

# Let No One Steal Your Crown!

Pastor Vijay Eathakota  
www.gracetabernaclehyd.org

*Father, we just want to thank You, Lord. We just thank You, Father, for the third day of this fourth month. Lord, times of uncertainty but we know these days have been ordained by You for us, especially as a Church. Therefore, Lord, even as we come to Your Throne Room of grace, Father, because You enjoined us to come boldly and confidently to the Throne Room of grace, we ask You, once again, for Your mercy this morning. For mercy, O Lord and for grace! We need Your mercy, not to deal with us according to our sins and our shortcomings. We need Your grace, Father, to overcome every sin and every offense in our lives that offends Your holy Name. This morning, even as we meditate upon Your Word, Father, speak to our hearts. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit. Anoint us all, the hearing and the speaking, O Lord, that we might be strengthened, O Lord; that the Word might go to the deep most parts of our inner man and cause us to walk in Your ways. Father, write Your law on the tables of our hearts and on our minds. Teach us Your ways. Show us Your paths and lead us into the way of everlasting life. To that end, I pray that You will bless the speaking and the hearing of this Word. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

Let's first turn our Bible to 2 Timothy 1:6-7.

## **2 Timothy 1:6-7**

***<sup>6</sup> Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.***

Stir up! So, these days are days of stirring up. That word 'stirring up' is so vital because if you see when exodus from Babylon to Jerusalem takes place (I am not talking about exodus out of Egypt), when the Israelites are coming back from Babylon to Jerusalem, it says, "Those whose spirits the Lord had stirred up, they came back to build the house of God." Those spirits whom the Lord had stirred up! Therefore, it's important for us to be stirred up in our spirits. It's not just being stirred up once and just forget about it. But these days, God has given us so that we will be sufficiently stirred up; that we would truly go back and build what's lacking in our lives as we have received the promise in the beginning of the year. The promise for this year being 'rise up and build'. Therefore, stir up.

***<sup>6</sup> Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.***

There is impartation of the gift of God.

***<sup>7</sup> For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.***

Sound mind or discipline or self-control!

See, yesterday, we have been looking at 'little children'. One of the things we know that the little children lack is self-control. God is telling us that He has not given us a spirit of fear, but He has given us a spirit of power and a spirit of love and a spirit of sound mind. One of the things that we have been blessed with the filling of the Holy Spirit in our lives is when there is an increased self-control. *Proverbs 25:28* is a very powerful verse.

## **Proverbs 25:28**

***<sup>28</sup> Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls.***

So, if you are rising up and building, what does 'rising up and building' mean? That we have control over our spirit! It says, "The spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophet (1 Corinthians 14)." So, you don't lose control; you are in control. That is what we are doing. We are disciplining ourselves. We are teaching our body to be disciplined, to be focused, especially these days on the Word; concentrate all the faculties of our spirit and our mind, to lay aside every distraction and lay aside every weight and give ourselves to the instruction of the Word of God. Very important! So, *He has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of self-control.* Both men and women are enjoined in this exhortation.

## **1 Timothy 3:2**

***<sup>2</sup> A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded...***

## Let No One Steal Your Crown!

We know 'temperate' means he is not overindulging. He is not indulging in extremes. He is balanced. He says, 'sober-minded' or self-controlled or having a sound mind.

*...of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach;*

How can we teach unless and until we are sober-minded or we are self-controlled?

### **Titus 2:2**

*<sup>2</sup> that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience;*

Men, in general, be sober. We are supposed to have that self-control. We should be that stabilizing influence in our homes and also in our Churches. So we are not easily moved by any emotions or anything of that sort. We think through things. That is what God has given us 'the ability not to be moved'. It says, "Adam was not deceived but Eve was deceived and fell into temptation." So, we have been given that gift by God that we are not easily moved and to be sober minded. Similarly, with women, too (It's not just for men), again—

### **Titus 2:3-6**

*<sup>3</sup> the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things— <sup>4</sup> that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, <sup>5</sup> to be discreet...*

Discreet is the same word for 'sober'. Discreet means how discreetly you spend your time, your money, the resources that God has given you, that you think twice before you do any spending or any talking. Don't be impetuous in any of the decisions that you make. So, be sober, self-controlled.

*...chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God may not be blasphemed. <sup>6</sup> Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded,*

One of the things we are asked to do is to be self-controlled. That should be the spirit in the Church. A Church, which is self-controlled! In the world there is absolute mayhem going on, that we will have a set of people, who are self-controlled. Why am I saying this? The end of the days is at hand.

### **2 Timothy 3:1**

*But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:*

Perilous or fierce times will come. If you know where this particular word 'fierce' is mentioned (I spoke about this some time back), it says in *Matthew 8:28*, you will see a very interesting word.

### **Matthew 8:28**

*<sup>28</sup> When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way.*

Do you see the word 'exceedingly fierce'? That is the same word for 'perilous times'. 'Exceedingly fierce' times will come; times, which have been inspired by intense demonic activity and that will increase in these last days. We are seeing that literally unfolding right in front of our eyes, increasing amount of demonic activity. Increasing, it's not just reducing. People are just losing control, left, right and centre. So, what is the hallmark of a man who is delivered, therefore? Look at what it says in *Luke 8:35*, about this man, whom Jesus delivers. He sends those demons into the swine, remember that? Then, this is what He is talking about that person who got delivered now.

### **Luke 8:35**

*<sup>35</sup> Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.*

## Let No One Steal Your Crown!

He had a sober mind. The same word! He had a sober mind. How did he have a sober mind? He was sitting at the feet of Jesus. So, you are delivered from the fierce spirit of this age but the only way you do not walk in the spirit of the age but walk in your deliverance is when you sit at the feet of Jesus, clothed in the righteousness of Jesus and in your right mind. How do you get this right mind? By sitting at the feet of Jesus! What happens when you are sitting at the feet of Jesus? Let me give you an example. I will tell you why I am using this particular example.

### **Luke 8:1-2**

***Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God. And the twelve were with Him,<sup>2</sup> and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons,***

She was perfectly possessed, in other words. God drove out all those seven demons from her life and likewise, there were other women also, whom God healed of evil spirits and sicknesses. But something is very interestingly mentioned about Mary Magdalene. Turn to *Luke 10:38-42*. We know these verses very well.

### **Luke 10:38-39**

***<sup>38</sup> Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. <sup>39</sup> And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word.***

What was happening to the man who was delivered from demons? He was sitting at the feet of Jesus. What was he doing? He had his body clothed and he was in his right mind. How did he have a right mind? It says here, she (Mary) was sitting at the feet of Jesus and hearing His Word. This is exactly what we want to do also in these days. We want to learn to sit at the feet of Jesus and hear His Word so that we can just not be delivered from our sicknesses and infirmities and demons but we also walk and learn how to walk in our deliverance. Both are important, just not to be delivered. Otherwise, what will happen to this generation? This will be a generation, a perverse generation, which will be delivered from their demons but they are not filled with the Word of God because they do not have the patience to sit at the feet of Jesus. They are distracted by so many things. One has been delivered; the other is distracted. Mary is delivered from demon and then, what does she do? Jesus says in *verse 42*.

### **Luke 10:41-42**

***<sup>41</sup> And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things...***

Meaning, your mind has been distracted into many, many different directions. Many things! This is very important. All of us should learn to have focus. Focused to sit at one place and work where time stops for you! Remember when we do certain things which are interesting? When we keep working, working, working and we don't even know time has passed? We are like, "Oh, my goodness, time is over! So many hours!" That's exactly what happens when we watch a movie, right? When we watch a very interesting movie, "Oh my goodness, three hours? I didn't even feel like it!" Why? Because you were so focused on that. You were not troubled by so many other things. Unfortunately that same thing doesn't get carried over into the Word of God or onto other things which are more important in life. God is saying, "Martha, Martha, you are troubled and distracted. So many things are begging for your attention." Phone calls! You have your phone and somebody is 'WhatsApping' (that's a good word!), your life is absolutely distracted into so many different directions. You are not focused. What we need in these last days is focus. What did He say?

***... "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. <sup>42</sup> But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."***

See, God has created us in His image. *We are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which He has promised beforehand for us that we should walk in them.* But the problem is that we are distracted with so many works and we are not concentrated on that one work that God has ordained us for. Therefore, it is important for us in these last days to have focus on that one thing. Why? Because perilous times are there. Exteremely fierce times are there and we need self-control. Therefore, we need to focus our faculties of our mind in that one thing that God has ordained for us. At this point, what is that one thing that God has ordained for us? You shut down everything, sit at His feet and learn. Everybody! Have

## Let No One Steal Your Crown!

that mind, just sit at His feet and say, “Lord, let this be the time I want to just not have a right mind, walk in the right mind.” Why?

### **1 Peter 4:7 (ESV)**

***<sup>7</sup>The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.***

Do you want to have a focused prayer-life or Word-life or a ministry? Practice self-control. Practice being sober-minded. Very important! This is something, which we have been doing all these years. One thing is our focus. Thank God for us, at least God has given the special blessing, I would say. We are privileged because we can focus on one thing. We know that when we are focused on this thing, you know that the anointing is flowing and you know that you are being a blessing to others. You are not being distracted by any other thing. I have never seen Sammy at one time, localised in one place for such a long time. It's remarkable! I am just taking an example here.

Absolutely focused, not distracted, in one thing! Why do we need it in last days? Because you go out after 21 days, just imagine, what will happen, if the lockdown is removed? So many things are begging for our attention, isn't it? They are waiting. They may not be bad things or wrong things or evil things in and of themselves but what are they doing? They are just taking our focus away from that one thing God has asked us to be involved in. Do you understand? So, we are practicing that. Like it says, “*Paul was involved in the Word of God.*” I was searching for that word in the morning and I couldn't get it. I will get back to that. I just want that focus for myself, hours and hours. *Paul was involved in the Word of God.* Involve yourself in the Word of God. Here, for us to teach, we want to be involved. We enjoy to learn and teach. For you, I hope that you will practice learning the Word of God and sit at the Word of God.

***<sup>7</sup>The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.***

Other translations will use, ‘*alert and sober-minded*’. Be watchful and prayerful. Both these things are important. *Watch and pray.* Like Pastor was saying yesterday, four things about what Jesus enjoined us to do. Don't be deceived. Don't be distracted. Be watchful and be prayerful. So, remember that. Think soberly.

Look again *Romans 12:3*. I am just giving you several verses to set the premise for today's study.

### **Romans 12:3**

***<sup>3</sup>For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly...***

Think soberly about yourself. If you have to think soberly about yourself, you have to sit at His feet.

***...as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.***

Be in your right mind. You have to not just be in your right mind; you have to stay in your right mind. At any given point in time, you are not moved, that in your faculties, you are conscious about the work of God; absolutely focused and you are not distracted. You are not turning to your left or right. That's what He says, “Don't turn to the left. Don't turn to the right; stay in that straight and narrow path.” Therefore, in order to do that, meditate upon His Word.

Why this focus on self-control?

### **2 Timothy 3:1**

***But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:***

We are living in the last days. When did the last days start?

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

***God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup>has in these last days spoken to us by His Son...***

That means the moment Jesus ascended into heaven, the last days started. Like Pastor was saying, we may not have war in our generation but every generation prepared for war. Every generation prepared as though Christ would come in that generation. So the moment Jesus ascended into heaven, everyone including Paul and Thessalonian Church, they were all thinking that Jesus would come during their time and John would say, "My little children, we are in the last hour." This, He is talking about almost 2,000 years ago. Now, we are in the last of the last days, for sure. Everybody says that. Therefore, because we are living in the last of the last days, it is very important. When you know that exam is approaching, one of the things you do most of the times (at least 30 days from the exam, you are doing so many other things; 15 days from exam, the other things you are doing are getting lesser and lesser and lesser; at least 10 days before the exam, if you want to get good marks), you are focused. Ten days, you shut down everything, sit with your books and you study. Why? I don't want to waste my energy and time. I should be absolutely focused. Look at what it says in *1 Corinthians 9:24*.

**1 Corinthians 9:24-25 (NIV)**

***<sup>24</sup>Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.<sup>25</sup> Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.***

Put this in mind. Today's sermon is – 'don't let anybody steal your crown'. That's today's title. It's very important.

***<sup>25</sup> Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training.***

Other translations will say, "He is temperate in all things", or "He, who strives for mastery". The word is 'agonizes'.

***They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.***

'Don't let anybody steal your crown' is today's title. Therefore, what should we do? We need to be temperate or self-controlled in all things. Look at what he says. This is what he does.

**1 Corinthians 9:26 (NIV)**

***<sup>26</sup>Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly...***

First thing, he says, "By this time, I know what my aim is. I am not missing my mark." For him, the definition of sin has changed now. It is not that he is watching pornography or he is messing up with something else. No! He is not even talking about sin anymore. He is talking about weight. He has got this aim on the prize. He is absolutely focused on his aim. He is not aimless.

***...I do not fight like a boxer beating the air.***

Latest NIV says, "Boxing in the air." So, he says, "Every time I use my fists to box, it hits target." If you see in a boxing match, lot of punches go in the air. Mohammad Ali was supposed to be the greatest heavy-weight champion because he had excellent footwork. He would know how to tire the opponent. That fellow would come raging like a bull and this fellow would dodge. The term 'fly like a butterfly, sting like a bee' came from him because he would dodge, dodge, dodge and one punch would hit the target. That would just totally disorient that guy. They are all heavy-weight champions. So, they are fit like anything. They are absolute real, real fit. They can go till 12 rounds. So, this guy waits and dodges and he is calculating his punches and every time he is punching, he is hitting target. Then comes the final, he is dodging and with one punch, he completely puts him on the back foot and once he sees his opponent is weak, he goes for the kill.

Now, Paul is saying the same thing. He says, "Every time I punch, I am hitting target." Do you understand what I am saying? He is absolutely focused. He says, "I don't want to lose my energy." We have only limited energy as long as you are in this body. That is the reason why he says, "I beat my body and bring it to subjection." He is talking about as long as we are in this body, we know that we have only limited amount of energy. When you are young, maybe you can do lot of other things but even as you grow older, you have to be really, really conservative about how you spend your energies and your mind as well. Both!

## Let No One Steal Your Crown!

Be absolutely focused! Even when you are reading books for example, don't just read indiscriminately. Ask the Spirit of the Lord to direct you to those books, which will help you in your walk with Him and also help you in the process of growing with the Lord. The other day, I was having a discussion with one of my relatives. He was asking me, "Vijay, what are you reading these days?" I looked at him and I said, "The Bible!" He started laughing. He said, "Vijay, what an answer to give!" Lot of people don't read the Bible in a year. They would have read several other books in a year about the Bible.

So, in fact, last year, I was reading so many other things but when it came to the study of the Word of God, by the end of the year, I was panting to finish the Bible. Then, I said, "No! This year I am going to do something totally different. I would spend time in the written Word. Otherwise, I would just be boxing in the air. I would be losing a lot of time." Which is the inspired work? Bible, not any other book! It could have been an exposition of the Word of God but Bible is 'the' inspired book. Nobody can authoritatively say of whatever they have written, like Paul says, "I also have the mind of Christ." No! Nobody can say that. It doesn't matter how great they are, how incredibly brilliant they are, how incredibly gifted and anointed they are, they don't have the authority to say that what they have written is really inspired by the Spirit of God. No!

So, get focused. Read the Bible more. I was inspired by what Pastor said in one of the Pastors' conferences. He said, "Don't read books about the Bible. Read the Bible." So, when you are reading, you need to read (I am not discrediting reading at all) but ask the Lord. You read by faith. Like Pastor says, "I read my Bible by faith." Read other books also by faith. Don't read books which will just stimulate you intellectually but not inspire you spiritually. There are so many books like that. "What a thought!" Thoughts are thoughts. Okay! Great! Like Pastor said, it could be only in the 'Holy Place' but we need 'the most Holy Place' kind of ministry.

There is only one thing; it says, '*All Scripture*'; it doesn't say 'all books'. *All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God. Every part of Scripture is God breathed, profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness so that the man of God may be complete and thoroughly equipped for every good work.* Spend a lot of time in the Bible and spend also reading books where the Lord will lead you to. Ask God. You might have several books. Ask God to zero-in on those books, which will help you. Don't just read anything indiscriminately. Do you know what you are doing? You are beating the air. You are aimless. How much of aimless things we do, right? So many aimless things, which don't profit! Cut them off. It says,

### **Hebrews 12:1**

***Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,***

### **1 Corinthians 9:26-27**

***<sup>26</sup>Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. <sup>27</sup>But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.***

In other words, I might lose my prize. He is not talking about salvation here. He is not talking about eternal wrath and punishment. He is talking about being disqualified. In what days are we? In last days! I hope we understand that. If you read through the Bible, there is one particular passage in the Bible, which inspires us specifically as to what kind of attitude we need to have so that we can be successful in the last days. Turn to *Genesis 49*.

### **Genesis 49:1-7**

***And Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days:***

Underline 'last days'. Actually, if you read the heading in your Bible, it says 'the blessings that Jacob gives his children'. So let's see. Depending upon time we have, we will try to see as many as we can.

***And Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days: <sup>2</sup>"Gather together and hear, you sons of Jacob, And listen to Israel your father.***

It's beautiful! First, he says, "All you sons of Jacob, come." That means, "You are all physically my children. But are you spiritually my children?"

## Let No One Steal Your Crown!

“Listen to ‘Israel’ your father.” Now, he is saying, “As Israel, I am saying.” They are not Israel who are of Abraham. Let’s read on.

First, he talks about Reuben.

**<sup>3</sup> “Reuben, you are my firstborn, My might and the beginning of my strength, The excellency of dignity and the excellency of power. <sup>4</sup> Unstable as water, you shall not excel, Because you went up to your father’s bed; Then you defiled it— He went up to my couch. <sup>5</sup> “Simeon and Levi are brothers; Instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place. <sup>6</sup> Let not my soul enter their council; Let not my honor be united to their assembly; For in their anger they slew a man, And in their self-will they hamstrung an ox. <sup>7</sup> Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; And their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob And scatter them in Israel.**

Three tribes! Who are they? Reuben, Simeon and Levi! What is this called? The blessings of Jacob! Why is it ‘blessings of Jacob’? A warning to those people who are ‘Reubens’ in God’s Kingdom! A warning to those people who are ‘Simeons’ and ‘Levis’ in God’s Kingdom! If you have this kind of attitude, this is what is going to befall you in the last days. Understood? Let us go step by step. First, what are these attitudes that we should not have? What are the attitudes we should have? So, here, the attitudes that we should not have.

Can I ask you an honest question? We have more attitudes we should not have, am I right? Very few attitudes that we should have! I have always seen that. Actually, in fact, the attitudes we should have are very little only. What is that? Focus and hard work and associated with that will come so many other things. But attitudes we should not have, to take us away from our focus and hard work are many. That is something you need to identify. What does the word ‘Reuben’ mean? ‘Look, a son!’ ‘Ben’ means son. ‘Reu’ means ‘look’ or ‘behold’. That’s what it means. That’s exactly what happens to all of us when we are born again of the Spirit and the Word of God. Look, a son! As many as have believed in Him,

### **John 1:12-13**

**<sup>12</sup> But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:**

Do you know what the word ‘right’ is? ‘Authority’ that is ‘exousia’, not ‘dunamis’! He gave them the authority to be the children or sons of God.

**<sup>12</sup> But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**

When God has birthed us, do you know what He says? “Behold, a son!” That’s exactly what He told about His Son also, His firstborn. What did He say? “Today, I have begotten Thee!” When did He beget Jesus Christ? When He rose Him from the dead, He begot Jesus.

### **Romans 1:1-4**

**Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God<sup>2</sup> which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup> and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.**

When we actually went into the waters of baptism and when we came out, you know what God said? “Behold, a son! A son is born!” What am I going to give him?

### **Genesis 49:3**

**<sup>3</sup> “Reuben, you are my firstborn, My might and the beginning of my strength, The excellency of dignity and the excellency of power.**

“Do you know what I have given you? I have given you authority.” As many as received Him, He gave them the authority to be called the children of God. Authority! “Behold, a son! I have birthed in My Spirit a son.” But what are you?

**Genesis 49:4**

***<sup>4</sup>Unstable as water, you shall not excel, Because you went up to your father's bed; Then you defiled it— He went up to my couch.***

First thing – what are you? You are unstable. Do you know what the word ‘unstable’ means? Pachaz! It means reckless. It has several connotations – recklessness, wantonness, unbridled licence, frothiness, a light person, he is not very serious, very casual. Unstable! How are you unstable like? Like water! Have you seen water? It takes the shape of the vessel into which you pour it. That means it doesn't have a personality of its own. He doesn't have any convictions of his own. That's what it says, *“Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen; the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen.”* This guy is unstable as water because he has no convictions of his own. Because he has no convictions of his own, he is easily movable. One of the pictures – he is wanton, he is reckless. He has got unbridled licence. He is frothy. Do you know what the word ‘frothy’ means? Light and entertaining but devoid of substance! That's the dictionary meaning. That's what it means. It's like candy cotton. Have you seen candy cotton? It looks so big. Three bites and it's over. I thought it was so big.

Frothy! What are you? Behold, a son! Behold, the beginning of my strength, I have given you excellence in dignity and excellence in power but you are unstable. You are ‘my’ might, the beginning of ‘my’ strength but you are unstable. ‘Pachaz’, wantonness, unbridled licence, frothy! That's exactly what is happening even in these last days, right? What is one of the characteristics of water? Water flows and it always chooses a particular path. What path does it choose? It chooses a path of least resistance. Let me explain that to you again. What does it mean to choose a path of least resistance? Let us say, you stop water. That's what we call it a dam. One of the things that you need to do when you are constructing a dam is that you ensure there are no breaches in your dam. It is not that it doesn't have power; it pushes through places in your life, which are not strong, which has breaches, which are not been strengthened. It comes through the weak areas in your life. So, what do they do when they construct dams? They do a thorough examination and ensure that there are no breaches in the wall. Whenever they find one, what do they do? They ensure that they close it, right?

God has given us tremendous power but He has to harness it. Let me rephrase that sentence. God wants to give us, wants us to have tremendous power, but the point is – can we be absolutely under His control so that we can be directed wherever He wants us to go? That's exactly what He says, *“Not children, sons are a heritage.”* That's what it says in *Psalm 127*, *“Sons are a heritage from the Lord.”* What is Reuben? *“Behold, a son! Sons are a heritage from the Lord and the fruit of the womb is His reward. As arrows in the hand of mighty warriors, so are sons. Happy is the man who has quiver full of them.”* How do you make an arrow? You sharpen it and sharpen it. You take off all those rough edges and you put it in your quiver, so that at the appropriate time you use it. That means that guy has come absolutely under the control of the person who he is being mentored by. That's very important. Reuben is a son, but he's unstable as water. So, what do we need? We don't need frothy teaching with lot of sound and fury but signifying nothing, as Shakespeare says. We need substance in our teaching. We need meat. We don't need light stuff. We need to have light means and heavy word. What do we have in these last days? We have light word and heavy meals. But of course, in GTC, these days, we are having heavy word and heavy meals also. But we're perfectly balanced. I don't know how, but that has to change okay? Light meals and heavy word. So, don't be light. Look at what it says in *Zephaniah 3:1-5*. I want to show you a verse.

**Zephaniah 3:1-5**

***<sup>1</sup>Woe to her who is rebellious and polluted, To the oppressing city! <sup>2</sup>She has not obeyed His voice, She has not received correction; She has not trusted in the LORD, She has not drawn near to her God.***

Who is this? Jerusalem.

***<sup>3</sup>Her princes in her midst are roaring lions; Her judges are evening wolves...***

Kya baath hai! One is a lion and the other is a wolf.

***...That leave not a bone till morning.***



## Let No One Steal Your Crown!

They just eat up everything. Look at this.

### ***<sup>4</sup> Her prophets are insolent...***

'Insolent' comes from 'pakaaz' or 'light'! That's the word! Her prophets are fickle (ESV) – that's the word. That means unstable and what are they?

***...treacherous people; Her priests polluted the sanctuary, They have done violence to the law. <sup>5</sup> The LORD is righteous in her midst, He will do no unrighteousness. Every morning He brings His justice to light; He never fails, But the unjust knows no shame.***

### **Zephaniah 3:4 (ESV)**

***<sup>4</sup> Her prophets are fickle, treacherous men; her priests profane what is holy; they do violence to the law.***

Why? The prophets are light. They're light. The people who are supposed to teach the Word and do daily devotions. I'm not saying daily devotions are wrong. Leave it to other people, but you are supposed to teach the Word, the meat of God's Word. The problem is – even though people are ready to teach, people are not ready to learn. That's the point! Can we endure sound doctrine in these last days? So, first thing, you're unstable as water. What are you? You're reckless. You're wanton. You have unbridled license. You're frothy. You're not a serious person. You're a light person. You know the sentence people use among children, "Light teesko mama (Take it light.)" Have you heard these sentences? In the Kingdom of God, there is no taking light. If you do 'full light', He will take you full light. He's got used to a lot of Telugu words. Good! See, this is very important. Don't take anything lightly. You know what He says? "I've seen in the prophets of my people lightness."

He says in the *Book of Jeremiah in chapter 6:14*. He says, "Lightness in the prophets of My people. They don't heal the wounds of the daughter of My people. But they say, 'Peace! Peace!' when there is no peace." They're light!

### **Lamentations 2:14**

***<sup>14</sup> Your prophets have seen for you False and deceptive visions; They have not uncovered your iniquity, To bring back your captives, But have envisioned for you false prophecies and delusions.***

Why? Ezekiel 13:8-10. After that we'll go to the next point.

### **Ezekiel 13:8-10**

***<sup>8</sup> Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Because you have spoken nonsense and envisioned lies, therefore I am indeed against you," says the Lord GOD. <sup>9</sup> "My hand will be against the prophets who envision futility and who divine lies...***

In other words, they call lies, 'divine'. What are you? I'm a divine!

***...they shall not be in the assembly of My people, nor be written in the record of the house of Israel...***

God says, "I'm going to blot out these fellows from My register."

***...nor shall they enter into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord GOD. <sup>10</sup> "Because, indeed, because they have seduced My people, saying, 'Peace!' when there is no peace—and one builds a wall, and they plaster it with untempered mortar <sup>11</sup> say to those who plaster it with untempered mortar, that it will fall. There will be flooding rain, and you, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall tear it down.***

All your preachers will be exposed. All your weak areas will be exposed. It's a parable in our own generation. And you know what it is testing? It's testing the immune system of the people and whoever has got underlying issues, gone! It is making breaches through those defenses and killing people and telling us how frail we are. We don't have a strong immune system to fight off sicknesses from outside. Similarly, as a parable God is saying, you don't have a strong immune system towards sicknesses and demonic activity from outside. Do you have sufficient white blood cells in your body which can fight off? How's your blood? Have you eaten the meat of My word sufficiently so that your sufficient enzymes flowing in your spiritual veins

## Let No One Steal Your Crown!

to fight off and ward off the enemy? Otherwise, people will say, “Physician, heal yourself first.” There are so many things God is exposing in our life to show that our immune system is not strong. It’s a parable saying, “If I were to send you a delusion of the same spiritual proportions do you have the sufficient immunity in your system not to allow the preachers to open up or are you unstable? It’s a parable. First thing, “You’re unstable. I have given you excellency in power and excellency in dignity, Reuben, in chapter 49, but you shall not excel.”

### **Genesis 49:3-4**

**<sup>3</sup>“Reuben, you are my firstborn, My might and the beginning of my strength, The excellency of dignity and the excellency of power. <sup>4</sup>Unstable as water, you shall not excel, (Why?) Because you went up to your father’s bed; Then you defiled it— He went up to my couch.**

Because you fell into sexual sin. This is one of the scariest things in our generation. You have to be extremely careful and absolutely ruthless about it. Two verses to scare us. Let me scare you sufficiently.

*Proverbs 22:14.* I learnt this from Pastor Vijay James when he came to Grace Home and that was the last Bible study I heard.

### **Proverbs 22:14**

**<sup>14</sup>The mouth of an immoral woman is a deep pit; He who is abhorred by the LORD will fall there.**

Actually, other translations will say, “He who is accursed of the Lord will fall into sexual sin.” Another translation says,

**<sup>14</sup>The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit; He who is cursed of the LORD will fall into it. (NASB)**

So, if you have no control on your sexual appetite, chances are this is your condition.

### **Ecclesiastes 7:26**

**<sup>26</sup>And I find more bitter than death The woman whose heart is snares and nets, Whose hands are fetters. He who pleases God shall escape from her, But the sinner shall be trapped by her.**

That is the reason why our constant prayer is – “Lord, lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from the evil one, the wicked one.” He who pleases the Lord escapes from her. Other translations say, “He who fears the Lord escapes from her.” That’s what Abraham has to say when he goes to Gerar. There is no fear of God in this place and if I say, “Sarah is my wife,” they’re going to kill me and take her. He who pleases God shall escape from her, but the sinner shall be trapped by her. Two verses to scare us. What was the problem with Reuben? Unbridled sexual appetite. It’s a revelation of a deeper thing, that you don’t have self-control. The point here is – Reuben has been given a fantastic start. Positionally, he had this capacity to be the first born and enjoy the dignity and the excellency of his father and really be strong, what was his problem? His problem was unbridled appetite, frothy life, license, lightness towards sin and unstable as water. He was a ‘pahaaz’ in the Hebrew. It sounds very gross. You pahaaz! Means, unstable fellow, light fellow or worthless fellow. We can actually title today’s sermon as, ‘Are you a pahaaz’. Thank God I’m not a pahaaz, but a Prakash. That’s my second name. The point though here is how did he reach here that he allowed himself to fall into sexual sin? See, nothing happens in your life by chance. He says, “Reuben means what? ‘Behold a son!’” But after He has birthed you in the spirit, He still wants us to exercise our freewill and make choices according to His word. That is the reason why it says in,

### **1 Peter 2:1-3**

**<sup>1</sup>Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, <sup>2</sup>as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, <sup>3</sup>if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.**

So, desire the pure milk of the Word of God, that milk which is full of cholesterol. Nursing mother have milk that is full of cholesterol. And that’s very important for the child because that is very important for the mental make-up and her growth, because it’s got nutrients that other milks don’t have. They add a lot of other things in that. So, nothing happens by chance. You have made a set of choices. You got distracted with certain things in your life. There’s a series of attitudes and choices that you have developed in your life, which have caused you to come into the situations that you are in. God wants to bless

## Let No One Steal Your Crown!

us. That's what He says, "If you being evil fathers want to give good gifts to your children, how much more your Father in heaven will give you the Holy Spirit if you ask?" So, what were the choices he made? How did he end up in this position?

### Genesis 30:14

<sup>14</sup> **Now Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field...**

What did you go for? Wheat! And what did you find? Mandrakes. This is your problem. Not only did he find mandrakes, but he brought mandrakes also. You know what mandrake means in the Hebrew? It is that which arouses sexual passions. The word mandrake in the English comes from two words, man and drake. Man is man and drake means dragon. Etymology! Go and look up the etymology of the word dragon. So, you went into the field to get souls into the kingdom, instead you got what? Dragons into the kingdom. Mandrake – that which arouses unnecessary sexual passions.

**...and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes."**

Careful brothers! Don't get distracted with mandrakes in God's field. What did Jesus say?

### John 4:27-35

<sup>27</sup> **And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman** (They were thinking that something like mandrakes was going on with Jesus. Nothing!); **yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?"** <sup>28</sup> **The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men,** <sup>29</sup> **"Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"** (Could this be the Christ?) <sup>30</sup> **Then they went out of the city and came to Him.** <sup>31</sup> **In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."** <sup>32</sup> **But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know."** <sup>33</sup> **Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?"** (This is the problem: anytime He makes a spiritual statement, they take into equivalent physical statement.) <sup>34</sup> **Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.**

In other words, I don't want to get distracted with mandrakes.

<sup>35</sup> **Do you not say,** (That means all of us say. That's what it means right?) **'There are still four months** (What are we? Light! Ah, it's still four months till harvest! We're light about the things of God. We are light about the things of God, we have a Reuben's attitude, which we are not supposed to have.) **and then comes the harvest? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields** (What do you find? Wheat! What do you see? Mandrakes.), **for they are already white for harvest!**

That's what happens to many people. They go to office and say, "My office is my mission field." And there will be mandrakes over there. And instead of winning souls for the kingdom, they get distracted by mandrakes and they bring it home also. In other words, they get married to her/him. What did you go out for? Wheat. What did you get home? Mandrakes. That's your problem Reuben: unbridled passion. Look at what He says,

### John 4:45

<sup>35</sup> **Do you not say, "There are still four months and then comes the harvest"? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!**

Question is: do we see harvest wherever we are? In other words, do we really have the burden for Christ saying, "Lord, nothing else satisfies me. Only when I win souls into the kingdom it satisfies me." He who reaps in tears will bring up with rejoicing. Bringing in the sheaves, we shall come rejoicing bringing in the sheaves. You know why? We have never sowed in tears, and therefore we don't have a harvest. We sowed in mandrakes and we have reaped in mandrakes. So even when we go to the field, we get distracted with the mandrakes. That's exactly what happened to Jesus right? Jesus was sitting in Simon's home, He was looking at the field and Simon was looking at the mandrakes. It all depends on how you see. If he was really a prophet, He would have known what kind of a woman she is. Arey! That's your problem. You're getting distracted. I see something. You see something else. You don't have my eyes. That's exactly what Pastor was saying, "Whenever you are going on the roads, you need to have those eyes which see the harvest, not mandrakes." Not mandrakes, my dear brothers!

### John 4:36-37

## Let No One Steal Your Crown!

**<sup>36</sup> And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup> For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.'**

Paul says, "Paul plants, Apollos waters, but God gives the increase. So, he who sows and he who waters is nothing, but God who gives the harvest is everything." But be careful how you sow and what you sow.

**<sup>38</sup> I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors."**

Are you laboring in the Kingdom of God? Are you getting distracted with mandrakes? This is the time to get rid of all our mandrakes. I was serious with myself. I was actually getting this when Pastor was talking about self-control. This is the verse that came to my mind: I wrote down the title as from anger to righteousness. I'll tell you why I wrote it. I'll tell you why it came from anger to righteousness. And then I was starting to study Genesis 49 and the Lord was speaking, "Look at Reuben. Just because he didn't have self-control, what he lost." Are we involved in the ministry? Are we involved in the ministry of gathering the harvest? And Jesus said, "He who doesn't gather with Me scatters abroad." That's what you're doing. Either you are scattering, my dear brothers and sisters, or you are gathering. But you are not neutral. You're gathering wheat for the harvest or you're gathering mandrakes. Don't get distracted with mandrakes in your schools or colleges. There are so many mandrakes. You don't become a mandrake. Don't dress like a mandrake. Men and women dress like mandrakes these days. I was telling in one of the youth meetings, I taught in IIT for eight years. Every year the skirts get shorter and the blouses get tighter. And what do they do? Every time they come to the professor they do a song and dance. They're unstable. Mandrakes everywhere! Behold, I'm sending you into a field full of wheat and mandrakes. Be careful with the mandrakes, God says. The mandrakes could be anything that distracts you from your goal and your purpose. That's exactly what happened right? Don't ever think that an anointed king cannot fall.

*2 Samuel 11:1-2. How a great man falls:*

### **2 Samuel 11:1-2**

**<sup>1</sup> It happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle...**

What are you supposed to do? Be at war for souls. Kneel down and pray. Seek for the lost. Ask God for a burden to build the body of Christ. What are you? The ark of the Covenant, Joab and My Lord's servant are in the field fighting. What are you doing? Sleeping, taking a nice siesta.

***...that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> Then it happened one evening...***

That means he took a nice siesta. That's a luxury. Right? Taking a siesta is a luxury for a soldier. Soldiers are supposed to do sentry duty. Two hours I'll be guarding, rest of you sleep. Everybody does sentry duty for two hours. So even their sleep is controlled. What is happening over here? This man is enjoying life while others are fighting. He's got a lot of time for siesta and become a prime target for collecting mandrakes. What is he going to do? Collect mandrakes. Distracted with mandrakes. The king anointed! That is why we need to ask God what is lawful and what is not lawful.

***...that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold.***

### **1 Corinthians 6:12**

**<sup>12</sup> All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.**

See that? If anything is overpowering you, that has become a mandrake, basically. It's unbridled passions as I said. Desires should not become ungodly desires. Lusts should not become ungodly lusts. Desires are not a problem. Desires for the wrong things are the problem. Desires for the right thing is absolutely okay. That is the reason why men are asked to work hard when they're young, and not get distracted with so many things. Have an avocation so that you'll be tired by the time you come back home. You would have worked, worked and worked. After you come home, sleep. Work, work and come back to

## **Let No One Steal Your Crown!**

home and sleep. The problem is we're living in a generation even when you go to office you get distracted by mandrakes, not necessarily people around, but in your computer. Look at what it says in verse 13.

### **1 Corinthians 6:13-16, 18**

***<sup>13</sup> Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.***

He's definitely talking about two things – one is the stomach which is your normal appetite and the second one is your sexual appetite.

***<sup>14</sup> And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. <sup>15</sup> Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! <sup>16</sup> Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." <sup>18</sup> Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.***

It's very dangerous! Why? Because you're giving unbridled authority for your sexual appetite. You do not exercise the authority God has given you over your own appetites. God has given us a lot of authority and power. That is the reason why He says, "When I come to you I will not look at your words, but your power." For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of words, but power. Demonstration of power in our own lives, not the power in ministry, but power over our own sin. Let's go back. Don't get distracted by mandrakes. That's what happened to Reuben.

### **Genesis 49:4**

***<sup>4</sup> Unstable as water, you shall not excel, Because you went up to your father's bed; Then you defiled it— He went up to my couch.***

What does it mean? I've given you excellency of power and dignity, but you shall not excel. What does it mean? You will not have authority. You know what that means? It means that you will lose your testimony and people will not listen to you. Even though you have a position called the first-born in your house, people will not listen to you. You will not have any control over your other brothers. Jesus when He taught, what did He have? Authority! Pharisees when they taught, people wanted to run for their lives. When Jesus taught He arrested them with the authority of the Spirit of God that even the servants who came from the Pharisees went back and said, "Nobody spoke like this man." That is how we are. Why? Because He exercised authority over His own body. He came under authority. He obeyed His parents. He obeyed His elders. He obeyed little things in life and He increased in stature and wisdom and in authority. You will not excel means what? You will lose your authority. I wrote this one – you will not be able to influence people with your position. You'll only be able to influence people by the authority that is over your life. Did Jesus have a position? No. When Jesus went to the Temple and drove out the money changers, nobody questioned Him. They came back and asked Him, "Who gave you this authority?" Pharisees had a position. They didn't have authority. They completely compromised with the situation in the temple. They completely comprised and that's exactly what has happened in these days. There is a leadership which has been comprised and all kinds of merchandise is going on in the house. They have a position of leadership. They have a position in the Church, but they do not have the authority to drive out all the nonsense from the Church. Youth leaders don't have the authority to drive out all the nonsense from among the youth, because they themselves are compromised. They have a position as a youth leader, but they're not able to influence the people in their generation, because they themselves are compromised. Leaders don't have the authority. Nobody asked Jesus, "Who gave you this position?" No! They said, "From where did you get this authority?" You see, you need to have authority my dear brothers and sisters. That is the reason why when Jesus looks at that guy, He says, "I have not seen such great faith." Who does He look at? The centurion. The centurion says, "I'm also a man under authority. I tell people go and they go. I tell people come and they come." Meaning: because I am a man under authority I have authority and people listen to me. What does a man under authority do?

### **2 Timothy 2:1-3**

***<sup>1</sup>You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. <sup>3</sup>You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.***

Who is a soldier? He's at the border. He's having an AK-47 in his hand, Kalashnikov in his hand. He's dressed. He's got his helmet. He's dressed in camouflage. He's at the border and across the border there's a Pakistani guy who is taunting him. He's got anger boiling down in his guts, but will he shoot one bullet? No. No. If he shoots one bullet, he might have killed one Pakistani, but he'll be court-martialed. Because you're not moved by situation, but you are moved by instruction from authority. You have authority. You know why Jesus had authority? He was never moved by situations. Why did Elijah have authority? He was never moved by situation. He was completely under the influence of His father and whenever His Father asked him to move, he moved. That's exactly Elijah. He said, "You know what, as the Lord God of Israel before whom I stand, according to my word there'll be no rain." And then he receives instruction: Go there. After that for three and a half years, he receives instructions. Go there and then after he's completely refined in the furnace of affliction, he goes to mount Carmel and he defeats the prophets of Baal. Why? Because he exercises authority. Why did people turn their hearts to the God of Israel? There was one Elijah who was exercising authority, because he was a man under authority. And he says, "You will not excel. You will not have authority. You will not be able to influence people." And Jesus is never moved.

### **2 Timothy 2:4**

***<sup>4</sup>No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life (or civilian affairs. Why?), that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.***

It says, "Without faith, it is impossible to please God. whoever walks in the flesh, cannot please God." That means if you're walking in the flesh, you're not walking by faith. He who is enlisted as a soldier pleases who? Him who appointed him. Whoever does not come under authority is not walking under faith, he's walking in the flesh and therefore, he will not be able to please God. Therefore, if you're walking under authority, you are walking by faith. If you a rebel and you have no authority over your life, let me tell you, categorically speaking you have no authority to influence your generation. You know why? Because you are compromised and you have no head. You will not excel. How do I know this about Reuben?

### **Genesis 37:16-23, 29-30**

***<sup>16</sup>So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding their flocks." <sup>17</sup>And the man said, "They have departed from here, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.' " So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan. <sup>18</sup>Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. <sup>19</sup>Then they said to one another, "Look, this <sup>[b]</sup>dreamer is coming! <sup>20</sup>Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!" <sup>21</sup>But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him." (But do they listen to him? No.) <sup>22</sup>And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him"—that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father. <sup>29</sup>Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes. <sup>30</sup>And he returned to his brothers and said, "The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go?"***

He has lost his influence over his brothers. How do you know that they did not listen to him?

### **Genesis 42:22**

***<sup>22</sup>And Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not speak to you, saying, 'Do not sin against the boy'; and you would not listen?..."***

Nobody would listen to him. He's the eldest in the home. He's supposed to be in his father's stead, but he lost his authority. No one would listen to him.

***...Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us."***

Why? Because he messed up in his life. He lost the battle with sin in his personal life and therefore, there is no authority in his life. And we, in the ministry, have to be very careful. We could be used by God and God could say, "What?" "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your Name, driven our demons in Your Name?" But God will say, "Depart from Me. I don't know you, you workers of lawlessness." What is lawlessness? Rebellion. You people, you never came under authority. See, the worst thing that can happen is when people don't listen to us, right? You're in the ministry and you're not influencing people,

## Let No One Steal Your Crown!

what's the whole point? I mean influencing people to be positive. You can compromise and say everything goes and you say, "Look at my ministry." We're not talking about that. We're inspiring people to live godly lives. Can we inspire people? What I'm saying is very, very important, my dear brothers. It says that he did not excel simply because he did not have authority. He did not have authority simply because he lost his battle with sin. Why is this important? Why is this such an important thing for us?

*1 Chronicles 5:1-2; Look at this everybody and underline this in your Bibles.*

### **1 Chronicles 5:1-2**

***<sup>1</sup>Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel—he was indeed the firstborn, but because he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel, so that the genealogy is not listed according to the birthright; <sup>2</sup>yet Judah prevailed over his brothers, and from him came a ruler, although the birthright was Joseph's***

Why was the birthright Joseph's? Simply because he overcame in the sexual area. And he was zealous for his father's name. Reuben did not fear his father's name. He defiled his father's bed and he was defeated in the sexual area and lost his birthright for simple stupid mandrake. That's where it starts. It might look like an innocent thing. Mandrakes looks very innocent. There is a dragon behind it that we don't know. That's what mandrake means, a man dragon. It's a camouflage. It's a viper there which can destroy you. The viper of sin. You will lose your birthright and your position as a firstborn. Why didn't he not have influence over his brothers? Simply because it is not by birth. Let me show you.

### **Romans 9:10-13**

***<sup>10</sup>And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac <sup>11</sup>(for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), <sup>12</sup>it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." <sup>13</sup>As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."***

Now, you might argue, "This is the sovereignty of God." But do you think that people are not making those choices? Why did Esau lose his birthright? Simply because he considered it very light. And you know what the Bible calls him? Turns to *Hebrews 12:12*. Esau has gone to hell because he deserves it; not because God was sovereign. Yes, God was sovereign but he deserved to go to hell. He made his choices.

### **Hebrews 12:12-**

***<sup>12</sup>Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, <sup>13</sup>and make straight paths for your feet...***

You know why? Because the Gospel has lines. Don't turn to the left; don't turn to the right; don't get distracted, with mandrakes, especially. Young people, all you young people who are watching. Older people also. Identify your mandrakes that easily causes you to get into pleasure. In fact, this is my observation – the older you grow, the weaker your intensity to battle sin. All your decisions are made today so that you are set in your ways, as far as sin is concerned.

***<sup>13</sup>and make straight paths for your feet so that what is lame may not be dislocated...***

What a superb analogy!

***...what is lame may not be dislocated...***

It's unstable as water and what does water expose in your life? That which is lame, that which can be easily dislocated. I had an accident when I was in my class 8<sup>th</sup> or class 9<sup>th</sup>. I dislocated my elbow. Till now, it's not strong. I'd be very careful and conscience about it. If I put intense pressure on it, it will just go out of the socket and come again. This holds very true to me in experience. How much for your spiritual bones! That is why truth is so important, even though it looks like a skeleton and scary. But if your truth is gone, you are gone. He says,

***<sup>13</sup>and make straight paths for your feet so that what is lame may not be dislocated but rather be healed.***

## Let No One Steal Your Crown!

And then, he says something very powerful.

**<sup>14</sup> Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: <sup>15</sup> looking carefully (circumspectly) lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; (second) lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;**

What is a mandrake? It's a root. It's basically a root fruit. It's like a carrot. It's very interesting that he was looking at all the fields and he was chopping the fields and he says, "It looks interesting." And he literally pulled it out of the ground. Mandrake. What is that? He says,

**<sup>16</sup> lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.**

For one stupid mandrake, he lost his position. And I'm telling you something – there will be such intense distractions in these last days. A lot of mandrakes which you need to identify in your own lives so that you, like Reuben, will not forsake your birthright, like a firstborn and lose the authority over your life. And I'm talking to men especially. We've all been given positions of leadership and authority in our homes. And if we are compromised, our daughters will see; our wives will know. One weakness in our life, it will be easily exposed. Like Isaac had a weakness of food and it was easily exposed. Rebekah could expose that weakness easily and exploit it. Because he lost authority in his home. Simple. He had a position but no authority. That's exactly what happened to Saul – position, no authority. What is he doing? He is hiding. When the Philistines have come, what are they doing? They are describing the Philistines, "Hey, look at the Philistine. He looks so big." What are you supposed to do? Destroy and defeat the Philistine; not describe the Philistine. You know why you are describing your problem? Simply because you lost authority. You lost your authority. You compromised little things in your life. And you lost your birthright. And he says,

**<sup>17</sup> For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing...**

He wanted it back for himself.

**...he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.**

That's what I said – not all repentance is the repentance of faith. No. He also cried. You know why he cried? Because he lost something and what did he lose? Positions in this world. That's what he lost. He didn't lose the eternal birthright. He didn't care about eternal things. He was light and absolutely unserious about spiritual things. Absolutely unserious about spiritual things. Spiritual things, in these last days, "Lord, make me serious about spiritual things." Not useless distractive nonsense babblings. That's what he says, "Avoid vain babblings which increase strife." In Telugu, it is very nice – musalama muchatalu. Profane and vain babblings. "O Lord, just keep on the straight and narrow path. Let me fight sin. Let me have an influence over my next generation. Let me be a man of influence and authority. When people look at my place, one word that I speak will have weight." You may not be given a position in the Church but if you fight sin in your life, you will have authority. You don't have to have a position. And a lot of people with position have no authority. What do you want – position or authority? I want authority. Who cares about position? That's the problem with Saul. God said, "I'm going to take away your throne and give it to others." He was fighting for position. Think about it. It's a lesson for us on how deceptive positions are. You think just because you are sitting on top of people that you have the position and you say, "You go there." But they are all serving you. You want to be looked at as a very righteous and a holy man in the sight of people but you don't care what God thinks about you. Now, God has taken your kingdom forever and He has found a man. And he says, "Please, Samuel. Come back with me and stand next to me and justify me before the people. Please, Samuel." He is not interested. He wouldn't go down on his knees and say, "Lord, okay. Take the kingdom but, Lord, let me have authority; not a position. I'm not after position." Positions are dangerous. You run away from positions. And what does it say? It says,

**<sup>17</sup> For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance...**

Can you change your mind? That's exactly what happened to Saul. He was given warning after warning and he came to a point where his heart was hardened. He was given a new heart, remember? God gave him a new heart and he was



## Let No One Steal Your Crown!

prophesying. But after a few years, slowly, sin entered and he lost his authority, notwithstanding the fact that he had a position. He lost his anointing. He had a shield. What good is a shield if you don't have anointing? Anointing – it stands for authority. Jesus Christ of Nazareth was anointed of the Holy Spirit and He went about doing good and casting out demons. Authority. Wherever He went, He didn't have a position but He had authority. It's a very interesting thing, right? He is a High Priest, right? But did He fight for the High Priest office? "Are You the Son of the blessed one? Come on. Answer me!" "Yes. I am the Son of Man and you will see the Son of Man returning with angels and sit at the right hand side of God." And what does the high priest do? He tears his robe and immediately, the position of the high priest jumps from Aaron and falls into Jesus' hands. Did He fight? Did He do one thing to fight for position? No. You see, that is what we call as 'humbling yourself and making yourself of no reputation'. Humbling yourself under the mighty hand of God so that you may be exalted in due time. Positions will be given, my dear brothers and sisters. Don't jostle for it. Jostle for authority. Say, "Lord, I want authority. I want authority, Lord." People like positions. Who cares for positions? Honestly, every time I ask, I say, "Lord, if somebody else is better than me, take me off from this place." Meaning – I don't want position. Let me be an influence over my people. That's all. If I'm not able to influence my people, what's the whole point of having a position? Right? I'm just occupying space. If I'm not able to influence people to lead a holy life, if I'm not able to influence people to put God first in their lives, I'm not able to influence people; I've lost my position. There's no point in having a position. It's only a matter of time. It will just go. So, don't jostle for positions. Don't say, "I want to sit at Your right hand." He says, "Forget about this." Let God give you a position and if God gives you a position, nobody can take it out. That's exactly what happened to Joseph. Joseph was destined to rule but one thing he never lost in his life. You know what? He never lost the authority. Wherever he went, he was a ruler. He was reigning. Wherever he went, he was a king because he had a kingly heart. That's exactly what Saul ultimately confesses about David. You know something? He says, "I'm pursuing." And one day, when they have a confrontation with each other, David confronts Saul's attitude and you know what Saul says? "I know, one day, you will be a king. You know why? Because you already have an attitude of a king. You have authority. You are able to influence your own people." When you say, "Don't strike him. They want to kill me." But you have such authority that you can constrain the hands of your own people. Absolutely. You are exercising authority and one day, you will be king. Don't fall short of the grace of God. Don't let any root of bitterness spring up. Don't be a fornicator. What is a fornicator in this case? A guy who takes spiritual things very lightly. He's an adulterer. That's what it says, right? "*You adulterers and adulteresses! Don't you know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?*" And what happens over a period of time? Slowly, authority goes from your life. We don't want that, right? Let us ask God to guard our hearts. "Lord, grant me the grace that I'll be serious about spiritual things." Humble yourself, therefore, under the mighty hand of God and He will exalt you in due time. Promotion doesn't come from the east or the west; promotion comes from God. He puts down one, exalts another. Don't exalt yourself before time. Come under God's authority so that one day, God can give you authority and position.

And what happens?

### **1 Chronicles 5:2-3**

***<sup>2</sup> yet Judah prevailed over his brothers, and from him came a ruler, although the birthright was Joseph's— <sup>3</sup> the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.***

Reuben lost his birth right and who was given the birth right? Joseph was given the birth right. We are not indispensable in the Kingdom of God. That's one of the lessons that I learnt. I think Zac Poonen also said and write imposition several hundred times – "I am not indispensable. If I think, "Oh, nobody can be better than me in the Kingdom of God,"" God says, "I've already found out somebody after my own heart. So, shut your mouths. You do what you are supposed to do. Be faithful in what God has given you." Don't jostle for positions. Have authority in your life, over your sin and over your situation. "I put somebody up. I put somebody down. Study well." Let nobody steal your birth right.

*1 Samuel 13*; what was the destiny of Saul?

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

***<sup>13</sup> And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. For now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever.***

## Let No One Steal Your Crown!

Look at the plan God had for Saul. Do you think the Holy Spirit was lying? Oh, you might say, “God is sovereign.” Yes, He is sovereign. He was sovereign over Saul’s disobedience; not over his obedience. Unfortunately. Think about that statement. Next verse,

**<sup>14</sup> But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart...**

What should have Saul done? You know what he should have done? He should have said, “Lord, it’s not about position, Lord. If I have lost it...” This is the problem with Saul – the moment he was born again and he was given a little success, Jonathan fights the war and he wins the war; he blows the trumpet. Finished. Don’t blow your trumpet, macha. Be humble. So, two exhortations, right? Turn to *Revelation 2:8-11*,

### **Revelation 2:8-10**

**<sup>8</sup> “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, ‘These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life**

By the way, this is a very faithful Church. Look at what God promises this Church.

**: <sup>9</sup> “I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. <sup>10</sup> Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer...**

That means – you will suffer. God has already promised. You are going to suffer.

**...Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.**

“You will get a crown. Just be faithful.” They already got this exhortation that they will be tested; that they will be put through tribulation. Now, go to another positive Church which God always has commendations to say about them. This is Smyrna. This is Philadelphia.

### **Revelation 3:8-11**

**<sup>8</sup> “I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.**

You are also going through suffering. But look at what He says,

**<sup>9</sup> Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. <sup>10</sup> Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial...**

To that Church, God said, “You will be tested. You will go through tribulation.” And to this Church, God said, “I’m going to keep you from the hour of testing,”

**...which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. <sup>11</sup> Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.**

Look at this! Now, tell me – which is the more dangerous Church to be in? Church of Philadelphia or Smyrna? Smyrna says, “You will be tested and I will give you.” Here, He says, “Hold fast. Let nobody steal your crown.” Kya bhaat hain! Dangerous. That means, “I’m going to keep you from the hour of trial and when I’m keeping you from the hour of trial, hold fast to Me. Otherwise, somebody will come and steal your crown.” That means if they would not have obeyed and taken the exhortation seriously, the crown that was supposed to be theirs, the particular Pastor of this Church; because every Pastor will ultimately get the crown of glory. You know what is going to happen? Somebody else is going to get the crown and he will be regretting all of eternity when he sees his name on the crown on somebody else’s head. Can you imagine? Gold medal was supposed to be for Vijay but it’s on Peter. And for all eternity, “Hi, Pastor Vijay. I have your gold medal. Thank you! Bye, bye!” No, I don’t want that. If there was a washroom in Heaven, I might just go there and beat myself up. I don’t know. I’ll go beat,

## Let No One Steal Your Crown!

maybe. I don't know what will happen. All have competitive attitude. Nobody wants to share position number 1 in school. But the problem is – people are so light about spiritual things. If you tell them, "Somebody might take your crown," "what crown? They are all children." "Anna, the Antichrist is coming." They are not waiting for Jesus, like Pastor said. They want to keep themselves from boochodu (the boogie man). "Boochodu, boochodu," you know they sing that song when we were children, when they were fed food in their homes? "Boochodu vasthunadu." (The boogie man is coming). It's important for us to understand. Therefore, the question is: are we serious about spiritual things, this morning? I'm talking to all my young brothers and sisters first and older brothers and sisters too. Or let me put it – young brothers and sisters and older fathers and mothers. Do you take spiritual things seriously or light? "Picha light! (Super light)" Do you want to have an influence over your children, mothers and fathers, that when fathers say something, they will obey? Do you have that authority? Sunday morning, at 6:30, "Abigail, get up. That's it." You know why? We are all supposed to be at Church on time. That is the reason why you know what God tells about Abraham? "Should I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, knowing that Abraham is going to become a powerful nation? For he will command his children after him to follow the precepts of the Lord." He will have influence over his children. When Abraham divides his property, he gives Isaac his estate and he gives gifts to all his servants; nobody lifts a word and everybody shuts their mouth. You know why? Because he has authority. You know why he is able to go and fight the five armies in Sodom? You know why? Because he has authority. He is able to do it with 300 soldiers. You know why? Those 300 trained soldiers listened to his word. God is able to do with few or with many. The fewer are better with God because He says, "When Gideon has this thirty-two thousand people, whoever is fearful, let him go," twenty-two thousand leave. You know why? Because if those fellows are allowed, they will weaken the hearts of the others. So, God says, "Let the fearful leave. Then, I will test the rest of the world, whether they have a sense of authority or not." And then, 300, He says, "This is enough for Me." It's a very interesting number. Gideon had 300 soldiers; Abraham had 300 odd soldiers. And God needs only a few people because only those few people will listen to Him. They will be only a few people who will come under authority and because they come under authority, God is able to give them authority because they are not jostling for positions and they will be able to influence the next generation and fight the battles of God. Look at this guy, Joshua. "Joshua, tomorrow, you are going to fight." That's exactly how Joshua is introduced to the entire picture. "Joshua, tomorrow, you are going to fight the Amalekites." No questions asked. "Get a few young men. Go and fight." He takes the horse, takes the young men, goes and fights. No questions asked. "Why should I do it? Why are you not coming? You will go and pray? I should go and fight?" Nothing of that sort. "I should go in buses and scooters and autos and you will go in the car?" What is this?

So, can Reuben be restored? We'll finish this. *Deuteronomy 33:6*. I love this. Jacob pronounces something and Moses? A picture of Christ. Your father might have pronounced something over your life but Jesus can change your destiny. I love this. Moses, a picture of Jesus.

### **Deuteronomy 33:6**

***<sup>6</sup> "Let Reuben live, and not die, Nor let his men be few."***

"CT Maro." I can't do it on camera. Nowadays, people are saying, "You are getting overexcited." I'm just trying to control myself. I'm exercising super-mindedness.

***<sup>6</sup> "Let Reuben live, and not die, Nor let his men be few."***

R, R, R. Reuben, repent and be ruthless. First – repent. Reuben, repent. That is what will make you live. Turn from your wicked ways. Turn from all your stupidity. Repent, Reuben.

If you have messed up in your life, if you have been tempted and succumbed to mandrakes in your life, God is a God who is able to restore you. Otherwise, why are we studying the Bible? Just because God is a God who restores you, it doesn't mean you can be light. Now, be serious. Be ruthless. You were very light? Now, be ruthless. How can Reuben continue in life? *Romans 8:12-14*,

### **Romans 8:12-14**

***<sup>12</sup> Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. <sup>13</sup> For if you live according to the flesh you will die...***

## Let No One Steal Your Crown!

What did Moses say about Reuben? “You will live. You will not die but live.” So, Reuben, don’t live according to your flesh and you will live. How will you live?

***...but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.***

That’s what I said – repent and be ruthless.

***<sup>14</sup> For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.***

They are the Reubens of God. What does ‘Reuben’ mean? “Look, a son.” Reuben means – behold, a son! Be led to be filled with the Spirit and to put to death the deeds of your body. There is no other option. There is no plan B. Do you understand? There is no other way. If you do not kill sin, like Pastor John Piper said, “If you do not kill sin, sin will kill you.” And who is this written to? This is not written to the people who are outside; this is written to the people who are in the Kingdom, right? Is *Romans* written to the Gentiles in Rome or to the Church in Rome? To the Church in Rome. The person who is reading from the Church is not going to read the letter and say, “Oh. Hey, you gentiles. If you live according to the flesh, you will die but if you...”

***...but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.***

Will he say that? No! He is going to say, “Oh, my goodness! He is speaking to me!” And if you are a child, you are carnal and not spiritual. Be ruthless. In other words, don’t defile yourself with mandrakes.

### **Revelation 7:4-5**

***<sup>4</sup> And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed: <sup>5</sup> of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand were sealed...***

“Thank You, Jesus.” Who are these one hundred and forty-four thousand people?

### **Revelation 14:3-4**

***<sup>3</sup> They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.***

Among whom are also the Reubenites. Thank You, Jesus.

***<sup>4</sup> These are the ones who were not defiled with women...***

Hallelujah! Women. They understood now. “No more mandrakes in my life.”

***...for they are virgins...***

Can you imagine that God can call you a virgin even if you have defiled yourself? Wow! The Bible is the Bible of hope.

***...These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.***

Can we just say, “Hallelujah,” for that? You can be redeemed, my dear brothers. But you have to be ruthless. R, R, R. Kya bhath hain! No Raja Mouli; but Jesus Christ. Reuben, repent and be ruthless. Otherwise, somebody will steal your crown. Don’t let anyone steal your crown. What about Simeon and Levi? We’ll talk about that later. We’ll pray now. Let’s pray.

### **Closing Prayer:**

*Father, we just thank You, Father. You are a good God. Your mercy endures forever. You are always on time. Father, enable us not to let anyone steal our crown. Enable us to hold fast to You. “Hold fast,” You asked Timothy, “to the pattern of sound*

## Let No One Steal Your Crown!

*words that I have spoken to you.” And let all those brothers who thought that they have messed up; all of us, Lord. We all messed up. We all got tempted with mandrakes in our lives. We were not serious about the harvest. Forgive us, Lord, and grant us the grace to be ruthless with sin. Ruthless, that we, by the Spirit, will put to death the deeds of the body. Lord, that we will be filled with the Holy Spirit; that we will be accountable to one another. If our eye causes us to sin, we will pluck it out. If our computer causes us to sin, we will throw it out. If our laptop causes us to sin, we will throw it out. If our iPad causes us to sin, we will throw it out. If our mobile phone causes us to sin, we will throw it out and we will take a normal phone. Lord, we will not waste our time, O Lord Jesus. We will be focused. We will not be people who will be beating aimlessly in the air but we will make every punch count in the Kingdom of God. Grant us grace, O Lord, to that end, we pray. Strengthen us, O Lord. Let there be no fornicator or a profane person like Esau in our lives, beginning with me, that for one morsel of food, he will sell his birthright. But afterward, even if he sought it with tears, he couldn't find a place for repentance. Lord, Lord, have mercy upon us and grant us continuous repentance, Lord. And let these be the days where we will examine our hearts and we will purpose in our hearts and our minds not to defile ourselves and not to sell our birthrights for temporal, earthly pleasures. Thank You, Father. Bless us and continue to speak to us in these days. We thank You. We praise You. For in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.*