

War Horse For God!

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Father, we just thank You, Lord, for Your mercy. You are faithful even when we were unfaithful; for You could never deny Yourself, Lord. Thank You, Lord. Thank You, Jesus. Thank You, for You are a God who never changes, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever. Thank You, Father, that Lord Your Word is eternal, forever settled in the heavens, Father, that Your Word is exalted above every name, that the entrance of Your Word brings light and therefore, Father, this morning, we come, Lord, for this last Sabbath of this year. Father, speak to us, not the words of man but Your Words. Speak to us, speak through me, give us ears to hear what the Spirit of the Lord has to say even in this last hour of time. Anoint us; to that end we pray. Prepare us for the coming days, that we will, Lord, will look forward. Look ahead with expectancy in our hearts to what You are going to do for us, O Lord; that You are going to be for us. More importantly, I pray, Father, that You prepare us and therefore, I pray You would bless and anoint the speaking and the hearing of this word this morning. Touch us. In Jesus' mighty Name, Amen.

So, last Sunday of 2019 before we enter into 2020. I am not going to teach anything new in principle, even though if I may be looking at scriptures we haven't possibly looked before in our teaching sessions and preaching but principally we are not looking anything new, we are just looking through the word what God has taught us in a nutshell to remind ourselves to strengthen ourselves the promise the God gave at the beginning of the year and He said this year is going to be the year of overflow could mean so many things to so many people but you know God is always faithful and every promise is yes and amen in Christ Jesus. So, this morning, I just want to look at one passage in the light of what we have been listening to especially during our fasting and prayer about the coming rain and even as I was preparing this sermon I found this interesting passage in the *Book of Zechariah*,

Zechariah 10:1

¹Ask the Lord for rain, In the time of the latter rain...

That's a fantastic verse, we have been hearing, Pastor keeps telling us the sound of the rain, 1 kings 18, Elijah is praying, he is on his knees, he says, I hear the sound of the rain and he is asking his servant to go back and forth, back and forth and his servant keeps coming back and says, "there is no sign of rain" and then he says, "I already hear," and then, he finally comes and he says, "I see a small cloud in the form a small hand" and Elijah says, "Prepare, it's going to thunder." And we believe that the coming year is going to be an year of incredible latter rain, so he says ask the Lord, I mean we are not praying the way we ask Lord even as we been exhort ourselves during fasting and prayer is praise him with expectancy,

Zechariah 10:1-2

¹...The Lord will make flashing clouds; He will give them showers of rain, Grass in the field for everyone (Halleluiaah, who eats grass?). ²For the idols speak delusion; The diviners envision lies, and tell false dreams; They comfort in vain. Therefore, the people wend (some versions will use the word – wander) their way like sheep (notice the word sheep); They are in trouble because there is no shepherd.

Grass in the field is for everyone, who is that everyone? It is obviously, he is talking to the sheep, which is the flock of God and then he goes onto say they are in trouble because there is no shepherd and therefore, verse 3,

Zechariah 10:3

³ "My anger is kindled against the shepherds, And I will punish the goatherds. For the Lord of hosts (Yahweh Sabaoth) will visit His flock (his flock is made of what? Sheep, fantastic, that is what we looked at), The house of Judah...

That's the flock, he is defining it even further, house of Judah which mean spirit of praise, we are all Jews in spirit, in that whoever is circumcised in his heart, as we heard several times in *Romans 2*, will say he is a true Jew,

Zechariah 10:3

³ **...For the Lord of hosts will visit His flock** (the house of Judah, how is he going to visit his flock? By the rain and the rain will cause a lot of what to grow? Grass to grow, so the Lord of hosts is going to visit his flock with a lot of food, in other words and he will make them into what?) **The house of Judah, and will make them as His royal horse in the battle.**

Imagine the transformation, from a sheep to a what? To a horse and the horse which is ready for what? For battle. That's today's sermon. A horse, ready for battle, you know why? Because we see the sound of rain, a horse ready for battle, now tell me who is riding the horse, I hope you understand, interestingly, think about this, if you actually read scripture and if you look at what the connotations for the word horse through the Bible, most of the connotations for horse is negative, in other words, "vain is the strength of a horse", "most of the times it says", it tells that "the kings of Israel don't go back to Egypt by horses", "some trust in chariots, some trust in horses but we trust in the name of the Lord", "the horse is made ready for battle but the victory comes from whom? From the Lord." So, if you look at the Biblical teaching for the word horse, you will find it more often in negative connotation God is not really positive about the horse, except in few places, I'm going to show another place,

Song of Solomon 1:9

⁹ **I have compared you, my love, To my filly among Pharaoh's chariots.**

He looks his Church and he says, "you look like the horse which is dragging pharaoh's chariots", He is comparing his bride, you look like horse dragging chariots of pharaoh and most of the time in the Bible, king is not coming on the horse, he is coming on a donkey, that's what he used, but later he is going to come back on the horse, if you know that for sure but who is riding the horse, obviously Jesus is going to ride the horse, he wants us to make into a horse and he wants to ride and for what purpose, there is a very interesting verse, we looked at when Grace Tabernacle Church started, for very first time, very interesting verse in,

Revelation 17:14

¹⁴ **These will make war with the Lamb** (who is the lamb? Jesus), **and the Lamb will overcome them** (who will overcome them? The lamb will overcome them, why will He overcome them?), **for He is Lord of Lords and King of kings; and** (why will He also overcome them?) **those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful."**

So, the reason why the Lord is going to win the war is because He is Lord of Lords and king of kings and also because those who are called, those who are with Him are the called chosen and faithful, in other words, there is one side in Christianity, that is the Lord's side – 90%, but the war is always won in conjunction with those who are the called the chosen and the faithful, that's essentially the idea, so God is wanting us to make us into from sheep into horse, so if you search the entire Bible where God positively talks about a horse and what kind of a horse – A horse which is ready for battle, so this is a battle horse, God wants us to make us into a horse ready for battle and I was studying and looking where do you find a horse spoken in such positive ways by God himself and especially, a horse which is ready for battle and you find that passage in the *Book of Job 39*, this particular 7 verses which we are going to look at will be the meat of today's message, a horse ready for battle, you know why, God is sending rain to give us food in order to make us into a horse ready for battle, let's read them, even as you read, let's see how you respond, I mean how you feel, feelings are sometimes bad but when I read this, I was like so excited, I was like "baba, kya hein, ye kya baa thein", look at this

Job 39:19-25

¹⁹ **"Have you given the horse strength? Have you clothed his neck with thunder?** (kya baat hein) ²⁰ **Can you frighten him like a locust? His majestic snorting strikes terror.** ²¹ **He paws in the valley, and rejoices in his strength; He gallops into the clash of arms.** (this is like goosebumps only, look at the next one) ²² **He mocks at fear, and is not frightened; Nor does he turn back from the sword.** ²³ **The quiver rattles against him, The glittering spear and javelin.** ²⁴ **He devours the distance with fierceness and rage; Nor does he come to a halt because the trumpet has sounded.** ²⁵ **At the blast of the trumpet he says, 'Aha!' He smells the battle from afar, The thunder of captains and shouting.**

Whoa! That is a horse. I mean when you read those verses, you have to say, "Wow, Lord! Kya baat hein", I mean I said, this is what God wants us to make into, think about a sheep, have you seen a sheep? Absolutely looks helpless, what does He want to transform those sheep into, of course by the way He is not taking about one sheep into one horse, He is taking about entire flock into a horse, essentially, He is taking about entire Church, what does He want? What He going to do? In

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order to make us into a horse ready for battle, I want to look at each of these verses, you can dig into it and you will just get lost, I don't want us to get lost, stay with me, I just want us to look at 8 things, as to how God wants us to make us into, a battle horse, a horse ready for battle,

Job 39:19

¹⁹ ***"Have you given the horse strength? Have you clothed his neck with thunder?"***

Rhetorical question, Job is so frustrated and he is so self-righteous and after that God is asking him questions after questions, do you know? Were you there? Etc., when He comes to the creation part, this is where He is asking Job these questions to humble him, of course, Have you given the horse strength? Answer: No, from where does the horse strength come from? Obviously from God, have you clothed his neck with thunder? First, we will look at verse 19 only, first I want to talk about strength,

Ephesians 6:10

¹⁰ ***Finally, my brethren, be strong (where?) in the Lord and in the power of His might.***

You know where the strength comes from? As long as you are in the presence where the God dwells, I will tell you something, it is where the presence of the God is or we kept hearing this, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from law of sin and death, I mean everything, all the blessings of God are yes and Amen in Christ Jesus, as long as you are in the Lord, you have strength, in other words, as long as you are there in the presence of the Lord, that is the reason why one of the Psalms that we read at the end of the year, you know very famous Psalm, we read at the end of the year, any ideas? Psalm 90, you know remember, you know how it starts,

Psalm 90:1

¹ ***Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.***

From everlasting to everlasting, you are God, in other words, what Moses is saying (that is psalm of Moses of course) Lord, you have been our dwelling place, you know where did God choose us? He chose us where? In Him, even before the foundations of the world were laid and when He called us, He called us into himself, when we were baptized, we were baptized into Christ Jesus, everything, the strength of a believer is as long as He is where? In Christ. That is where the strength of the believer is and the strength of the believer increases even as Christ goes against the flow, always you know Christ is always against the tide of the world, you know that? Christ is always against the tide of the world, you see fish out of water has no strength, the fish out of water has no strength, a crocodile out of water has no strength, as long as it is in the water full of strength, when it is out of water, gone. When I am talking about flowing water, you see only rivers have the flowing water, and Christ is strong and the strength of Christ in you keeps on increasing even as you go against the flow of the world.

You know in Andhra, there is a very famous fish called palsa, I will tell you what palsa is, palsa is found in the sea, it is about Rs 50/- per fish, now the palsa is found near close to Godavari Krishna basin where the water flows into the sea, where the river water flows into the sea, what happens is, some of the fish they start tasting the water which is coming from the river, the mud mixed water which is coming from the river and it starts tasting it and in order to enjoy that freshness of water, it starts flowing from the sea across the stream, upstream and into the river and even as it goes from being palasa and starts moving upstream it goes upstream and it starts taking in that water from the river and the minerals in that mud and then you know what it happens, it increases in its strength, it puts on more muscle, it puts on more flesh and it would have been one kilo when it was in the ocean and it keeps flowing upstream and comes into the river and it becomes hilsa, palsa to hilsa and hilsa is almost Rs 3500/- a kilo, you know the saying in Andhra is let you get into debt, no problem but once in a life, you have to eat hilsa, you know why, it is one of the most delicious fish, 50 rupees fish when it was in still waters, when it moves upstream, it becomes 3500 rupees, gains strength, when it keeps moving upstream. This year there is going to be lot of opposition my dear brothers and sisters, in the Lord, upstream, increase in value, increase in strength,

2 Timothy 2:1

¹ ***You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace (grace of God, that is where?) that is in Christ Jesus.***

How do we get this strength? Very simple, one way you get this strength, I will show you how you get this strength,

1 John 2:13-14

¹³ I write to you, little children, because you have known the Father. ¹⁴ I have written to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the Word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.

The reason why you are strong is because you have devoured the word, you have devoured it, strong because of the word, I really encourage you my dear brothers and sisters, start devouring God's word not just the milk of the Word of God but the meat of the Word of God become strong, digest, start taking in more of the Word of God into your life then you will become stronger and stronger and stronger. You see 1 John 2 says, this is for young men, because you are strong, in Isaiah 40 it says even the youth will faint, do you want to be a young man who faints? No, no. Young man, you want to become strong? You know how you become strong? By devouring the word, the Word of God abides in you, that's the reason why it says in 3:16, one of the 3:16s in the Bible

Colossians 3:16

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

You see that? So, let the Word of God richly dwell in you. That means take in as much as the Word of God as possible. The thing is – if you start taking the Word, it like taking food and you keep on taking food, what will happen to you? You increase in weight; you become obese. The only way for the Word of God to actually convert into strength is when you start practicing. You understand? So, how do you practice the Word of God? Look at what it says in *John 4:31*,

John 4:31-

³¹ In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." ³² But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." ³³ Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?"

Whenever Jesus talks about something spiritual, they always look at the physical. That's the problem with many of us. Whenever Jesus says something in the spiritual, "There is going to be a lot of rain," "ah, salary. Hike." How we start thinking, right? "Promotion. I will publish four papers this year. I will get my Ph. D." That is exactly how we think. But look at what it says,

³⁴ Jesus said to them, "My food is to (not listen to the will of God,) do the will of Him who sent Me...

In other words, the only way to increase in strength is to start doing the will of God. Then, what is the will of God? You will say. What is the will of God for my life? One of the common questions I get whenever I go to the youth meeting – how do I know God's will in my life? And whenever they talk about 'God's will', you know what the question is. We are not going to repeat that. How do I know God's will in my life? I'll tell you how you know God's will. That is something called as the 'revealed will of God' in each one of your lives. Everybody's specific will is different but there is one thing which is common to all. What is the first thing that is common to all? I will show you – *for this is the will of God – your sanctification*. What is that? That you have to be set apart for God. You want to increase in strength and you want to become a war horse for God? Separation is important. There is no increasing in strength without separating from the world. *Friendship with the world is enmity with God. The Spirit in you yearns jealously; therefore, whoever makes himself a friend of the world will make God his enemy*. Do the will of God. What is the will of God? Sanctification. Separation. And it's impossible. I keep telling you – it's impossible. One of the ways that you allow yourself to be mentored is that you are not the part of the crowd. You understand that? I told you example of Joshua, right? Joshua is not here; he is not there in the mountain. Where is he? He's not with the crowd. Simple. What is he doing? What is the crowd doing? "Where is this fellow, Moses? We don't know. Make us a god." And they are doing all kinds of things. And this man, in the presence of God, is absolutely sanctified, set apart; he hears clearly from God; and then, he is coming down. Joshua may not be as spiritually discerning as Moses and Moses comes and says, "What is going on over there?" "I hear the sound of battle," says Joshua. "I think it's fasting and prayer, brother Moses. I think they are all singing; they are praising and worshipping." No, no. This is not fasting and prayer;

this is not praise and worship. This is something else. The point is – you may not have that kind of a discernment as Moses but at least, you are not part of the crowd. And you know what *Numbers 27:17* says? One day, the hand of God comes over Joshua. You know why? Because he was set apart. He thought different. He thought completely different. When 12 spies went into Canaan, he brought a different report. He had a different mind-set. He was set apart. He was always following Moses wherever Moses went. He may not be where Moses was, physically; but he was close to where Moses was and even when Moses left, he did not leave the presence of God. You understand that? Sanctification is a very important process. That is how you increase in strength. The more you are sanctified. Why are so many people weak? Because they are not sanctified. Why can't we worship on Sunday morning? Because we have not been set apart the whole week. We find it very difficult. Why do we find it difficult to overcome sin in our lives? Because we are not set apart. We are not sanctified. We are not set apart. If you see all the people who have been used mightily of God, there was a time in their lives where they were completely hidden. It says in *Luke 1* about John, the Baptist; it says, "Until his time of being revealed to Israel, he was dwelling in the wilderness." What was he eating? Locusts and wild honey. Amazing. Set apart. Be set apart. Was he physically strong? No. That's the reason why he says, "What did you go into the wilderness to see? A man clothed in fine apparel? Those who are clothed in fine apparel, you find them in the palaces; not there in the wilderness. But what do you see? A man. More than a man, more than a prophet." Behold, right from the time of John the Baptist, the Kingdom of God is being conquered by violence. A spiritually violent man, set apart man. If you want to grow in strength this year, be set apart for God. I encourage all my young brothers and sisters, how much can I re-iterate this to you? If I were to go back and live your life, I wish I could do it so differently. Set apart. Those who are my age, my contemporaries, between 30-40 and 41, think about it; if you could go back in your lives and do so many things, would you not have done it? Absolutely. Be set apart for God. Be hidden in God.

Romans 12:1-2

¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world...

Be set apart. How do you get set apart?

...but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

That is being set apart. That is how you know the will of God and do the will of God.

Second will of God. Very interesting. We know this very well.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

In Christ, this is the will of God, that you give thanks to God for all circumstances. I'll tell you why I put the five-star ad. That is just to remind me of this. So, there was one five-star ad. I generally skip the YouTube Ads because I quickly want to go to the next thing. This was an interesting ad. There was a very old lady. She was sitting by a stool; or rather, a chair on the road and she is waiting for the bus. She is waiting and sitting there and even as she is sitting there, there is a young man who is having a five-star – munching, chewing and enjoying the five-star. And then, you know what happens? She accidentally kicks her walking stick and it falls unto the road. She says, "Beta (child), could you please help me and get my walking stick?" The young man says, "Yes, Dadi ma (grandmother), no problem. I'll get it," and he continues munching. And he doesn't even pay attention. "Beta, please. Can you help me with the walking stick?" He acts as if she's not even there and he continues. "Yes, Dadi ma. I'll help you," and he starts eating. She gets exasperated and wonders why he is not helping her and she gets up from the seat, she goes down the road and she picks up the walking stick. Even as she is picking up the walking stick, one piano from the top floor, falls unto the seat there and crashes the entire seat even as she is out. She looks at the piano, she looks at the young man, she says, "Thank you, beta, for helping me." I thought that was a very interesting thing. I'll tell you what happened. If the young man would have gone and taken the stick, where would she be? On the bench and what would have happened? The piano would have fallen and she would have died. And he says, "If you eat five-star, you would become so wise and you will know what is help and what is not." I thought that was very interesting but think about it – God did not help you. That's what you thought. And you thought God made life difficult for you. 2019 may

have been a situation like that. "Lord, please, can You help me?" And God, as if He was just eating His five-star in Heaven and He is looking at you and saying, "Ah, it's okay. I'll help you." "Nothing is happening, Lord." And then, you get up from your set and boom! Something falls there. And then, you look back and you say, "Thank God, You did not help me." Give thanks to God. You know why? Because *all things work together for the good of those who love God and who are the called according to the purpose*. So, give thanks, where? *For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus and you will grow in strength*. Do the will of God, grow in strength. Think about this; there was one Pastor. He had two daughters, like Abigail and Emmanuella. They were twins I believe. One daughter was smarter than other. They were writing tenth class exams. One passed with flying colours and the other flunked. The Pastor called the girl who got marks and gave her thousand rupees and said, "Take these thousand rupees and put that in Church as thank offering." He gave another girl two thousand rupee and said, "Put this as a thank offering in the Church." She said, "But daddy, I failed." "Give thanks to God in all things for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus." Can you do that? I don't know, 2019 may have so many failures. I don't know what might have happened. God didn't seem to come through for you, but did you give thanks. May be just give thanks now, "Lord, thank you for all the times when you seemed not to have helped me." Can you say that in your own heart? Understand this; thanks for all the plans which didn't come to pass. One pastor said, "after 20 years, I went back to my high school reunion and I thanked God for all the sweethearts that betrayed me." I said, "That was fantastic. I love that." "If I would have got married to those sweethearts, I don't know what would have happened to my life; 20 years of high school reunion."

Give thanks to Jesus for all that. Think about all those things God did not allow in your life. I think about my own life, honestly, you don't know how frustrating it is to see people whom you thought a little more foolish than you become more successful than you. You look at them and say, "that fellow, what is he?" Professor of University. "Lord, do you know what I used to do to that man in college? Team roll him with my marks" Thank God! If I were somewhere else, I would not have been here. I would have been completely out of God's plan. Boy! I thank God for all my apparent failures. Everybody says in the world that failures are steppingstones to success. Its speaking a lot of non-sense, it's only true in the kingdom of God because ultimately you will be successful because then you give and accept the will of God in your life. Amen! How well do you go in strength? Look at what it says,

The child grew (Who is this child? Jesus) and wacked strong filled in wisdom and the grace of God was upon Him.

That is how He was wacked strong. Where do you whack strong in? In spirit. Ask God to fill you with what? With the Spirit! Where is the Spirit? As long as you are where? In Christ Jesus. "*Baptise me, oh Lord with Your holy Spirit!*"

Ephesians 5:17-19

¹⁷Therefore do not be unwise but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be (what?) filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

Galatians 3:2-5

²This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

⁵Therefore He who (What?) supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

No! the answer is: by hearing of the faith. Therefore, faith comes from hearing and hearing from the word of God and even as you keep on hearing the word of God by faith, you know what God is going to do? He is going to fill you with Spirit, and you will whack strong. You will have strength in your inner man. I will tell you why many people are able to withstand the circumstances, you know why? Because they are not strong in the word. They have not heard from faith. They may be intellectually strong but deep down inside their heart, the word has really not become spirit. Amen! So be strong in the spirit this year so that God will work and continuously supply. There is another beautiful verse in *1 Peter 4*,

1 Peter 4

¹¹If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability (or strength) which (who supplies?) God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ,

Amen. So, how do you grow in strength? By enjoying the word of God and by doing the will of God, and by being filled with Holy Spirit and will be strong and ready for the battle. Second one,

“Have you given the horse strength? Have you clothed his neck with thunder?”

The second thing I am going to look at is ‘clothed’. What clothing is He talking about? The very first time the word cloth is mentioned in the Bible.

Genesis 3:21

²¹ Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin and clothed them.

You see ‘clothed’; what is this clothing? I will tell what this clothing is in a very detailed way but let us look at another verse, 41:42, let’s say 41:42, they are very adjacent to each other, they are neighbours. Are they neighbours really? What do you say? My dad will tell you why they are not neighbours but anyways.

Genesis 41:42

⁴² Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand; and he clothed him (with what?) in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain(what?) around his neck.

What did the God cloth horse with? Thunder; actually, the word is rendered as mane. Have you seen a mane? It looks like a thunder. What is this clothing, what is he talking about? I will tell you what it is. The Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand; and when did he cloth him? There are seasons when God moves you from one position to another. What does He do? He changes your clothes. From father’s house to pit, clothes changed. From Potiphar’s house into the prison, clothes change. From prison to the palace, clothes changed. What is God doing? I will tell you something. God is going to do something in our lives, He is going to clothe us with garments of fine linen. Who has the garments of fine linen? If you look through the Bible, it’s the priest who has the clothes of fine linen; and what is going to put? A gold chain which signifies authority around your neck. Why? Because He has tested you. I have chosen you in the waters of afflictions, in the furnace of affliction. In other words, have you ever seen Joseph trying to justify himself? “No Potiphar, how can you do this to me? Madam, how can you do this to me? How faithfully have I served you all these days? This is how you repay me with.” Did he ever try to vindicate himself? No. Clothes signify vindication. He never tried to vindicate himself. Whatever the clothing, he never tried to vindicate himself, he never tried to justify himself. He never pretended to be what he was not. He allowed God to vindicate him at the right time and God will do it. I will show you this verse. I think this is beautiful, think about neck and clothes. These are the two things you want to look at. This is another place.

Genesis 27:15-20

¹⁵ Then Rebekah took the choice clothes of her elder son (who?) Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. ¹⁶ And she put the skins of the kids of the goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck.

What are you clothed with? Esau. What are you calling yourself? Esau. Why? I want the blessing.

¹⁷ Then she gave the savoury food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob. (Then what happens?) ¹⁸ So he went to his father and said, “My father.” And he said, “Here I am. Who are you, my son?” ¹⁹ Jacob said to his father, “I am Esau your firstborn...”

Is it right to get the blessing of the firstborn through deceptive means? Trying to cloth yourself with your own righteousness in order to get the blessing from God. You know it’s not going to happen.

...I have done just as you told me; please arise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me.” (And then what happens?) ²⁰ But Isaac said to his son, “How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?” And he said, “Because the LORD your God brought it to me.”

That is exactly what many people say. How are you able to solve the problem so quickly? “I didn’t look at the solution mam, God gave me intelligence.” I have seen that most of the time when people want to go abroad. You know what they do for visa document? One of the most important documents is the bank balance. The CA will give you one crore. What is your evaluation? One crore. Bank balance is 35 lakhs. The consultant will put 35 lakhs in your account for a day. Why? Everything is done for a visa. Then you will ask God, “Please give me visa.” “Is it your money?” Then you will say, “Yes, it is.” “Is this your property?” “Yes, it is my property.” “Very good” Then you have the stamp and you can go whichever country you

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want. Then you come to Church, “Lord gave me victory, thank you Lord.” All things through deception. How come you have visa so quickly? This way. Because God’s process is a tough one. You have to work hard and get a scholarship. You have to do a lot of other things to get genuine documents but what you do? You get your own justification. Like Esau you are not Esau, but you want to get the blessings of the first born. Let me tell you. If God has ordained a blessing in your life, not even you can stop it but don’t try to get God’s blessing through deceptive means. What is in your neck today? The hair of Esau? Can you imagine a guy who is willing to cloth himself with somebody else’s identity whom God says that He hates, just to get the blessing of the Lord? Think about that; what have you clothed yourself with? Look at this narrative.

²² So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, “The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.” ²³ And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau’s hands; so he blessed him. ²⁴ Then he said, “Are you really my son Esau?” He said, “I am.”

After that, you know what happened to Jacob, unless he really confessed his sin and clung to God. “Lord, bless me. Bless me” and God said, “What is your name? Jacob.” “This is what I am. I am not willing to justify myself. I want You to justify me. I want you to cloth me. Only when You cloth me, I have strength and power.”

Isaiah 54:17 (we love this verse very well,)

No weapon that is you fashioned against you shall succeed, and you shall refute every tongue that rises against you in judgement. (Why?) This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord and their vindication is from me, declares the Lord.

Let God vindicate you. Let God cloth you; don’t try to cloth yourself. In other words, confess who you are. Don’t lie. That is the reason why scriptures say in Colossians and Ephesians, don’t lie to one another or even to God. First thing: don’t lie to God. Of course, you can’t; everybody knows, you can’t lie to God.

Luke 18

The tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’. I tell you; this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

You see that. What are you going to cloth yourself with this year? Look at what it says in *Ephesians 4*.

Ephesians 4

That you put off concerning your former conduct, (You wanted to be like Esau, put off Esau.) the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in (what?) true righteousness and holiness.

Did you see that? True righteousness, true vindication. For this lot of humbling has to take place. You have to be really humble before God. That is why *1Peter 5* will say,

1 Peter 5

Likewise, you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another and be (what?) clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

If you want strength to overcome and want to become a battle horse, you have to have God by your side. You know what the word resist means? God has got an entire army against you. That is what it means. Entire heavenly hosts are against you that is what resisting you means. If God is against you, doesn’t matter how many people are by your side. The army of heaven is against you.

Be clothed with humility for God resist the proud and gives grace to the humble. Therefore, it says, ‘be humble before the mighty hand of God’ That he may exalt you in due time.

That is exactly what happened to Joseph. Never tried to cloth himself. He allowed God through circumstances in his life, he humbled himself. Never tried to justify himself even once. I told you last time. Everybody tries to explain themselves. Why?

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Because they are worried that they will be misunderstood. Every time you have to explain yourself. God says, “Don’t have to. If I have a plan in your life. You don’t have to explain anybody” Are you going through situations; have they reviled you? Let them revile you for being a righteous man, if they have called you all kinds of things know what they have done to My Son. Therefore, be clothed with humility. So, can we be clothed this year with humility. Final verse for that, Colossians 3, can’t end without this.

Colossians 3:12-14

¹²Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, long suffering.

How do you learn long suffering? As Derek Prince said, “By suffering long” There is no other way.

¹³Bearing with one another, forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against his another, even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. ¹⁴But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

Put on love, it covers a multitude of sins. Love clothes. That is exactly what God did to us. He clothed us with His love and covered all our sins. He paid for them all. Amen! So, if God has covered all our sins, what do you do? Overlook other’s sins. It’s difficult but ask God. That is how you grow in strength. That is how you become a war horse for God. The next one,

Can you frighten him like a locust? His majestic snorting strikes terror.

One of the things that I love to watch is lord of the rings and hobbit, just for the sound of the horse. Have you seen the horse snorting? Have you seen dogs on the street? You know how they show off their strength? That is what it means. Even as the horse is doing that, its snorting. What is it doing? Its breathing out. The snort essentially means a breathing out showing indignation and anger. What kind of snorting? Majestic snorting. What does it do? It strikes terror in the enemy’s camp. The moment you are clothed with the strength of God, the moment you are clothed with the thunder of God, the moment you are in God and absolutely clothed with his strength. You know what happens? Your snorting becomes majestic and brings terror into the camp of the enemies. We sing that song; I went to the enemy’s camp and took back what he stole from me. What will happen? The enemy has to release. What is this majestic snorting which strikes terror in the heart of the enemy?

Mark 1:21-23

Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He (Jesus) entered the synagogue and (did what?) taught. ²²And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes. ²³Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out

See what is happening. Jesus is snorting, in other words He is teaching. You see, most of the times, preachers of the Word of God are angry at people and not angry with powers of darkness, that is operating against the people. Most of the people are angry at people, they are not angry with the powers of darkness. How many times you know, Pastor James keeps telling us this know: “How many times were you angry with the devil?” You are scared of the devil, angry with the people. You see, you try to argue with people but we never, ever contend with the enemy. It says, *Resist the devil and he will flee.*

What is this majestic snorting? It says, His teaching had authority, it says,

Mark 1:23-28

²³ Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. (What did he cry out?) And he cried out, ²⁴saying, “Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? (Terror!) I know who You are (Like it says, Jesus I know, Paul I know) —the Holy One of God!” ²⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet, and come out of him!” ²⁶ And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him. (What happened?) ²⁷ Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? What new doctrine (Or new teaching) is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.”

There is a terror in the hearts of the enemy, why? Because, He got teaching with authority. God is willing to give you the same teaching with authority. You know what is going to happen to you? God is going to use you, just not to save yourself

but use you to save others. That is the authority God is going to give us and we need that. That's exactly what it says in, *Mark 16:15*, onwards.

Mark 16:15-18

¹⁵ And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

I like that word: "Every Creature," I don't know why? Every creature means? Everybody, whoever accepts.

¹⁶ He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷ And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;

You know the first thing: You will cast out demons, you know why? Because, you've been equipped with authority and majestic snorting.

"....: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

That exactly what happened to Paul know, he went into that Island called 'Malta.' You know the first time, I heard the word: 'Malta,' was when my uncle got me a t-shirt written: 'Malta,' remember? A fluorescent colour t-shirt- 'Malta.' Then I read the Scriptures when Paul goes to this place called: 'Malta,' you remember right? It's cold there and he takes the viper, I mean, he is trying to help them and a viper comes there attaches itself to the hand. They all think he is a sinner, what kind of a crime he must have committed. Takes the viper, puts it in fire, everybody is amazed. *It will by no means hurt you*, what is that? You know what? God is going to give us? Authority to disarm the enemy, that is what God is going to give us. *"I come to you, you come to me with a sword and a spear but I come to you in the name of the Lord of Hosts, whose name you have defiled,"* David says that.

Majestic snorting. It is in *Acts 8*,

Acts 8:1-6

¹At that time a great persecution arose against the Church (Enemy is thinking, that he's gonna strike terror in the hearts of the Church) which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

And then, those who were scattered, went everywhere preaching the Word. And, look at what it says, then verse 5,

⁵ Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them.

That is snorting, majestic snorting. They preached what? "Christ!" *Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ.* And, then what happened?

⁶ And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. ⁷ For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. ⁸ And there was great joy in that city.

You see? This is majestic snorting where you have power over the enemy. I'm telling you honestly, you should believe this. I tell you something, this is a problem with 21st century Church. We don't believe in signs and wonders and miracles anymore, in many Churches they don't preach this at all. I told you this example know- It's as if 21st century, God has become less powerful. "Ek zamane me humara bhagwan bhaut powerful rehta tha abi thoda kam hogaya tha technology ane se kam hogaya! (One time ago, our God was very powerful but now because technology has come, He has become less powerful) What is that? In fact, He has more power today. I mean not that He has more power, He displays more power because sin has increased more and there is more demonic activity all around. Think of only Hyderabad for example, in my days Ganapati festival was small. How it has increased? By leaps and bounds, every street has one Murthy and it's just all new things, Maha Kali also they are going to do it. Everything has increased, the demonic activity has only increased and

what are we doing as a Church? Are we really, really equipped to face this? Do we have the authority? The teaching with authority? Which is able to overcome? Are we really, really equipped with Word of God? Where people are really, really searching for God. You know there are people who are really, really searching for God and they have opened ears? Contrary to what we see in them. Recently we had one meeting in Patricia's aunty home we had all, most of them from Hindu background. All of them from Hindu background, all unbelievers. And, they have open ears; I was so surprised by the way they were listening and respecting what was being spoken. It's really interesting, there are people who are really, genuinely are searching for truth.

And, after the meeting was over, this Punjabi lady came and said, "I didn't understand a lot of what you said because you were speaking partly in Telugu and English but please can you come to my home and minister to me too? I thought this was so fantastic! You see people are willing to listen, but what we have to be? We have to be? We have to be with teaching, with authority we should not be scared. But we should be ready to give an answer, equipped with the Word of God. That is what is majestic snorting is. That means what? we have the power. Why do we have the power? Not because of anything because we have the teaching and we have been surrendering ourselves to that teaching every-day of our lives.

And then, what happened? I mean, I wrote this down from one of the very, I mean very old Puritans books called: "The Christian in complete Armour," by William Gurnall. This is what he had to say,

"The devil had as good have let Paul alone, for he no sooner comes into prison but he falls a preaching, at which gates of Satan's prison fly open, and poor sinners come forth. Happy for Onesimus that Paul was sent to jail;

(Look at what he says)

God had an errand for Paul to do to him and others, which the devil never dreamed of. Nay he doth not only preach in prison, but that he may do the devil all the mischief he can, he sends his epistles to the Churches that tasting his spirits in his afflictions and reading his faith, now ready to be offered up, they might much more be confirmed;

Look at what it says, goes on to say. And, I mean, before I go there. *Philippians 1:12-13,*

Philippians 1:12-14

¹² But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, ¹³ so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are (Where) in Christ;

And then look at what it says, powerful words.

¹⁴ and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

You see this is what is happening. I like that stanza in "Mighty fortress is our God," you know? It says,

*"And, though this world with devils field,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear for God has filled his truth, to triumph through us,
The prince of darkness grim,
We tremble not for Him,
His rage we can endure, for little doom can endure,
For one little Word can fill in,
A mighty fortress is our God!"*

One little Word can fill in. All you have to do is be equipped and believe that Word. So, this morning, I want to ask you, how much of Word; this is only you know- we have authority as much as we have surrender to authority. We cannot have more authority than the authority to which we surrender ourselves to. That is the reason why, the centurion looks at Jesus and he

says, you know what? “I know you are also a man under authority because I’m also a man under authority and you see, speak the Word and my servant will be healed.” Our teaching, our words will have majestic snorting as long as you are under the authority of Scriptures. That is the reason why, *Romans 6:7*, it says,

Romans 6:7

¹⁷ But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance.

You were set free, by the enemy to deliver. People out of bondage, majestic snorting my dear brothers and sisters, that is number three. First, we looked at – strength.

Second, we looked at – Clothing.

Third we looked at – Teaching.

Next one,

*“He paws in the valley and rejoices in his strength,
He gallops into the clash of arms!”*

What is pawing in the valley? The word ‘Paw,’ the Hebrew word: “Paw means to dig.” Where is he digging? In the valley, let us read where else Scripture talks about digging. *Genesis 27*, Sameer you are one of our bright students, no kidding okay? *Genesis 27*,

Genesis 26:12-14

¹² Isaac planted crops in that land and the same year (In the year of famine) reaped a hundredfold,...”

So, this is the will of God okay? Hundred-fold, not 60 fold, 30 fold it is 100 fold. Mathematics how much you should get? 100, okay? For, God also it is 100 only, Anna naku 90 uchundi (Brother, I got 90!) na, na, hundred-fold, okay?

Genesis 26:12-20

¹² Isaac planted crops in that land and the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the LORD blessed him. (How did he bless him?) ***¹³ The man became rich,*** (That’s exactly the word is actually, he became rich until he became very rich) ***and his wealth continued to grow until he became very wealthy.***

Look at this, this is what the word is? Rich, rich, until he became very rich. The man became rich and rich and rich, until he became very rich during the time of famine. Kya baat hai! (So, nice it is!) This is the Spiritual reality for all God’s people. And, then

¹⁴ He had so many flocks and herds and servants that the Philistines envied him.

Be ready for that? Whenever you’re becoming successful, there are Philistines in the Church and outside the Church. Why am I saying Philistine in the Church and outside of Church? Know, the sons of God appeared in the book of *Job* in the presence of God. Who also came? Satan also came, if Satan is coming there what’s the whole problem coming here? Artamaitunda (Understanding?) so there are Philistines are in the Church and outside the Church. So, all the Philistines started envying, now don’t say who is this Philistine in my life? You could be that, as long as you don’t deal envy in your heart and all of us are prone to envy. Okay? So, he had positions of flocks and herds, many servants and Philistine envied him. And, then what happened?

¹⁵ So all the wells that his father’s servants had dug in the time of his father Abraham, the Philistines stopped up, filling them with earth. ¹⁶ Then Abimelek said to Isaac, “Move away from us; you have become too powerful for us.”

Is he going to fight? “No, no this is my land, anta kachtabde nanu (with so much pain!)” No, no he said: “Okay, fine.” You want to go, go. That is the beauty of Isaac, he will never contends. If God decided to bless you, no power on earth, no scheme of man will stop the purposes of God in your life, finished except you. That is the reason why? Pastor was saying

us, "God save us from self!" "Save me Lord from myself, so that You can bless me." That should be our prayer – "Save me from self so that You can bless me." So, what happened?

¹⁷ So Isaac moved away from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar, where he settled. ¹⁸ Isaac reopened the wells that had been dug in the time of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died, and he gave them the same names his father had given them.

Okay? He started giving them names and then goes on.

¹⁹ Isaac's servants dug (where?) in the valley and discovered a well of fresh water there.

You know what happens? That is when the trouble starts.

²⁰ But the herders of Gerar quarreled with those of Isaac and said, "The water is ours!" So he named the well Esek, because they disputed with him.

The word Esek means 'Contention.' So, he started digging. When you start digging into the Word of God and you go deeper and deeper into the Word of God and you start experiencing the fresh water in your life, you know what happens? Trouble comes. You know I like what Derek Prince said, "The first sign that you are filled with Holy Spirit is, what? Trouble." "How do I know, Lord, that I have been filled with the Spirit?" Trouble will increase. "Oh, I got the gift of tongues." You got the gift of tongues, is it? Wait for a while now. It will start. Trouble will start. What happens? Trouble started. And is Isaac going to stop digging? Contention will be there. There will be opposition in your life. Will you stop digging wells of the Word of God because you see opposition? Will you say, "It's okay. It's enough"? You know what happens next? They quarreled with him and he said, "Take it and go."

Genesis 26:20-25

²⁰ the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water is ours." So he called the name of the well Esek, because they contended with him. ²¹ Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that also, so he called its name Sitnah.

I'll tell you what this 'quarrelling' is. Whenever I think about this, it's like this, "You are preaching my Word. That is my revelation." Whose revelation is this? There is no new revelation. Already, all revelation has been given. Plagiarism is a big thing in Christendom now. There is no copyright in the Word of God. Think about it, "That is mine. My revelation that you are preaching. I know from where you got that message." Somebody came and asked Pastor, "How do you study? From where do you study?" Pastor said a very interesting statement; he said, "I milk many cows. I make my own milk." I like that. That's exactly what I do too – I milk many cows but this one, from *Job 39*, it will be vain for me to say but I think, for the first time; in all my searching, to the best of my knowledge, that's exactly what we write in research papers also – "To the best of my knowledge, this work has not been done before." At least, to the level of what I'm teaching you today.

²¹ Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that also, so he called its name Sitnah.

The word 'Sitnah' is from where we get the word 'Satan'. What does it mean? Accusation. The more you start digging the Word of God, the more accusations will come. One of the signs that God is giving revelation to you and more and more revelation, you know what will happen? Increasing revelations. You know why? To discredit God's Word in your life. The only way they can discredit Jesus' message is by discrediting the messenger. Slander will increase. If they have called the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords as 'Beelzebub', how much more will they call you? Thief. They will call you all kinds of names – 'friend of tax-collectors and sinners, prostitutes, wine-bibber and a glutton'. Can you imagine the kind of names? Think about it. Jesus says, "What did you call Me?" "Wine-bibber." "You called Me a 'glutton'." Think about the kind of names – "We know who our father is but we don't know who Your father is. Didn't we tell You that You have a devil and You are a Samaritan." And if He literally had to flex His muscles... and this was all because of His teaching. And then, the Pharisees said, "Why did you not capture Him?" "No one spoke like that Man." Finished. Fresh water kept on coming. It doesn't matter how much of opposition came to His Name, how much of accusation the devil could throw at Him, He never stopped digging in His life. He continued to dig. I'm telling you, my dear brothers and sisters – continue to start digging the

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Word of God. Let there be a rich freshness of the Word of God in your life, in spite of all the opposition that you might face. There will be contention and there will be accusation. That is not going to stop. If they called Jesus a wine-bibber and a glutton, how much more will they call you and me? A servant is not better than his master. In Christendom, it is the only place where the sishya cannot be greater than the guru. Guru minchina sishyudu evaru kaaledu (there cannot be a disciple who excelled his master). If you can come to the level of the guru, that is enough. How many of you can come to the level of that guru in this lifetime? We don't know. So, if you are getting more accusations, you are close. If you are getting more opposition in your life, you are close. That is the reason why I said – God has to make us from palasa to ilasa; and there has to be opposition for our value to increase.

And then, what did he say? “No, the accusations that you are bringing to me, is wrong. Let us go to the court.” No, “Okay, fine.” He moved.

²²And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, saying, “For now the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.”

Phew! The opposition has stopped. So, what should we do? Stop digging? No. See, whenever opposition stops in your life, if you get success... which is more difficult to handle? Success. Many young people, they could not handle success. One of the guys was a stalwart in the Tennis community. I'm not sure if you know his name – Boris Becker. He won his Grand Slam at the age of 16, Wimbledon. Unprecedented in the history of Tennis. Afterwards, he went into depression because he couldn't handle success. The most dangerous position to be in Christendom. That's what I keep telling you – the safest position is in the position of war and not relaxation. When you are in war, then you are safe. Anyways,

...So he called its name Rehoboth, saying, “For now the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.”

Then, what did he do?

²³From there he went up to Beersheba.

A land of seven wells. He dug seven more wells. Beersheba. And then, did he stop there? No, he didn't stop there.

²⁴And the Lord appeared to him the same night and said, “I am the God of Abraham your father. Fear not, for I am with you and will bless you and multiply your offspring for my servant Abraham's sake.” ²⁵So he built an altar there and called upon the name of the Lord and pitched his tent there. And there Isaac's servants dug a well.

Ah! Never stop digging, my dear brothers and sisters. Keep digging and digging. If you've finished in English, start in Nigerian English. Finish the Bible. Telugu, Hindi, Malayalam. Start digging and start reading. Start studying. Start digging for your own self; not for others. For your own self. Don't stop digging. Be like the horse which paws in the valley. Why?

Proverbs 10:11

¹¹The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life...

Out of your belly shall flow rivers of living water. So, speak forth rivers of living water. And it's only when you go deeper into the Lord, you will get a big catch. Remember in *Luke 5*? Jesus is preaching at the shore using Peter's boat. And after that, He said, “Let Us go a little deep.” From shallow to deep. What will we get? We will get a catch. Do you want to be really successful in your evangelism? Go deeper with the Lord. Understand the Lord deeper and then, you will understand the human heart deeper. You will know the heart of God. You will know exactly the kind of word to preach to the person who is going through the situations. That is the reason why He says, “Morning by morning, He awakens Me to hear.” That means, what was God doing? What was Jesus doing? He was digging and digging. He heard the Word of God. He studied the Word of God. And then, He knew exactly what Word to preach at the time to those who are weary and you will know exactly what Word to give because you have dug deeper and deeper.

Proverbs 18:4

⁴The words of a man's mouth are deep waters; the fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook.

So, dig deeper.

So, four things we looked at.

First – strength.

Second – clothing.

Third – majestic snorting

Fourth – pawing the valley, dig deeper.

Then, let's go the next. That is, pawing the valley. Next one – he mocks at fear and is not frightened; nor does he turn back. In other words, don't give up. No drawing back. This is not for those people who will retreat. If a horse goes forward, it will keep going forward. No stopping it. No turning back. The Cross before me; the world behind me. No turning back. Goodbye, world. I stay no longer with you. Why is this important, my dear brothers and sisters?

Hebrews 10:36-39

³⁶ For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. ³⁷ For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; ³⁸ but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him."

Think about it. Did you draw back in 2019? Did you give up in certain areas in your life? You made some agreement with your sin. It's like you allowed a serpent to stay there. "Stay there. I will not do anything to you. You will not do anything to me." Can you do that? That is what many actors do – they will have pythons in their home. Python is a pet. One day, that fellow will swallow you. Can you say, "Serpent, you stay there. You came into my house. You stay there in the corner. Don't come near me. I will not do anything to you. You will not do anything to me."? You switch off the light, we don't know where it is. Gone. There is only one thing – kill the serpent. Move on. Don't draw back. There is no drawing back here. No mutual agreement. No peace with the devil. There is only war. Till we go to the other side of eternity, there is only war. And if you draw back, you know what Jesus says?

...my soul has no pleasure in him."

And He goes on to say,

³⁹ But we are not of those who draw back to^lperdition...

"Once saved, always saved, brother." I don't know. When I read the Scripture, I don't know how to interpret this. This is very clear for me. You can draw back to perdition. Tom Hanks – Road to Perdition.

...but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

³⁹ But we are not of those who draw back to^lperdition...

God says, "I don't have pleasure in you." Think about things in your life which cause you to draw back. Relationships which cause you to draw back?

Luke 9:61-62

⁶¹ And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house." ⁶² But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

You failed in the fitness test. You are gone. This is what spiritual fitness test is. That is the reason why I like the book 'Pilgrim's Progress'. Pilgrim is going from the City of Destruction and his children are calling him, "Daddy, come back home!" He just closes his ears and he runs out of the City of Perdition and he says, "Destruction is coming! Destruction is coming!" Run! Don't draw back. In other words, any other relationship which will hinder you from progressing in your walk with the Lord, consider it as dead. That is the reason why He says, "Let the dead bury the dead but you come and follow Me." No

drawing back, my dear brothers and sisters. What is causing you to draw back? Offense. Something has offended you? Think about it; you started on fire in 2019 and something happened. You got offended and slowly, you become cold. Your meetings got reduced. Your prayer meetings got reduced. You don't come on time for worship. You know why? "This is what I expected but I got offended." And slowly, you are drawing back. The same zeal is not there. No fervor. What has caused you to draw back this year? You think the disciples didn't have this struggle?

John 6:60

⁶⁰ Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?"

It's not that they did not understand but they did not like what they understood. "I didn't understand. No, uncle. I did not understand." That's what people say. It's not that they did not understand but they did not like what they did understand; because they did not want to pay the price.

John 6:61

⁶¹ When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you?"

And then, you know what happens?

John 6:66-68

⁶⁶ From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.⁶⁷ Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" ⁶⁸ But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

Peter said, "it doesn't matter how much what You say offends me, I am not drawing back. Let it offend me. I will get offended for few days but after that sense will prevail when the emotions cool down and you start reasoning! "How dare he says this to me?" Then you cool down and start reasoning out. Everybody has lot of aavesham (anger, rage). Let us just cool down. "How can he say that?" Cool down. Take it easy. We have said much worse things to lot of people. Cool down. Recently in our own home, my wife and maid were having a discussion, which turned into a real major clash over salary. Maid was saying, "I am doing this, mam! I am doing that!" Both were getting agitated. Then after a while both cooled down. Then she came and said- "Don't take it to heart." Cool down. Take it easy. Don't have so much 'aavesham'. We all have 'aavesham'. There is only one 'aavesham' that is 'Daivaavesham' (God's aavesham) that is good 'aavesham'. But Simon Peter said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? It does not matter Lord, how much You offend me, I am not going to leave You. You call me 'satan'." Two times Jesus said- "Get thee behind Me, satan! When he was tempted, Jesus said, "Get thee behind Me, satan!" and when Peter tempted Him in different way, He said, "Get thee behind Me, satan!" Did he get offended? No! There was only one man who got offended, that was Judas. Finished! You know what happened. He went back to perdition. Do you know why? It's because he got offended and he drew back. The more you are confronted, the more you get offended. We all get offended because flesh will get offended. When you go back to your home, chill and relax. Then reason will return. You will feel hurt; you will feel bad; then start progressing slowly. Do you know what? Then the words that I have spoken to you will start making sense. You are all looking at me intently because you all have got so much 'aavesham'. Don't draw back. You draw back because you get offended.

Another way you draw back is when you get success or you get failure. Either way, you can draw back. "I have tried so much, it is waste! I did not get it, uncle, how many times I tried." Keep trying! There is a chess player called 'Mikhail Tal'. There is a chess tournament called 'Tal memorial'. The guy who attacks in such incredible ways, a brilliant guy, do you know how he actually learnt chess? He was actually so bad at chess; extremely bad but he loved the game. He lost and lost and lost. One day finally he won and after that he never lost. That is the reason why we have 'Tal memorial'. Of course, he is Jewish, for whatever reasons. The other guy is Bobby Fischer. They asked him a question- "they say that you are the best chess player in the world." Do you know what Bobby Fischer said? "I play chess; therefore, I happened to be a best chess player. If I would done anything else, I would been best at that." My jaw dropped at that arrogance. What arrogance! Become Mikhail Tal and not Bobby Fischer.

No drawing back. Success or failure is not going to hinder you from trying. Rafael Nadal! How can we miss him in preaching? That is exactly what happens in *Philippians 3*.

Philippians 3:12

¹² Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

Press on like a horse that is snorting! Do you know what Jesus is saying? “You have this reward here, Paul. I want you get that so I am holding you for that.”

“You want me to get that reward, Lord? Take my other arm also.” Partnership!

Philippians 3:13

¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,

What are ‘those things’? Success and failure both! That is exactly what happens once you finish engineering, “what next?”

“Masters”

“What next?”

“PhD”

“What next?”

That is exactly what my librarian said after I finished my PhD, “Sir, now you are taking a flight and going to America?”

“No! I am here. I have become a pastor.”

He looked at me as if somebody died.

¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,

Reaching forward like a horse! There is something ahead in 2020 for us. Sound of rain, my dear brothers and sisters!

Philippians 3:14

¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

That is exactly it says in *Revelation 4*- “John, come up! Press on! Don’t be satisfied with the revelation I gave you in chapter 3.”

“O Lord, nice letters that I wrote to the Churches, the rebuking letters!”

“Something else is there. Come up.”

Then He shows him the throne in *chapter 4* and 5. What an amazing vision that is! So let us press on. No drawing back!

We looked at 5. Next-

Job 39:23

²³ The quiver rattles against him The glittering spear and javelin

What is that? The sound of weapons! He is weaponized; he is armed. He is licensed to kill. What are the weapons we have?

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

Imaginations! How many of us imagine? “I wish!” Imaginations! I was sharing the other day; there is a very interesting conversation in Bhagavad Gita (I am not endorsing Bhagavad Gita) between Krishna and Arjuna. Arjuna does not want to go to war like all of us; he does not want to be a horse. Krishna is persuading him to go to war. Arjuna says in the final chapter 16:16, “give me the answer to this question and I will go to war.” It is a very interesting ‘shloka’ (verse)-

“aneka-chitta-vibhrāntā;
moha-jāla-samāvṛitāḥ prasaktāḥ kāma-bhogeṣhu patanti narake ‘śhuchau.”

I will explain you this. So many imaginations are leading me astray. I am surrounded by a web of deception and delusions. My mind is full of imaginations. I have so many addictions of lust of the flesh in my mind. They are dragging me to hell, full of murky water. It is like a quicksand trying to drag me deep down. How can I come out of it? How can you call war ‘good karma’ if I myself am so impure? I was thinking about it. What a verse? Of course, then Krishna gives an answer- do ‘tapashya’ (Penance)! I remember when Sadhu Sunder Singh was going in North India in Rishikesh, one ‘sanyasi’ was hanging upside down the tree, doing ‘tapashya’. Sadhu Sunder Singh goes and asks him, “What are you doing upside down?”

“I want to kill all desire.” Sadhu Sunder Singh looked at him and said, “Is not the desire to kill all desire itself a desire?” He got enlightened. How do we cast down imagination? By the Word of God! There are specific tools the Word of God gives us to cast down every imagination, every delusion. Casting down every delusion with the truth! That’s what it says.

⁵casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, ⁶and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

Like a horse, ready for battle! That is the reason why it says, *my dear brothers and sisters, live as pilgrims and sojourners in the world.* Why? There are fleshly lusts which are warring against your soul. That is the reason why it says in *1 Peter 4:1, arm yourself with this methodology of thinking because those who have died to sin have been made alive to righteousness.* Arm yourself with this thinking. Change your thinking patterns. Weaponize your minds, my dear brothers and sisters. Get arguments which will cause you to counter arguments, which will cause you to sin. Counter arguments in your minds. Casting down imaginations!

Finally, this is the seventh one.

Job 39:24-25

²⁴He devours the distance with fierceness and rage...

Christ is there and I am here; the distance between Christ and me has to become smaller and smaller.

...Nor does he come to a halt because the trumpet has sounded. ²⁵At the blast of the trumpet he says, ‘Aha!’ He smells the battle from afar, The thunder of captains and shouting.

What is that? Be zealous! That is the point. If there is no zeal, we can do nothing. Every topper has an attitude. You can’t stop him from being a topper. That fellow is marching toward different direction altogether. I see some of our own children, who want to be doctors and engineers and IITians and I look at your walk. Doctors and Engineers with this attitude! There is a different attitude for a winner; different mindset. One of the things they asked Rafael Nadal, “What is the secret for your success?” “An unconditional love for the sport, whether I win or I lose!” If that guy, for a perishable crown have that attitude, how much more you and I for eternal crown? Os Guinness wrote a book called ‘In Two Minds’ in 1976, much before many of us were born. Look at what he says. ‘A sure mark of Christian vision is a Godly impatience and a holy restlessness.’ *I have to preach the Gospel. Woe is me if I don’t preach the Gospel!* That is our mission statement in *1 Corinthians 9:18.* “What is the salary you are getting Apostle Paul?” “My salary is to preach the Word of God.” That is what he says. I was thinking about it.

Edward Williams is a famous Telugu preacher. In one of his interviews, he gives this interesting experience that he had when he was called for an interview for CBN to become an anchor for CBN. Several candidates were called and after several rounds, 2 candidates were left, him and another guy. I think it was Pat Robertson’s son, who was doing the final interview. He was asked this question. “What are you expecting from us?” (We may say), “It is a privilege for me to work in your company! Your esteemed company, the kind of products they make, I want to be a part of it.” So many lies that we say in interviews. He asked him this question, “What are you expecting from the company?” The answer that he gave just blew my mind away. He said, “What do you mean by that? The platform that you are giving me to preach the Gospel to the millions itself is my salary. That is what I am expecting. What else do you want me to expect from you?” That guy was

War Horse For God!

shocked at the answer. That was ringing in my mind. Think about it. I just put myself there. The opportunity to share from this pulpit is my salary. Can I say that? That is zeal! That is a true mark of Christian vision, my dear brothers and sisters.

When they come to our school, for teacher's interview, "what is the salary that you want to give us?" The moment somebody says 'salary', my BP raises. Salary? O Lord, have mercy! In Christian organisations, you don't ask for salary. If you want salary, go to Amazon. They will not give you salary. They will take the life out of you and they will give you what they call a 'salary' and you will say, "Life for this!" or any other company for that matter. The opportunity to be a minister of the Word of God itself is my salary. That is zeal, my dear brothers and sisters!

Romans 12:11

¹¹ not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;

Let your fervency not drop even an iota. If you are not working for God and you don't get a raise, your fervency will drop. If you are working for God, it does not matter what you get; you have same zeal- win or loose, unconditional love for God!

Titus 2:13-14

¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

Revelation 3:19

¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

Go back home and read 1 Corinthians 9:18 and you will go crazy. *Woe is me if I don't preach the Gospel! Necessity is laid upon me.* That is zeal! The word of caution here- the horse is straining to go but it has to be under control, it has to be under harness. Why? You can have zeal in a different way, too.

Romans 10:1-2

¹ Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. ² For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for...

A zeal for not Krishna. A zeal for, who? Yahweh. They have a zeal for,

...God, but not according to knowledge.

That's exactly what happened to Apostle Paul. Full zeal in a wrong way. Think about it. One man of God made a very interesting observation about Apostle Paul. He says he had the backing of the state; he had the license to kill because he was the one who was holding the garments of those who were stoning Stephen. He had the backing of the so-called religious establishment. He had the backing of everybody and he was opposing the Church and you know what God calls that? Kicking against the goads. That's why He calls it. And you know what the man of God said? "It doesn't matter how many people tried to oppose Christianity; they may be having the backing of the state; they may have the license to put us in prison; you know what it is equal to? Kicking against goads." They can change laws; they can do anything but they will not be able to stop Christianity. That is besides the point. Let's move on.

These people are zealous for God but not with knowledge for,

Romans 12:3

³ For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness...

Do you know when our zeal gets misdirected? It's when we try to establish our own righteousness. That is when we go out of hand. Emotions, for example, anger is an emotion. We don't have the complete picture and we get angry and we start shooting our mouth. "This person should not have done that!" That's why, don't be hasty. Trying to establish your own righteousness. No. Take it easy.

James 1:19-20

¹⁹ So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear...

That's what we've been learning over the past several days in our Church.

...slow to speak, slow to wrath; ²⁰ for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Let your zeal be under control. Let your love be without emotions, in other words. In the sense, you can have emotions but sometimes, love doesn't have to have emotions. Let your anger be without sin. Be angry but do not sin. Let your giving be with knowledge. You just start giving, left, right and centre. Zeal under control. That is the reason why a very important aspect for being zealous is to have mentorship. I keep coming back to this. It's like there's only one lesson I teach and I know. I have a cow and his name is now. And it eats grass and any other essay you ask me, I will only talk about the cow. One thing which I keep on talking about is – mentorship. A man who holds the reigns. "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen." Who is Elisha calling? He is calling Elijah. "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen." Who is the 'horsemen'? Elijah is the horsemen. Who is the horse? Elisha is the horse. Understood? Who has the control? Elijah has the control.

James 3:2-3

² Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way. ³ We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth.

So, let God have the 'bit' in His hand or come under mentorship who can guide you. You know how sensitive a horse it? You just have to tweak like this to the right and it will turn right; tweak to the left and it will turn left. Sensitive to that discipline and mentorship. That's exactly the reason why it says in Isaiah, "You will hear a voice telling you 'turn this way; turn that way'," because you've learnt to come under spiritual mentorship and your zeal is under control now. You are not trying to establish your own righteousness; you are trying to establish God's righteousness in your life and also in the lives of others.

So, this morning, even as I close, let's come back to the first verse that I looked at today.

Zechariah 10:3

³ "My anger is kindled against the shepherds, And I will punish the goatherds. For the Lord of hosts will visit His flock, The house of Judah, And will make them as His royal horse in the battle.

And for that, what is He sending? The rain. So, are we ready to become horses for God? One horse. We are all one horse. We are not horses; we are one horse for God.

So, this morning, we are finishing the year. So, Pastor James, please come and bless us.

Pastor James:

We are ending the year. It's an awesome Word from the Lord. Don't lose your zeal or should I ask you – did you have zeal in the first place? When you are zealous, there will be a lot of distractions from the world, from the people. Sometimes, from family and like David, turn away. Because, what does he say? "Is there not a cause?" That cause drove David all the days of his life. You read the account of Jesus when He is revealed in the public, it begins with zeal for His Father's house. Scripture says, "Zeal for His Father's house has consumed Him." And if you look at the end of His ministry, the same zeal in the house of God. It was zeal that consumed Him from the beginning till the end. We both are Pastors but when I go to Pastors, I say, "One of the miserable sights in life is to see Pastors without zeal." I call them 'hirelings'. No zeal. Just a job. You should quit and get a job. And you, as Christians, as believers, God's children, don't be a sight. I know how zealous you are for sports. I know how zealous you are for movies and how zealous you are to talk. That's not where your zeal should be shown. How zealous are you for the things of God? Zeal. 2020. 3 days. Today is the 29th. 29, 30, 31. Three days. God can do everything in three days. Change it all around. It's not that you don't have zeal. There's nobody here who doesn't have zeal. You will say, "I have no zeal at all. All I want to do is sleep." You are zealous for sleep. Everybody has. Can we channel it to the things of God in 2020 and fulfil Scripture? *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things...* I wish he had

not just finished with what Krishna told Arjuna but also explained what those seven things are. That would have been awesome because those seven things that is possible for Arjun to come out is fulfilled only in Christ. And in nobody else. Only in Christ.

So, shall we stand up before God? To do this, you only have to stand up. You don't have to hang upside down. Our God is so gracious and so simple. We just have to stand in His presence. Don't have to try anything. Hang upside down, roll down the stairs, up the stairs. Even in Christianity, don't look at other religions. You go to Tamil Nadu, that Church called 'Velankini' and you see the kind of crazy stuff people do to receive something from a Living God. You have to see all these things. God has made it so easy and we make it so complicated. Let's look to the Lord as we close on the final Sunday.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we just thank You, Lord. You just didn't save us. That was not the end; it was the beginning. The beginning of an incredible journey now and into eternity. And all we can say, "Who are we, O Lord, that You are mindful of us? Who are we, O Lord, that You brought us thus far?" To see the liberty in Christ. To see the freedom we have in Christ. In everything, Lord, from the beginning of salvation till the end, it is only victory. Help us to see through the eyes of God that salvation itself is victory, that even death is victory. In Christ, nothing is failure. Because Christ is a man of war. From generation to generation, He has never lost a battle and so are His children in Him. For Your Word says, You take us in trials in Christ Jesus. He cannot us take us in defeat. For our God is a Man of war and I pray the Christ in each one would arise; for He is the hope of our glory that this new year that is coming, we would truly struggle to die so that He may live. And we will taste that victory You bought for us on the Cross where You subdued, You emptied, You disarmed the powers of darkness, made them nothing in the heavenlies, made them a spectacle of them in the heavenlies; and each one standing here would experience that in their inner man that the powers of darkness are being subdued and disarmed by the Christ in me and is being made a spectacle in the heavenlies. We walk in victory, Lord. I commit the Church into Thy hands – every brother, every sister, every child, new and old; even those who have come for the first time, we may not know them but You know them. You know them by name and You know everyone at what stage of the journey they are in; and I pray, Father, even now, that You would touch each one. Touch, Lord. One touch. Above all, touch the ears of everyone that we might hear; that we might incline our ears to You. As Peter said, "Because You alone have the words of life. No one else. You alone." And Your Word is Spirit, life and truth to everyone who receives it and Your Word has the power to work in those who believe. It is the very power of God being released into our inner man. I pray, Lord, that open ears and open heavens would be there. The next 3 days, as we continue to wait in Your presence, continue to speak to us. Continue to prepare us. Continue Your work through the coming year, Lord. Thank You, Father. I bless Your people in Your Name. May the blessing of the Living God rest upon them, pursue them, overtake them. Let them find favour with God and favour with man; and may the presence of God be their true living experience that what You have said would be our experience each day. Thank You, Father. Once again, by faith, believing the Blood of Jesus, the Word of the Living God and the sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit has cleansed us, we lift up holy hands in Your presence and we bless Your holy Name and we proclaim in Your house – Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Benediction:

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.