So the curse comes upon Him. And then He dies and He is buried. But then if He doesn't rise up death is still more powerful, because our hope is the resurrection. No man had any hope of resurrection until Jesus rose from the dead and never to die again.

So our entire salvation is fixed on one Person. This is what I told them, if you believe in God you will not be saved, if you believe in the Holy Spirit you will not be saved, unless you believe in the Son, because salvation comes from the Son. if you ask the Father He will point you to the Son. if you ask the Holy Spirit the Spirit will point to the Son and say, 'Believe in Him'. You cannot say, 'I believe in God' and be saved. Or say, 'I believe in the Holy Spirit,' you cannot be saved. For salvation there is only one Person and one Name and one work; it is Jesus Christ.

So it is Him you have to see. We see Him who is invisible. That is what the entire book of Hebrews is talking about. In *Hebrews 11* it gives you an entire list of people, can you see anyone of them? No, they are all dead and gone. But they surround us like a cloud of witnesses, unseen realm, they all speak. So the Bible says, the first person is talk about is Abel; even though he is dead he speaks. Where is he speaking from? He is speaking from another realm. What does Abel speak? Without Blood you cannot come into the presence of God. He speaks from another realm. Man can walk with God. Enoch speaks. Man can do a work for the saving of his household, Noah speaks. Man can live in the land God has promised him, believing His promises Abraham speaks. Man can put himself on the altar and give himself over to the knife, when God releases that man that man can never die again, Isaac speaks. These people are all speaking from the unseen realm. *Hebrews 11* is talking about that. And then when it comes to *Hebrews 12* it says – we are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses, run your race with endurance. And then it will tell us – *look unto Jesus*.

Abel is not the Author of my faith, he teaches me one part of faith. Jesus is the Author. And Jesus is the Finisher. Look unto Him and everywhere, in the first 3 verses, three times the word used is 'endure' 'endure' 'endure'. So I have to see Him who is invisible. So the churning of my faith, the sifting of my faith, the testing of my faith, the trial of my faith is so that my eyes are becoming clearer and clearer. I am able to see Jesus. I am able to see Jesus through the pages of the Bible, and through the sermon I listen to I am able to see Jesus. That is what the Bible is talking about.

1 Peter 1:7

⁷ that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

It has to be tested. Is your faith tested? Let's say you have got only 500 rupees note with you. You go to the supermarket and you buy everything and when you give the note they return the note and say, 'It is fake.' 'Oh! I am sorry.' 'We are also sorry sir, please put everything back and leave it there. And go get another note and come. This won't work.' we know what it is when something which we have is fake. You get a job, and then they will say, 'Submit all your certificates.' And the company checks on it and says, 'We have checked and your certificate is fake.'

We know, in life, if these things are fake what the consequences are that follow. Let us begin from birth, your birth certificate is fake. Every other document becomes fake, do you know that? Everything is connected to that. Your marriage certificate is fake. Now are you married? Or are you not married? Your degree certificate is fake. And the money you carry is all fake. Can you imagine what happens to you? Forget the temporal, now you get into eternity and there is a fellow at the wedding feast and he doesn't have the wedding garments on, Jesus says, 'Friend, how did you get in here? You are a fake. How did you get in here?' the Bible says that he was speechless. And God did not say, 'Take him outside, give him a nice wash, put a new coat and send him in.' No. He said, 'Bind him, hand and foot, and throw him into outer darkness.' Because that time to check your faith is over. Now is the time to have genuine faith.

So in life what we go through, all the situations that we go through, it is so that our faith is proved to us, not to God, but to us, so that we know 'My faith is genuine.' ***precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*** That is why it has to be tested, otherwise we will not know. Like I said, the foolish rich man, you remember, he died and he reached hell. If he has spent one day before he died, asking God, 'Is my faith real?' he would have got an answer. He checked on everything else, he checked his bank balance, he checked his stock market, he checked everything. The only thing he forgot to check was eternal.

So God says, 'Don't take a chance. If you are really My child, I will put you through trials and testings and tribulations,' what is it? The testing of your faith. 'So then don't fight it, I will tell you how to react to it.' So James will say, *Brethren, when you go through trials and testings of various kinds, you should rejoice because the testing of your faith* (if your faith is real, if it is genuine and it is of God) *when it is being tested it will produce patience.* The faith that is not of God does not produce faith. When it is tested it produces anger, it produces short-temperedness, it produces bitterness, it produces hatred. But the faith that is of God, when it is tested, it will ultimately produce patience. You become a more patient man, because patience is a quality of God. And God is confirming us to His image. and not to the world's image.

So this is what is being tested. That is why we do not react to situations like the world does. We react according to the Word. See the next verse how beautiful it is.

1 Peter 1:8

⁸ whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹ receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

So you love the unseen One. Did you see Jesus? No. but do you love Him? Yes. This is why we tell people, stay away from the world as far as possible. Go work, be a witness and come back. Don't get involved in the world, get out of this movies and all those things, because the more you get engrossed in the seen, the less you will be able to appreciate the unseen. That is the problem.

See, Jesus is a Person and the Bible doesn't describe how He looks, but it tells us who He is. And the problem is that we are so obsessed with looks we do not try to become somebody who can be loving person. When we used to study in our literature classes, our profs used to say, 'Never buy a book looking at the cover.' And lot of people who got married, got married looking at the cover. Then they started reading the pages and got upset. But I thank God that you are all believers and the pages can be re-written; you can change because there is the power of God for you to become something, in the image of Christ. That is the key. You can become somebody to can be loving, kind, patient, longsuffering. You can become all this, because that is what faith and grace does. So the Bible says, ⁸ ***whom having not seen you love***. So the love is connected to the unseen; enduring love. ***Though now you do not see Him, yet believing***, this is faith. So you see, faith and love have been brought together and connected to the unseen.

And that faith that works through love is unbeatable. See, all the writers of the Bible, whether it is Paul, or James, or Peter, or John, you will see that the Holy Spirit will come back and tune us to the same thing – there is a Person who is invisible, you can love Him. And as you keep reading, He says, 'Stay away from the world. The world is a set up, it is all outward and flashy. There is nothing inside, all hollow. You go there you will be miserable.'

You look at how many stars are committing suicide, or dying just like that. What did stardom do for them? There is nothing inside this world. This world is all hollow, it is all empty. Unless it is absolutely necessary do not go to the Mall. Before the mall comes the fall. Unnecessarily going into these places. Honestly tell me, can you feed your eyes with these 120 windows offering things which you don't need, and the money which you don't have to buy. You end up buying and paying with the money which you don't have and then you are miserable. Why do you go to all these places? Why do you get into all these? That is why the Bible says, 'Do not love the world or the things of the world,' not because it is evil per se, but what it does to you. See, you and I have only one heart. God didn't give us two heart, one for God and one for the world. Then we would be so happy.

He gave us only one heart. He says, 'Do not love the world or the things in the world,' because if you love what will go? Agape will go. Philia will be there, Storge will be there, Eros will be there, but agape will go, the love of the Father, which endures, which overcomes will go. People who are in the world have philia, they love their children. They have too much eros, they have storge. All t hat is there, what is not there is agape. Agape is gone, because in that same heart these two cannot co-exist. That is what God is saying. Don't love the world or the things in the world. And if you look at the world now, it is pressing us on from every corner. So you have to make that choice. How do you make that choice? The choice is made by love.

First you go on your knees and surrender, 'I am committed to You, Lord. Help me Lord.' Second, 'I am look at the invisible and not at the visible.' And one of the things by which you can easily check, I am telling you from my own personal experience is that, one of the easiest way you can get rid of the temporal where temporal doesn't mean anything to you is – you have read your Word and you have understood, you take anything here in the temporal there is no comparison to its parallel in Heaven. It is infinitely better in Heaven. The problem is that the more you enjoy the fake the more you lose your capacity to enjoy the genuine. That is the problem. The more you enjoy the fake, the more you lose the capacity to enjoy the genuine. The genuine is there, in Heaven.

That is why we are caught in this body which is automatically losing its capacity enjoy, because age is catching up. But on the other side a new body is going to be given. The problem is if you are coming with a mindset that is messed up over the years, how will you enjoy eternity? So the key is you need the Person. It is always connected with the Person. It is not connected with things. If you have to overcome anything it has to always be the Person. Even in human relationships it is a person. If you look at a child who overcomes who will see that the child loves either the father or the mother.

Joseph loved his father and therefore he obeyed his father's instructions. The father couldn't teach any of his other children, while this guy was an orphan, his mother was dead. You will always see, if a child has to obey, either he loves his father, or he loves his mother. And the same thing you take into other relationships, you will realize that there is always a person involved. There is always a person involved. In school you will always remember there was one teacher who encouraged you and said, 'You can do it.' And that changed a student's life. There was always a person involved.

And now we have the Person of all persons involved over here whom you do not see. Now what we are being made is we are being made into AI, all artificial, no persons are involved. Distance learning. What distance learning? 'Come closer,' is what God says. Come closer, come closer, come closer. But we want to learn from a distance. It doesn't work like that.

There is a Person (Jesus) whom you love, though you have not seen, whom you believe though you have not seen Him. There is a Person. And then there is a place.

Hebrews 11:9-10

⁹By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; (why could he do all this? Why could he live in tents, with Isaac and with his grandson? Why could he live like that? The reason,) ¹⁰for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Did you see that? This is what defines. In *John 14:1-3*, Jesus brings both together.

John 14:1-3

¹Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ²In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

So we are going to a place and there are people there. And the most important People, the Father and the Son are there. That is how you have to look at it. If you do not have your eyes fixed on eternity, you will miss out. You won't be able to endure. There is a Person. And on earth, it is your home and it is your church. That is why I always tell people, once you finish work go home. Go home. There is a place called home. And then whenever the spiritual home gathers if you are free and you are around, come home. Go home and come home. It is a place called home. These are two things that represent Heaven on earth. There is a home called home and there is a church called home, these two are homes. And in these two places, who are there? People are there and it is also a place.

So unlike all the others who are fighting for the Promise Land and the un-promised land and to build a temple and all these, we are not bothered, because for us the place is not important. Last Sunday we gathered at Jeevan Jyothi, this Sunday we are gathered here, in a different place, but it is still home. I feel more homely here because everybody is sitting close to each other. So it does not matter to us, but to the people who are outside of Christ, the place matters. For us people matter, and then comes the place. So you have to get these things in mind correctly. Otherwise you will not endure. God as your Father and Jesus as your eldest Brother and Savior. There is a place called Heaven and it is a real place. It is a city. And that is how.

So the whole book of Hebrews, basically, is written so that we endure. Fix your eyes, the Bible says, on Christ Jesus. That is the most important thing. You see, I am not talking about endurance as separated from the Kingdom of God, because endurance is there in the world as well. People will endure and persevere and be patient for anything. The devil is an extremely patient person. He is extremely patient and he endures and he perseveres. He could wait for years and years and years to get Moses. He could wait years and years and years to get Isaac. He could wait 600 plus years to get Noah. He can wait. So we are not talking about this as qualities detached from God, because people in the world have it. Any successful person in the world has endurance, patience, and perseverance. We are not talking about that. We are not trying to make a virtue out of something in isolation from God and His Kingdom.

The question is – is this virtue in your life and my life connected to God and to His people? That is the question. So please don't make endurance into god. Like the world has made love into god. God is love, but love is not God. Be careful. But Jesus said, 'Most important virtue that you will need, the believers will need, in the last days is love that endures and faith that endures.' That is why He told Peter, 'I have prayed, you are going to deny Me like no other man. even to a little servant girl you will tell, 'I don't know Him,' you are going to deny Me. Three times before the rooster crows you will deny Me. but I have prayed for you. Do you know what I prayed? That your faith will not fail you.'

Our faith should not fail us and our love should not fail us.

Two things at the end of this, one: surrender, if you have never truly surrendered. Go on your knees and say, 'Lord, here I am.' You don't have to do it in the church. This is one-on-one with God. If it happens in the church it is fine, but it can happen anywhere, say, 'Here I am.' On the road, Saul of Tarsus surrendered, it was on a road. The Bible is very clear – *on the road to Damascus*. That is where the bombing are taking place right now. He went on his knees and said, 'Here I am.' And the whole world changed through him.

You do not understand, in eternity you will read history differently. God will show us 2000 years of Church history, 'Do you know what happened? Do you know why all this happened? It is because one man on the road to Damascus said, 'What do You want me to do?' history was shaped by one man's surrender. To 11 others Jesus said, 'You follow Me.' they left their nets, they left the tax booths and followed Him. History was shaped by all these people. Not the people we are thinking about. All these people are the ones who shaped history eternally. Do you know why? It is because when God called them, they said, 'Here I am,' and they surrendered.

That should be your beginning. That is why when you look at the Cross and you have seen Jesus you should never be afraid to surrender, never be afraid. We may not understand a lot of things that happen in our lives. I still don't understand many things; many things I understand now in retrospect and there are many things which I still don't understand. But one thing I know, you can trust Him. And you can love Him. There is nobody like that, nobody like that, absolutely nobody like that. Surrender and then keep your eyes on eternity.

Be brave to pray every day, 'Thy Kingdom come and Thy will be done in my life.'

Forget the world, that whether you pray or not will happen. But what matters is, will it happen in my life? Surrender! Look at eternal and surrender. And when you look at eternal and not at the temporal things will start making sense. Amen?! We shall pray.

If you want to take a moment, just between you and God, you don't even have to voice it, you can just through your heart speak to God and say, 'Lord, here I am. As messed up as I may be, with spots and blemish, warts, with all that Father. This is all I am, but this is all I have. I surrender.' Do you know this morning there was an offertory, in that offertory there will be many notes, some notes are fresh from the printing press, some are old and soiled, but the old soiled 100 rupees and the fresh note has the same value, because that is how you counted it. You may be absolutely soiled and somebody else maybe absolutely unsoiled, but until you commit yourself you have no value in God's Kingdom. But if you commit yourself both will have the same value.

May be you have done it before, it doesn't matter, keep surrendering. That is what we are called to do, that is what we do every day when we wake up in the morning, we surrender ourselves afresh, 'Here I am, Lord. Let Your will be done Lord in my life. And then, make a decision to start putting the eternal first. Not to ignore the temporal because we live in the temporal, but to put the eternal first. And His promise is still true, always true. *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, (which is eternal and unseen) and all these things shall be added unto you.*' That is the temporal, the seen. And that one verse God has given us to stand on, the direction, 'Put My Kingdom first, and the temporal will follow. I will add all that you need in your life. I will add.'

Make these two commitments today and lean onto His grace each day and continue. And I tell you, in the strength of God's Word, you will be ready for His coming, because the One who promised is faithful. If we do what we can do, because we have the freedom to choose, then He will do what only He can do. If we surrender He is faithful and the Word of God says, the God of peace will sanctify us, spirit, soul and body and keep us blameless until the hour of the Lord's coming. And He is faithful and He will do it. But there is something which we need to do; we need to surrender and we need to take our eyes off the temporal. Look at Him who is invisible.

Closing prayer:

Father, we just come to You Lord. We just thank You. We just thank You and we just thank You. Every one standing here, everyone who has made that commitment to You, Lord, even when we make these commitments we know that we are weak and we cannot keep it without Your strength and without Your power, without Your grace. But You will not do that until we surrender first. I believe Lord, Your children have made that decision in their hearts today. They are surrendering and they are seeking Your help to put the Kingdom first, the eternal first. And I believe that they see things happening in their lives where God will start moving things in their lives so that O Lord the appointed end can come to pass. As it was

with Joseph, as it was with Job, the appointed perfect end will happen for everyone Lord. Because as a Father You have no bad plans for any child. All Your plans are good, pleasing and above all, they are perfect for he/she who endures till the end. Thank You Father, thank You Lord, thank You.

I speak healing into every sick body. Lisa who is not well, and many online who are not well, we speak healing. I speak strength into every person who is weak and I speak deliverance into every person who is oppressed. And I pray, touch every offended heart that they may let go. Touch every unforgiving heart that they may forgive. That seasons of refreshing may come in their lives too, Lord. Thank You Lord, thank You. Once again Lord, we confess, because everything we believe has to be confessed and it has to be confessed until we believe, we confess, 'We love You! We love You!' and we confess, 'We trust You! Even when we do not understand we trust You, because when we look at the Cross we trust You. We love You and we trust You Father.' And one day when we see You face-to-face till will be so easy to love You and to walk with You for all of eternity, Lord. Thank You, thank You Father, thank You Lord. We stand in Your house and we declare, as Your people by faith, Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. And all God's people said, '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.