

Let's look to the Lord in prayer!

This morning, we just want to thank You Lord, Father, we just want to glorify Your name, You are such an awesome God. Not withstanding all the inclement situations around the world, Father, You have been faithful to all of us, especially, to us in this church, You have been faithful, You have come through. There are no reasons, Oh Lord, for us to complain. You have met us exceedingly, abundantly, even more we could even ask, or we could even think. Thank You, Father, for all the praise report that come from all around the world, thank You Lord, for choosing us, as a church, to be a blessing, thank You, we never want to take that for granted. Lord, I pray that we will continue to remain humble and we, Your servants, continue to be a blessing, O Lord, even as we have been exhorted this morning. And Lord, even now as we come to the ministry of the Word, I pray Father that You would anoint us afresh once again, grant us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, that Lord, You would be able to take this Word and You would touch and impact Your people and make it relevant to whatever situation they are going through. To that end I pray that You would bless the hearing and the speaking of Your Word. Animate us, perfect the gifts that You have given to us, and keep us in that straight and narrow path. For in Jesus' name we pray, Amen!

So, this morning we have been looking at the Gospel of the Kingdom, the fact that we are subjects, supposed to be loyal to a King and God is interested in making us into disciples and subjects – “Go into all the world and make disciples of all nation,” so we will be loyal. That's the reason why it says, “A faithful witness who can find! A faithful/loyal friend who can find!” and David's last exhortation that he gives to his son, Solomon, is, “Serve the Lord God of your father with a loyal heart,” and the word is ‘shalom,’ – a heart which is always at peace with Him and loyal to Him. Shalom means; ‘completely,’ in other words, there is no division at all, it is completely surrendered to God's leading in your life. You see, that is what we have been exhorted to and we have been continuously, constantly trying to focus our minds on the Kingdom of God and to the King – Kingdom and King. That's the bottom line, I would say, of the entire Bible; Kingdom and King.

Like yesterday in the Q&A session; I like what Pastor was saying: I went to the Bible to look for answers but then I found my answers in Christ. That's ultimately – He is the answer. “I am your shield, I am your exceedingly great reward,” and when we go to the Bible is to know the God of the Bible and ultimately, we see that we are a people who are kingdom people and our mindsets have to change from being democracy seconding and thirthing to completely surrendering, there is no seconding and there is only two people who can second, I believe: God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit; second and third, and everybody else obeys. That's the focus of our life, to be loyal subjects of the king. Why? Because we have been told in Hebrews chapter 12, let's read from verse 27 to 29.

Hebrews 12:27-29

²⁷ Now this, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

²⁸ Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom, “Be cheerful little flock. For it is the Father's wish to give you the Kingdom,” which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. ²⁹ For our God is a consuming fire.

Other translation will use the word, “Let us be thankful and serve God acceptably and reverently and in godly fear because God is a consuming fire.”

Now, the question therefore is, how do I serve Him? What are the practical issues that I have to take into consideration in order for me to ensure that I inherit the Kingdom of God, and in order to that, how do I

serve God acceptably, reverently, and with godly fear for which He is going to give me grace? What are the practical issues that I have to take into consideration in order for me to inherit this Kingdom and build my life in such a way that what is being in my life is the Kingdom of God and not anything else? We don't have to turn too far because chapter divisions have been a modern thing and if you turn to same Hebrews chapter 13, let's look from verse 1 onwards, few things I want to point out today—there were actually about 13 things if you look at the entire exhortation over here, the final concluding arguments if you will, of the Hebrews chapter 13. You will see all the message kind of boils down to certain practical aspects. So, because we are receiving the Kingdom that cannot be shaken, we need to ask God for grace, so that we can serve Him acceptably, reverently, and in godly fear. And how do we serve Him?

Hebrews 13:1

¹Let brotherly love continue.

First thing He says is, "Let brotherly love continue." I was looking at it and I said, "What is this, Lord?" I mean because we have so many search engines these days, I might as well use technology and the word actually is, "Let Philadelphia continue," that's the word. "Let Philadelphia continue," in other words, if you really want to be a church which will not be shaken, one church you have to really become or aspire to become, is like the church in Philadelphia. But how do we become a church, which it says, 'Let Philadelphia continue' how do we become like that? How do we become a set of people where we will have brotherly love continuously?

It says in 1Peter—if you can put it in NKJV only, okay, because every other translation has missed something so profound and I believe that is the game changer in that verse.

1 Peter 1:22

²² Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit....

Now tell me, other translation will omit what? "Through the Spirit," they omit that, they have completely removed that—NIV, NASB, ESV, every translation I have seen, that has literally removed that word 'through the Spirit.' How is it possible for us to believe God and obey the truth without the Spirit? It's impossible, for the carnal mind is contrary to God, will not submit to the law of God and indeed, it cannot, and therefore, who live according to the flesh cannot please God and those who live according to the Spirit can please God. We can only obey the truth through the Spirit, it's impossible otherwise. Every exhortation in the Bible is connected, if you will, in the New Covenant is connected with the Holy Spirit – every other sin that you commit will be forgiven but not against the Holy Spirit, that's all. Powerful exhortation. So it says,

²² Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

How do you do that? Simple! First thing – purify your souls by listening to the truth and ask God for the power of the Holy Spirit to obey that truth, and what will be the net result of that is – sincere love, unfeigned love for the brothers. How do we achieve this? And God gives us patterns in the Bible, and if you will turn to Revelation chapter 3, you will know this particular verse.

Revelation 3:7

⁷ These things says He who is holy, He who is true "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens"

That's how He introduces Himself in different ways to different churches and the way He introduces Himself to the church of Philadelphia is that: "I am God who is holy and I am God who is true."

If you turn to Hebrews chapter 7,

Hebrews 7:26-27, 25

²⁶ ***For such a High Priest was fitting for us, in other words, the only High Priest who could fit the bill was Jesus, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;***
²⁷ ***who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.***
²⁵ ***Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.***

That is how He is introducing Himself to the church of Philadelphia, saying, "I am the only God, I am the only true God, I am separate from sinners, I have the ability to sanctify you through and through."
Let's go to back to Revelation chapter 3 and verse 7.

Revelation 3:7

⁷ ***These things says He who is holy, He who is true "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens"***

How is He going to do that? He says He has the key of David. He is the God who opens and shuts. What does He do? He opens the opportunities for us to live the life of Christ and shuts the opportunities where we will not be able to live the life of Christ. Let me give you one example - what does it mean for the key of David, key of David means Jesus Christ Himself. It says in Romans chapter 1,

Romans 1:1-4

¹ ***"Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God ² which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, ³ concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, ⁴ and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."***

His Spirit was absolutely pure, holy and by the power of the Holy Spirit He was risen from the dead, He was a Man who came in flesh and lived an absolute holy, righteous life, without sin, set apart and that has open for us – A new and a living way in the New Covenant; the same way as Jesus overcame sin, you and I also can overcome sins in our lives, and every door which enables us to overcome sin and be an overcomer, He will open and every door which is not going to be conducive for that, He will shut. Joseph opened the door. What was it? The pit, was his door for the life of Christ to be manifest. It says he sent a man before him. Awesome! He is a God who opens doors that no man can shut and who shuts and no man can open and He is giving that to Philadelphia church, He says, "This is how I want to introduce Myself." And He says in verse 8, "*I know your works.*"

Every church He comes and gives this exhortation: "*I know your works.*" You look at every church, seven churches, the first thing He says is, "I know your works." He is a God who is going to recompense us according to our works. Understand that. As body without spirit is dead; faith without works is dead. And He tell the church of Ephesus – "I know your works, but there is no love"; Sardis – "I know your works but they are incomplete"; "I know your works," He says to the church in Laodicea, "but you are lukewarm, you are neither hot nor cold." You see, every place He says and He is a God who comes and examines our work. He wants us to make us into a people—Titus chapter 2:14—you know that verse very well, look at what it says.

Titus 2:14

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.***

What? Zealous for good works. He says, "We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which He has prepared for us before the time began." So, this is important for us. He is a God who examines

our work and then He comes and He kind of shows their attitude, what kind of an attitude this church in Philadelphia has. He says,

Revelation 3:8

⁸ "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.

Why? because you had a little strength—first thing, in other words – you were completely dependent on me. It's like that widow with two mites, she came and put everything she had, and Jesus looks at her and says, "She put more than everybody else." And other people come and says, "God, do You know this building? So many donations came and with those two mites, not even a gram of cement you can buy, what are You talking about?" and Jesus says, "She has given her everything, she gave herself to the Lord."

I don't remember which preacher it was, maybe he became a prosperity preacher later on, so that's the reason I don't remember his name but I remember his example that he gave in his church—he says, the offering bag was going and this guy didn't had any money in his pocket to give to the Lord but the offering bag was just coming, so what did he do – he went along with offering bag and said: "I am going to give myself to God," and he just went to the altar and said: "I am surrendering myself to God." He is literally putting himself in the offering bag. That's exactly what that lady did; put herself there.

He says, "I know that you have little strength," meaning: you are completely, totally dependent upon Me. That is what the church of Philadelphia is – they realized they are absolutely powerless to do this – how can brotherly love continue? C'mon! We have discontinuous signals and continuous signal in engineering, right? That means whatever time it is, you will continuously love your brother and to have this kind of love, you know what the disciples say? "How many times should I forgive my brother?" 'So many times.' And they say, "Lord, increase our faith."

I am totally dependent upon you and you realize this kind of work, you are absolutely powerless: first thing. Second: "And also that, you kept My Word."

Romans 3:9-11

⁹ 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. ¹⁰ Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹ Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

Third: "You did not deny My name," fourth: "You kept My command to persevere." And He says, "I am also giving you an exhortation, hold fast; let nobody steal your crown." This is the church in Philadelphia, this is how brotherly love will continue. If we want to receive a Kingdom that is not going to be shaken, let your dependence be completely upon God, ask Him the power to keep the Word. So many times, when we read the Bible, people will say, "It's tough," and what should you say? "It's impossible," and then you will have the power of the Holy Spirit through you. As long as you say, "It is tough, I can do it," it's impossible. Completely depending upon His strength, upon His Word and you did not deny His name and you kept His commandment to persevere – that was the church in Philadelphia, you see.

So, the way we do it is this – "Lord, grant me strength in these last days to overlook faults." It's not that it's going to be easy, no way! Luke's gospel chapter 5 will say, "Is it easy to say your sins are forgiven or pick up your mat and walk?" easy to say pick up your mat and walk, easy to give but more difficult to overlook fault. And He says, "Let brotherly love continue."

Let's go back to *Hebrews 13*, the second one. This is something which I thought was powerful and important for us.

Hebrews 13:1-2

¹ Let brotherly love continue. ² Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.

I was thinking about this and I have heard so many teachings, I have read commentaries on that as well – some people think it directly refers to Abraham entertaining the three angels showing them hospitality etc., you remember that story and it's true in one way, but if you look at the verse very closely, it says: deal with xenophobia, meaning: fear of strangers. In other words, how do you deal with people who are absolutely different from you? Do not forget that. I am telling you honestly, a church is comprised of people who are completely different from you, very rarely you will find people who are absolutely as close to you; not only in DNA but also in your temperament and your attitude and your likings etc., It says in Jeremiah chapter 3— let's look at some verses for us to understand this.

Jeremiah 3:14-15

¹⁴ "Return, O backsliding children," says the Lord; "for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. ¹⁵ And I will give you shepherds /pastors according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.

That's what He says in 3:15, but what is He gonna do? He is going to take one from a tribe and two from a city – different people from different walks of life. I think ours is the only church in Hyderabad which is not predominantly telugu, right? It's interesting though. We have people from different walks of life, different temperaments and is it easy to show hospitality continuously? They could be strange in their outward looks with educational backgrounds, with cultural backgrounds—I mean, I can sit next to Ps. James, I am so totally different from him, my goodness! He wouldn't even know—it's like entering holy of the holies when I enter into his office. So, it's like that—I am so different, yet, God has brought us together in His sovereignty: one from a tribe, two from a city – two different backgrounds: one is in literature, one is in science, we think totally differently and we have also given inputs to my daughter: Pastor says, "You have to go for literature," and I say, "You have to go for math." You see, we are trying to do a melting point into Abigail now.

I like both, by the way, I like literature not because I enjoy literature but because I like drama, I really-really used to like drama and I used to like dialogues and monologues and I used to really get fascinated with people who can just emote and speak dialogues just without any difficulty. I did act in quite a few plays when I was growing up, it was one of my favorite art forms, if you will. I actually remember—when I was growing up during my youth fellowship days, they gave me 15 pages monologue on Peter for one day, and in one day I had to do it and I remember, I just did it just like that because I enjoyed it. I enjoy literature, that's the reason why I see Shakespeare's Marlin Brando's rendition of Mark Antony, it's super.

So, I am talking about different types of people having different temperaments and the problem is – we are not only a people who are scopophobic; we are xenophobic too. Because other people are different from us and what are we trying to do? We are trying to make them like us instead of allowing them to have their own individuality and yet working with them. The church is actually full of strange people, you need to understand that—even if you are born in the same family, you can be two brothers but two different people, they are not the same, they can be of the same parents but so totally different from each other—I mean I can see in my own family; Abigail and Emmanuelle – Abigail is one person who can sit and concentrate and the other girl is jumping, jumping, like that -it's so different and I have to make her sit.

The church is actually full of strange people and one of the skills that we need to master is the art of building bridges and not building walls. Okay, art of building bridges and breaking walls are not building walls amongst one another. It says in Ephesians that He broke the middle wall of separation and He made Jew and Gentile one. It was absolutely an anathema to the Jewish mind—how can the gentile? And when the Holy Spirit fell on them, Peter was absolutely shocked – "My algorithm was: believe in the Gospel, get baptized, and be

baptized in the Holy Spirit.” This is totally different! You know why? Because God was doing something, He was breaking that wall in his heart which actually took a lot of time for it to break.

The ability to be winsome and not compromise on your convictions—I am telling you this is very important, I mean God was speaking to me through several days even as I was meditating upon this—the one thing which I didn’t want to preach was from this, you wouldn’t believe, it was like I wanted to type something but the Holy Spirit suddenly said, “Write certain thing that would contend for the faith,” something like that happened. I didn’t want to because I knew there were certain things which I had to really look into my own heart—ability to be winsome and not compromise on your convictions. We know the man after God’s own heart is David; reason why David was such a tremendous character is because he had this uncanny ability to become winsome. Remember the episode at Ziklag, right? Now, Ziklag is burned down and everybody is frustrated, but David strengthens himself in the Lord and he is pursuing, he doesn’t know where to go, and then something happens in the middle—we know the story very well but I just want to put this into different perspective—*1 Samuel 30:11*, look at what it says,

1 Samuel 30:11-12

11 Then they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David; and they gave him bread and he ate, and they let him drink water.

You see what they are doing? Showing hospitality to strangers.

12 And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. So when he had eaten, his strength came back to him; for he had eaten no bread nor drunk water for three days and three nights. 13 Then David said to him, “To whom do you belong, and where are you from?” And he said, “I am a young man from Egypt, servant of an Amalekite; and my master left me behind, because three days ago I fell sick.

And after that you know the story – this guy will be the game-changer for them. And you know what happens on the way—they pursue the Amalekites, they overtake them, and they recover all and they are coming back and even as they are going, two hundred people say, “We are too tired, we don’t want to go,” and then in verse 21, something interesting happens;

1 Samuel 30:21

21 Now David came to the two hundred men who had been so weary that they could not follow David, whom they also had made to stay at the Brook Besor. So they went out to meet David and to meet the people who were with him. And when David came near the people, he greeted them.

You see that? They didn’t support him, okay.

1 Samuel 30:22 (NIV)

22 But all the evil men and troublemakers among David’s followers said, “Because they did not go out with us, we will not share with them the plunder we recovered. However, each man may take his wife and children and go.”

Now, how are these troublemakers characterized? You know what the word for troublemaker is? Belial – Sons of Belial among David’s followers, there are several sons of Belial among David’s followers, okay.

1 Samuel 30:22-26(NKJV)

22 Then all the wicked and worthless men of those who went with David answered and said, “Because they did not go with us, we will not give them any of the spoil that we have recovered, except for every man’s wife and children, that they may lead them away and depart.”

Get lost – in other words. You know that’s what I am saying! The uncanny ability to build bridges. You know what he does? Next verse,

23 But David said, “My brethren, you shall not do so with what the Lord has given us, who has preserved us and delivered into our hand the troop that came against us.

24 For who will heed you in this matter? But as his part is who goes down to the battle, so shall his part be who stays by the supplies; they shall share alike.

And you know, something interesting happens,

25 So it was, from that day forward; he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day.

Remarkable! Isn't it? And just imagine, what those guys would have thought? That's the reason why it says, "Do not repay evil with evil; repay evil with good, so that by doing so, you will heap burning coals on his head," and the whole purpose of it is to win him over. The best way to defeat your enemy is to make him your friend. That's it! That's how you do it, that is winsomeness and you know something which we need to understand in these last days? The church has to be a church without compromising in convictions. What should we do? Say, "Lord, how do I build bridges?" I remember—if you have seen the eulogy of Ravi Zac on Nabeel Qureshi when he passed away – he preached and he was telling something about Nabeel—when he went to Malaysia, there was a girl in the salon from a different background, she was asking about him and you know he said something about Nabeel that he had this uncanny ability to build bridges with other people which was so different from him.

It's remarkable to build bridges with strangers to overcome xenophobia, and the church is full of strangers. By the way, husband and wife in the same home can be strangers, you know that? They will hide from the husband because they are xenophobic, "I don't know what this fellow will do if I tell him or her." That's how walls are built, walls are made, that's exactly what happened even in the most ideal of couples in the Old Covenant – Isaac and Rebecca – one wall, strangers in the home instead of building bridges and becoming one, they build walls and become compartmentalized. Church is a body, seamless—the garment of Jesus was, what? Seamless! That is reason Colossians uses a very interesting term, "You should be knit together in love," not stitch together. There is a lot of difference—knitting takes lot of time, patience and effort but it's a strong garment because there is no seam, otherwise you will come apart at the end. Seams are your weak areas, your weak points. The Church is a body, it's not a robot where you assemble all parts together. Understand that? We are organic and one thing we need to do is, overcome xenophobia.

Look at the next verse, this is powerful. Look at what he says...

26 Now when David came to Ziklag, he sent some of the spoil to the elders of Judah, to his friends, saying, "Here is a present for you from the spoil of the enemies of the Lord"

Do you see how he is building bridges? Winsomeness with all the people who are of influence. We need to ask God for that. That is what it means to entertain strangers. This guy is totally different from me, but how do I become organic? in that sense how do I have that relationship with him that we become a body and when each part is supplying to the other, right? That is the reason why I love Paul when he says, "I was longing to see you because I wanted to impart you something of spiritual value to you, not only so, we should be encouraged by each other's faith – both yours and mine." That is how he looked at it. He is not saying, "I am the apostle of the gentiles, you better accept me into your church. I am going to teach you," no, no, no. That is winsomeness— "I want to know from you, I want to learn from you." You see. Think about the guys whom David won to the Lord—I want to show you few people. If you turn to 2 Samuel chapter 23, these are the mighty men of David.

2 Samuel 23:37-39

37 Zelek the Ammonite, he is not Moabite by the way, if he was Moabite, you can at least say—oh, he is from his clan, ***Naharai the Beerothite (armorbearer of Joab the son of Zeruiah)***, ***38 Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite***, ***39 and Uriah the Hittite: thirty-seven in all.***

And then there is another guy called ***Ittai the Gittite***. Think about this guy—he is from Gath, he is from the enemy's territory, he was won over to the Lord by David! That's remarkable!

I am going to show you something very interesting if you turn to 2 Samuel chapter 15, verse 18 onwards.

2 Samuel 15:18-22

This is when David is fleeing Absalom.

18 Then all his servants passed before him; and all the Cherethites, all the Pelethites, these are his personal bodyguards and all the Gittites, six hundred men who had followed him from Gath, passed before the king. That means this guy went there and he won 600 souls to the Lord. Just think about that! That's what I call building bridges, winsomeness. He didn't become like them; they became like him. Uriah didn't become a Hittite, he did not continue as a Hittite, he said, "Yahweh is my Light," Uriah means, "The Lord is my Light and my Salvation," I think Psalms 77 he sung much better than David. "The Lord is my Light and my Salvation, whom shall I fear?" you know what Hittite means? Fear. The guy who was given unto fear, now after seeing the life of David, he said, "I want to follow this God." Maybe it was his baptism name, I don't know or his circumcision name, I don't know; remember, when you are circumcised you are given a name? Abraham when he was circumcised, from Abram he was converted to Abraham; on the 8th day, you see that Jesus was given the name on the day of circumcision; John the Baptist was given his name on the day of circumcision—day of your circumcision, I believe Uriah was give his name – The Lord is my Light—he becomes circumcised. In other words, spiritually speaking, he became an Israelite and a follower of the God of David, just not David; that's how David built bridges. It's one thing to make your enemy your friend rather to win over an enemy and there is another thing that he will be ready to give his life for you—that's a different thing altogether. Look at what it says, the Ittai the Gittite,

19 Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, "Why are you also going with us? Return and remain with the king. For you are a foreigner and also an exile from your own place.

He is a foreigner, a stranger—Ittai the Gittite, Hushai the Archite; all the 'ites' he has, different ites he has. I am telling you, that is the picture of the church under the headship of David. That is Philadelphia, my dear brothers and sisters, of course! Understand that.

And he says, "You are a foreigner and also an exile from your own place."

20 In fact, you came only yesterday. Should I make you wander up and down with us today, since I go I know not where? Return, and take your brethren back. Mercy and truth be with you."

What does Ittai say? This is what I call winsomeness. What did Ittai see in David?

21 But Ittai answered the king and said, "As the Lord lives, and as my lord the king lives, surely in whatever place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also your servant will be."

He didn't say, "As David lives," he said, "As the Lord lives," the word for Lord is Yahweh, "As Jehovah lives," he is taking the covenant name of God. "I am not like Naaman the Syrian who goes back and serve his king, you are my king now—Jehovah is my King."

22 So David said to Ittai, "Go, and cross over." Then Ittai the Gittite and all his men and all the little ones who were with him crossed over.

You see that, they all crossed over along with David. It's like that, "Going outside the camp bearing His reproach," a picture of this, if you will. Spurgeon preached a sermon called "*Loyal to the core*," on Ittai the Gittite, okay. This is what he has to say, "I am afraid that friends quite so faithful as Ittai are as scarce as two moons in the sky at once," –two moons in the sky, and you will never see that—"And in fact, you can travel to the edge of the world before you find one. I think, however, that one thing why faithful Ittai has become so scarce is maybe because large hearted Davids are so rare." What a statement! Put that in your spiritual pipe and smoke it. "I think, however, that one thing why faithful Ittai has become so scarce is maybe because large hearted Davids are so rare," who have a winsome nature, who have overcome xenophobia in their lives are so rare and who are not fearful of strangers and they will not forget to entertain them. So what do we do? Ask God to make us this guy, to be winsome without compromising on your convictions.

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

19 For though I am free from all men,

You know what? Ittai was free, "Do whatever you want," you know what he says? "no, wherever you go, I will go." It's like Ruth, "Wherever you go; I will go, your people; my people, your God; my God, where you die; I die, except death, nothing is going to make us go apart."

I have made myself a servant to all, what of all? Servant of all, ***that I might win the more***, the whole purpose is to win them over, that is the reason why he says, “I am under obligation to the Jews and the barbarians, to the wise and the unwise, I am under obligation to everyone, don’t owe any man anything except the debt of love.” He says, “I am obligated, I am under obligation, I am a debtor,” that’s his attitude, I think he understood the Gospel more than anybody else—I mean think about it, if a Pharisee has come through, he has come through.

²⁰ ***and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law;*** the whole attitude is—I want to be a person who is going to win the other person over,²¹ ***to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ)***, and what is the law of Christ? Love, love is the fulfillment of the law, right? ***that I might win those who are without law;***

And what is the common between all these verses? The one word is ‘win,’

²² ***to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.*** ²³ ***Now this I do for the gospel’s sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.***

It’s awesome, isn’t it? My desire is to save and I will become weak.

I remember Brother Zac, in one of his addresses he says, “One thing that you never tell your child— ‘YOU MESSED UP!’ but rather you say, ‘Okay, you messed up, it’s okay, we can fix it.” I like that. In other words, go and sit with him/her and build it together. That’s difficult. My whole attitude these days is to make my daughter love math, my wife looks at my attitude and says, “I don’t know by the end of the day, will she love it or not?” See, this is the whole thing, you know, we want to become weak so that we can win them over. So, I said, “Lord, by the time this finish, when she looks at numbers, she should get excited,” then I have won her over.

Think about it, if everybody thinks like that: when she looks at the Bible, she should get excited, by the time this is over. The whole purpose is to whet your appetite and take you to Christ and then you have a relationship with Him, notwithstanding what your background may be – we all are people strange to each other, aren’t we? Strangers. And God brought us together.

So, don’t forget to entertain strangers. You know why? Unwittingly, you will be entertaining angels. Now when you think about angels, don’t think about cherubim and seraphim coming to your home—he could be a cherubim and seraphim on fire for God. What does seraphim mean? It means the one who is on fire. That’s exactly what happened to that Shunammite woman: built a house for this guy, and what did she invite? Fire into her home—man who was on fire for God. Those people can bring certain things into your life, some dimensions of God that you have never ever seen. I remember C.S Lewis in his book ‘The Four Loves,’ he talks about this, he says, “I had four friends...” –let’s say: Sammy, Peter, Dr. Richard, and Raj – four friends, one of them passed away before the other after we reach 70 and then he says, “I thought I could have more of Peter and more of Sammy and more of Dr. Richard when Raj is not there in the picture, and then I realized actually that I had less of Peter even though I spent more time with Peter and I had less of Sammy even though I spent more time with Sammy and less of Dr. Richard even though I spent more time with Dr. Richard, simply because there was one dimensionality of Dr. Richard, Sammy and Peter only which Raj could bring out. So when Raj is around, he suddenly brings out one dimensionality of Christ. You see what I am talking about?

“As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones in whom is all my delight,” they could be strange saints, but they are saints. One dimensionality of Dr. Richard which only Raj can bring out and nobody else, and if he is gone. That’s the reason why people when they live church, they do more harm to the church, they don’t realize that when they just leave, because that one dimensionality of Christ is gone, you have harmed, you have robbed the church of what we could experience of Christ in you because it is the Christ in you which is the hope of glory and people don’t realize this.

Strangers which entertain angels, the messengers –that’s what stranger means, the messenger, and sometimes strangers can bring fired up messages which can convict you even though you are a senior believer, you know that? I will show you one stranger who brought fired up message—2 Samuel chapter 11, you know this stranger very well.

2 Samuel 11:10-11

¹⁰ ***So when they told David, saying, “Uriah did not go down to his house,” Who is this? Stranger, right? Now he becomes the angel, David said to Uriah, “Did you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?” and look at what the angel brings; the message which is like a fire, which is like piercing arrow into his soul, into his heart.***

¹¹ ***And Uriah said to David, “The ark and Israel and Judah are dwelling in tents, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open fields. Shall I then go to my house to eat and drink, and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing.”***

This is a stranger. This is a stranger who teaches David. You entertain strangers, you will get this kind of messages. That’s what it means. Entertaining means, not constantly having him in your house, I am talking about building bridges across, so that we can enjoy Christ more. You understand that? We could not do this in our own self, it’s impossible. That is the reason why it says—1 Peter chapter 4 please,

1 Peter 4:7-11

⁷ ***But the end of all things is at hand; why? Because we are receiving a Kingdom which cannot be shaken, therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers, and ESV will use the word, “Because of your prayers.”***

⁸ ***And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.” That’s why it says, “A man’s discretion makes him slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.”*** ⁹ ***Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.*** ¹⁰ ***As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.***

Everybody has received the gift, “minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

¹¹ ***If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.***

So, understand, God is saying to all of us: “Break the walls and build the bridges.” As much as you can, you start and ask God for wisdom.

“How come your Master eats with tax collectors and sinners?” You know what Jesus says? “Those who are well, don’t need a physician, but those who are sick. The Son of Man has come to seek that which was lost from the Lo Debar of the world.” Remember Lo Debar? Pasture-less, wasteland. From there you have Mephibosheth coming to whom the king shows kindness for the sake of Jonathan his friend.

Luke 7:34-35

³⁴ ***The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’*** ³⁵ ***But wisdom is justified by all her children.”***

He became a friend of all: the friend of sinners is what He allowed Himself to be called as. This is important because remember the first—I think two apostles had confrontation rather; one confronted the other because of this problem. Instead of building bridges, we are building walls and this is what happens in Galatians 2,

Galatians 2:11-14

¹¹ ***Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed;*** ¹² ***for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew***

and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. ¹³ And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

¹⁴ But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?"

In other words, we all are one. Just because you are a Jew, it doesn't mean you are special and because they are Gentiles doesn't mean they are rejected – all of them have to put their faith in Jesus Christ to be reconciled to God, no other way.

Turn with me to James chapter 2, look at this principle.

James 2:1-4

¹ My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. ² For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, ³ and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," ⁴ have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

He says, "No! When it comes to the body of Christ, we all are one and we need each other."

So, never forget to entertain strangers because they will teach some things that you don't even know and that could really convict you as well.

So, first thing we looked at: *let brotherly love continue.*

Second: *do not forget to show hospitality to strangers.*

Third: *Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also.*

Let's see that, Hebrews chapter 13.

Hebrews 13:1-3

¹ Let brotherly love continue. ² Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels. ³ Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also.

You see that again? Same picture is coming, why? Because we are inheriting the Kingdom which cannot be shaken and the only thing which will not be shaken is the Church of God which will endure forever. It's like an ark, if you will.

2 Timothy 3:12

¹² Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

The only devotion that we get every day in the morning is that introduction to the persecuted church.

If you turn to 2 Timothy chapter 1, verse 15 onwards, there is one character that Paul mentions very interestingly.

2 Timothy 1:15-18

¹⁵ This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

I think Alistair Begg preached a word, "What will be your legacy be—will you be like Phygellus and Hermogenes which will be mentioned in eternity? They forsook Paul—legacy of Phygellus and Hermogenes; legacy of Demas - he left Paul. What will your legacy be? In eternity, what will your legacy be? And then he says, the next verse...

16 The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain;

Isn't that interesting? One guy in the family, "he often refreshed me," in other words, the entire household was involved in ministering to Paul, you know why? Because Onesiphorus led in the home, we will come to that late on.

"for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain" - of course, it may not be possible for us to meet people from different backgrounds who are imprisoned for the sake of the Gospel; I am not talking about that, but we could still refresh them in our prayers and ask God for a burden to pray for them who are going through intense trial.

It's very interesting, let me tell you – David Wood's channel, they banned him for seven days on YouTube, it's over two-three weeks back. You know why they banned him? Not because of the videos he produces against the Islam, there was one video which he produced which is talking about persecution of Christians in different countries and they banned that video as hate speech. He was actually tabulating the Open Door's report as to what kind of persecution is happening in different countries and including our own country, he just put that on YouTube and that became hate speech, they asked him to remove that. He was banned from YouTube for seven days and thank God, he has recently reached 500k subscribers for his YouTube channel—Praise God for that—and everybody complained to YouTube, "How can you ban this guy? And what is hate speech in this?" and you will see that it's going to be increasingly hostile towards Christians in the days to come, it is not going to be easy.

Yesterday, Dr. Richard sent us a video of John MacArthur, did you see that? Increasingly hostile. Those guys don't have a problem when these people come on to the streets without masks and all, not having social distancing and looting, but they have a problem when people are coming and worshipping God? Hostile! Hostile! And you will have a thousand dollar fine per day in California? Think about that.

And look at this guy, *"The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus,"* I am telling you honestly, if you have this kind of attitude, your household will be blessed, the Lord will grant mercy to your household. He did not say, "Lord, I pray for apostle Paul," but how did he do? Look at verse 17,

17 but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me, in other words, "he did not stop till he found me," that's the attitude he is saying—prison to prison, prison to prison, "Where is Paul? Where is Paul?" Can you believe that? This kind of attitude he had! I am sure his entire household was supporting in this kind of ministry. This is called Onesiphorus ministry – the legacy this man would have left. Then you know how Paul blesses him? Look at next verse.

18 The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day, which day? In that Day! You want to find mercy from God in that day? He says, "If you are ashamed of Me in this earth, I will also be ashamed to confess you before My Father in the heaven when you will stand before Him in judgement seat—***and you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus.***

This is Onesiphorus ministry, he did not write him one letter but he took care of the man of God who would bring this entire doctrine to the church.

Can we look at three verses together if you don't mind!

16 The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain;

That is the reason why Paul tells Timothy, "Don't be ashamed of me,"—he is a prisoner— "but endure hardship as discipline as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. Understand this Timothy. There is going to be persecution in the last days." The whole idea is, "Lord, will we be Onesiphorus?" You know what Paul is saying, ***"The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; 17 but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me. 18 The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day—and you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus.***

What is God is going to show him? Mercy. You know why? Because of this attitude towards the apostle.

Matthew 25:32-40

³² All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. ³³ And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: because we are receiving the Kingdom that cannot be shaken, prepared for the kind of people like Onesiphorus. We will never name our children Onesiphorus for sure, but Paul, of course! ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

That's exactly what He tells Paul, "Paul why are you persecuting me?" not my church, me!

³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? ³⁸ When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? ³⁹ Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' ⁴⁰ And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

You know why 'least of these'? Who will search apostle Paul like that? Everybody forsook him! This guy zealously searched for him till he found him. That is the reason he says in 2 Corinthians 9, "Increase in your love for us, those who have ministered the gospel to you," these are people who had eternity in their minds. You see, Paul is very important, but those who put Paul down through the rope and who held the rope so that he will not die are also important, because he is the bearer of the Word of God and if these people mess up, he is gone and the Church will be robbed off treasure. You see, that's the reason why we have to protect those people who minister the word to us; it's so important, protect them, have this attitude. We will come to that later.

'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

So three things we looked, let's go back to Hebrews 13 now.

Hebrews 13:1-3-4

¹ Let brotherly love continue. ² Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels. ³ Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also. ⁴ Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

So, if you have to rephrase this: marriage is honorable, marriage and the bed of marriage are undefiled and is honorable among all, but the fornicators or the pornographers—the original Greek—and the adulterers God will judge, since you are receiving a Kingdom that cannot be shaken. What shall you do? Keep your marriage pure. In other words, fulfill God's purpose of marriage in your life and if you think it's too difficult, ask God for something else. You see, there are two principles in the marriage: one for the man and one for the woman. What is for the man? *Matthew 19,*

Matthew 19:4-6

⁴ And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' by making this statement, God is putting His approval that Genesis was written by Him, especially the first three chapters, contrary to these polemics who come and say, "Oh these are all dreams, these are all stories," no, no, they are not! ⁵ and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? ⁶ So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

What is that? For man – leave and cleave and become one. That’s the one thing for the man, you have to leave. And all the girls will be, “See, you are still attached to your mother,” they will start thinking, “This message was for you only,” I am going to balance, okay. I will balance the equation—I used to hate chemistry for this reason because we have to always balance the equation and the left and right, atoms here have to be equal to atoms here; bah! Such trouble I had with chemistry, I hated it. This is for the woman.

Psalms 45:10-11

¹⁰Listen, O daughter,

Consider and incline your ear;

Forget your own people also, and your father’s house;

A man should leave and what should you do? Forget. Which is difficult? “Okay, let me call my mother what she has to say about this,” forget your own people also and your father’s house, delete, so that what will happen? **So the King will greatly desire your beauty;**

Because He is your Lord, worship Him.

See, man has to leave; woman has to forget. Bhuljaomaik (forget your father’s house) and you, husbands don’t say, “Maichechalejao,” (go back to your father’s house) aisa mat bolna ghar pe (do not say that to her in your house). She will say, “I forgot the address, this is my address,” if she is a godly woman. You know why? All because both of you are conscious of one thing—since you are receiving a Kingdom that cannot be shaken. It all is seen in the light of eternity, that is the reason why John Piper has a fantastic statement, “This light and momentary marriage,” I was stunned when I read that statement, I said, “Yeah, this is interesting,” ‘Light and momentary marriage,’ it’s true, ultimately, you we are reflecting something which is divine, we are receiving a Kingdom. And what is the whole purpose of marriage? Sanctification is the purpose, because two strangers are there – xenophobes, they don’t want to share their secrets, and what does the Scripture say? They were naked and they were not ashamed. That means there were no walls between them, absolutely open and transparent with one another.

In other words, they were giving themselves over— “You know what? I am willing to be vulnerable in this relationship.” (My wife be smiling right now) You see, that is the reason I don’t go to Scriptures, you see, I have my reasons, every man has to prophecy to the measure of faith he has, but—you know, every time I was trying to write something else, I was going only towards this, I don’t know why! Now I know why. Even marriage is a model. What is the model? Husband is the head. If you turn to 1 Corinthians 11, we know these things very well, I am just reminding of these things, but understand the purpose. See, don’t just get married because: “I have to get married now, my biological clock is ticking,” the whole purpose of marriage in the Kingdom is different. That is the reason why the fundamental clause is, “If he is an unbeliever, don’t get yoked to a donkey,” for all your life, he will make you a donkey, you will not convert him because donkeys are not redeemable, you know that right?

Don’t become like Solomon, “I will build bridges,” he didn’t build bridges, that fellow broke every wall of holiness in his life and he became a total compromiser. It says, “When he grew old, they turned his heart away from following the Lord and he did not wholeheartedly followed God as his father David did.” Don’t make national integration your cause in your marriage, it’s not going to happen—it didn’t happen in IIT, what will happen in your marriage? Think about that. Hall 4 we had hal 4: Gulty club, Bengali club, Mallu club, Sambar club –that is Tamil club and of course, you have the North Indian club. It’s unbelievable how we just gravitate towards our language people! All caste barriers will go during that time, even the Telugu speaking Muslims will become one with the Telugu’s; that kind of integration happens.

1 Corinthians 11:2-3

² Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you. ³ But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

“Abraham listened to his wife, God asked him to listen,” you know that is like—one preacher says, “That is shirshasana,” you know what shirshasana is? For those who do not know, it’s like yoga, it’s one posture in yoga where the head is down and the legs are up. Now, it is healthy if you do shirshasana for five minutes-- “Oh, the blood has to circulate into my brain and I should become active, my concentration level will increase”, etc., etc., whatever reasons you have other than religious reasons and occultic reasons, you are health-conscious people. How many times can you do shirshasana? How long will you do shirshasana? It is healthy if you do it five minutes a day, but the problem is, in many marriages, the husbands are doing shirshasana; It is healthy if you listen to your wife only once, “Throw out the bondwoman,” ‘God, what shall I do?’ “Did you ask Me when you had this problem with Hagar and your wife Sarah? Whom did you listen to?” ‘I listened to Sarah.’ “Okay, how did you have this Ishmael?” ‘By listening to Sarah.’ “Okay, now why are you coming to Me? You created this problem by listening to Sarah, now listen to what she asked you to do. Throw that fellow out.”

But the problem is, everybody: “What should I do? Should I go to church on time?” “Should we give this one to the church?” Who is making these decisions in the home? Think about that, my dear brothers! Husbands doing shirshasana, that’s exactly how it is, because they are not heads, because they don’t have strong convictions. Marriage is honorable in all and everybody has to fulfill its purpose. Let me tell you one thing—we men, whether you like it or not; we are called to lead and make the spiritual decisions in our homes and if you fulfill God’s decision, that’s what you are made for by God; that was the manufacturer’s manual – this is what you are made for, you were made to make spiritual decisions and to wash your home by the Word of God and to sanctify your wife and to be that spiritual head; that person is going to be the one who is going to minister to your home—the head! You cannot have two pair of eyes in the head, that is the reason why we have division, meaning: one person has one vision and other person has another vision and both are walking in two different tangents. And what is happening? Look at what it says—I will show you certain things which are little painful for all of us but it is good to be little hurt and not to be harmed later on, right?

Ephesians 5:22-27

²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴ Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, So, what is the whole purpose of marriage? Sanctification! And how does husband sanctify his wife? By being winsome, by the way. Understand that. Don’t say, “I am the head!” when you have proven yourself to be absolute.... the other way, I don’t want to use words now.

²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

That is the purpose of the marriage: to be the head and to be the person who loves the Word of God and whenever he is ministering to his wife and you are having issues, bring the Word, not arguments. After that, we can all agree in the Word, right? But the problem is, you don’t know your Word or you don’t live the Word even if you know the Word. The head is important.

Titus 2:3-5

³ the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things— ⁴ that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their

children, many people say that exhortation to love is only for husband, no, but it is also for the wife, ⁵ **to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.**

In other words, the wives have the incredible responsibility to prove through their behavior that the Word that has been preached will not be brought to disrepute. Understand this. Marriage is honorable among all, it is not a joke, my dear brothers. Marriage is a huge, tremendous responsibility because, literally what you are doing is, you are creating a small church in your home. You will not take your money or your possessions, or whatever it is, but definitely you have the opportunity to win your children and take them with you to heaven. Those are the people whom you can win, and those who win the souls are wise.

Understand headship! this has nothing to do with equality. What did God made a woman to be? To be a helpmate and she functions in that category, in that office, if you will. You know, she is exactly functioning according to pattern and she will be the most efficient and it is taking about efficient, otherwise, you will be wasting time because we will be running two different races and we are not having agreement. Let's come back to the husband again,

1 Peter 3:7

⁷ **Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding**, the word is 'gnosis,' according to knowledge, meaning: do your homework. Understand the mood swings of your wife—how to speak to her and to be winsome—it's a very intelligent thing, you need to understand, you should be wise as serpent and harmless as dove even in your own home. Because the whole objective is to win the other— "Oh, you have got very good words!" 'Yeah, I have used it very well,' – that time I used to win you over, now I am winning you over and over. You have to win them over and over. Know how to win them over, not force them over; to win them over and that is difficult. That is the reason why marriage is D-E-A-T-H.

Understand that headship is important. Who is the head in your home?

And He says, **giving honor to the wife**, Don't forget to be chivalrous--suddenly, "Ha, okay, okay," don't be like that at home. I am speaking again—see, my wife is looking at me again, she is going to bring this back, I am sure, but that's okay.

The whole purpose is to win her over, you see.

as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

These are portent statement, "That your prayers may not be hindered." That means, a husband and a wife in absolute agreement can literally make the powers of darkness run for their life if they agree. That is the reason why enemy knows it and he attack the marriages, you know that? And why during this pandemic everything has been exposed? Simply because of this. That is the reason why in Malachi, He says, "You come and weep and pour out your tears before My altar and you fill My altar with your tears and say, 'Why are You not hearing me?'" He says, "It is because I was a witness between you and the wife of your youth and you have garments of violence. I know how you deal with your wife of youth; you have dealt treacherously." Notwithstanding all the comments on YouTube—I am sure people will start sending comments, but it's a fact. Why all these? Because we are inheriting a Kingdom that cannot be shaken.

Romans 8:17-18

¹⁷ **and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.**¹⁸ **For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.**

Understand that? Marriage is honorable among all, so keep it pure. In other words, we are living in a generation which is baptized with sexuality, all around; keep your mind pure, be absolutely ruthless in this area.

Matthew 5:27-29

27 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ 28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

A young man or a woman—everybody is addicted to this nonsense, now, there is no difference.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-4

3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; You see – when you dress, when you walk, when you talk, the way you carry yourself, it has to be honorable—I am talking to both man and woman—the kind of conversation you have, it should be respectful. When younger sister looks to older sister in Christ, she should say, “Boy! What attitude she has got! The way she speaks, honorable!” When younger brothers look at an older brother in Christ, “Man, look at the way he treats women, how respectful and honorable he is! He is not flippant, he is conscious about it,” because we are living in a day and age where everything goes, where all boundaries are taken off and there is only one visible sign in the whole world – it’s the church of the living God who is upholding the standards of God and who are living in it in the power of the Holy Spirit, full of grace and truth.

4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, in other words, you have to know your own weaknesses, my dear brothers and sisters, and abstain from it and ask God— “Flee youthful lust and pursue righteousness, faith, hope, love, with all those who call God from a pure heart.” “Everyone who has this hope will cleanse himself because as He is pure, you also should be pure.” Pure means, have no divided loyalties with anybody.

One warning which I got from Pastor Vijay James when he came to Grace Home, several years back when he was with us; this one verse which struck to me, I am sure you know this verse very well.

Proverbs 22:14

14 The mouth of an immoral woman is a deep pit; He who is abhorred by the Lord will fall there.

What a warning!

Put it in NIV, it will be more scary.

Proverbs 22:14(NIV)

14 The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit; He who is under the Lord’s wrath will fall into it.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Because we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken—that’s the whole idea here, I am pointing this out because of that central message of Hebrews. ***Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.***

Therefore, deal with this and say, “Lord, grant me the grace to be pure in these last days,” and God gives you the grace. It is not something which is impossible, it is absolutely possible. And think about that one day, that satisfaction we have when we have not sinned from morning till evening, we can sleep peacefully—that one day, I long for that day and make it several days. Amen!

Let’s go to Hebrews chapter 13,

Hebrews 13:5

⁵ Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. In other words, if you have more, give it away. **For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."** The reason why people hoard is because they are scared.

Proverbs 11:26

⁶ People curse the one who hoards grain, but they pray God's blessing on the one who is willing to sell.
"Cast your bread on many waters," "Give and it will be given to you."

2 Corinthians 8:1-4

¹ Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: ² that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. ³ For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, ⁴ imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

You see, the blessing of giving— "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Practice this, deal with this. The best way to deal with covetousness is to give, not hoarding. We sang that, "When we have come to the end of our hoarded resources..."—I like that song, I was thinking: boy! Isn't it true? When we hoard certain things, we will lose everything— "and we have come to the end of our hoarded resources, our Father's full giving has only begun." It was only when Abraham was empty, zero, and no ability to bring forth the son; God started something afresh in his life and when he did not withhold that son, God blessed him even more. Don't hoard, don't hoard your gifts, be willing to be vulnerable even in your giving. It's a principle.

Luke 16:9-13

⁹ "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home.

That's what exactly David did. Gave all the spoil. What was he doing? He was making for himself friends by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home.

¹⁰ He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. ¹¹ Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? ¹² And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own? ¹³ "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

How do we serve God and make mammon your servant, we have been exhorted to several time. So ask God, "God, make me a giver." See, everybody has to be willing. It is not according to what one doesn't have but according to what one does have, and the gift is accepted—if there is first a willing mind—that's the principle. There is no law here, no legality – that is of the devil – freely from your heart, no compulsion at all.

Hebrews 13:7-9

⁷ Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. ⁹ Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them.

One thing he says: guard the treasure of the doctrine that is being given to you and don't be carried away with strange doctrines. You see, in the story of Absalom and David; David is fleeing Israel, he is going to exile in some sense, he is leaving Jerusalem and he has several people who are making choices; they are showing their loyalties in different ways—you have Ziba who is showing his loyalty, had ulterior motives; and you have Mephibosheth who is showing his loyalty and then you have Ittai the Gittite who is showing his loyalty

and you can actually do a complete study on it, okay, and you have Zadok and Abiathar the priest who say, “I want to come and follow you,” and David says, “Take the ark back,” because He is the true King; people who are occupying the throne, they are not the true king, don’t bring Him out of Jerusalem, He is the King.

I mean, actually, Warren Wiersbe in his study talks about three kings: King David, God the King, and Absalom, who was the temporary and he is uprooted. And one guy who accepts the sovereignty of God is established and David says something very interesting, “If God shows favor towards me, He will bring me back, I don’t want to occupy this throne if this is not God’s will, and if He is punishing me, chastising me, let it be done,” and he asks Abiathar and Zadok to go back. And then, when one of the guy called Hushai the Archite comes and he puts sackcloth and all dust on his head and when does this guy enter into the scene—see this, okay, this is remarkable—if you want to make a play, it’s a perfect screenplay; entry into Jerusalem, exit out of Jerusalem, it’s fantastic.

You know what he says? If you turn to 2 Samuel chapter 15...

2 Samuel 15:31-34

³¹ Then someone told David, saying, “Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.” And David said, “O Lord, I pray, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!”

He makes a prayer and somebody enters into the scene as an answer to the prayer. Now, who comes?

³² Now it happened when David had come to the top of the mountain, where he worshiped God—there was Hushai the Archite coming to meet him with his robe torn and dust on his head. This is remarkable! This is what I call the sovereignty of God, this is I mean—if He has to write a screenplay, who can be better?! Steven Spielberg will also not be better—by the way, Steven Spielberg has no original screenplays, he has only adapted screenplays. That is just for your information, free of cost.

³³ David said to him, “If you go on with me, then you will become a burden to me. ³⁴ But if you return to the city, and say to Absalom, ‘I will be your servant, O king; as I was your father’s servant previously, so I will now also be your servant,’ then you may defeat the counsel of Ahithophel for me. Just keep that in mind, “Defeat the counsel of Ahithophel,” now, this is interesting, what does Ahithophel mean? Tophel or Tofel means foolishness, ‘Ahithophel’ means; my brother is fool, my brother is folly – that’s a very strange name to give to a man who is very intelligent, isn’t it? I want to show you something very interesting, a word study—‘tophel,’

Job 6:6

⁶Can flavorless food be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?

I want to ask you for a guess. Tofel means foolishness or folly, in this particular sentence, can you tell me what is the word that is rendered as folly or tofel? ‘Flavorless food,’ thank you very much. Flavorless food is teaching: what is tofel? Teaching without salt and what does salt stand for? “Let your word be seasoned with salt” and stands for grace. Any teaching which is void of the grace of God is tofel, and what does the Hushai the Archite has to do? He has to defeat that council. Because you have in the last days, people who use the grace of God as a license to sin. You know, one of the most incredible brainstorming verses that I really—it’s like a lightbulb which came to my mind, okay. Remember, when pastor was teaching?! Adultery happens in two ways: when you forsake the doctrine of God, forsake Him and become a friend of the world – what does James call you? adulterers and adulteresses.

So, there is a doctrine which says, “Okay, you can be a friend of the world,” what does it making you? It is making you to commit adultery with God. There is another doctrine which is called the doctrine of the law. If you are married to the law, you are not married to Christ. In other words; you are connected with the law – you are also being an adulterer. I hope you remember that. You know when I read that, my goodness! Everything in my mind fell into place. Because that is what will happen in the last days, you have one set of people taking towards the law, and one set of people going towards license to sin and both are void of grace; both are tasteless, truth without grace is tasteless, and you enjoy the world without the grace of God—I

mean, you will just be miserable and the most miserable set of people are believers in the world because they cannot enjoy the world. Can flavorless food be eaten without salt? You know what he is saying? “Hushai, there will be strange doctrines in these last days, fight every doctrine which is void of the grace of God.” Grace of God makes you overcome sin; grace of God doesn’t lead you back to the law. There is only one law for the Christians: it is the law of love. Otherwise, it’s foolishness,

Lamentations 2:14

¹⁴ Your prophets have seen for you False and deceptive visions; Now tell me, what is the word for Tophel? ‘False.’ ***They have not uncovered your iniquity, To bring back your captives,***
In other words – they have not released you from captivity, they have made you into more slaves of sin or more slaves to the law.

But have envisioned for you false prophecies and delusions.

In other words – every teaching which will not uncover iniquity—what is iniquity? The reason for your sin. It is only doing, what? It is putting everything under the carpet, brushing everything under the carpet. Every doctrine— “It’s okay, it’s okay,” No! what is it doing? It’s leading you to captivity, instead of releasing you from captivity. “You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free,” that is the reason why I love Romans chapter 6.

Romans 6:17-18

¹⁷ But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. ¹⁸ And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

So, every doctrine which will make you captive to sin and not release you from the clutches of sin, which will not uncover the iniquity in your life, rather put a covering over it, is tophel, and what is Hushai supposed to do? Defeat it in the name of Jesus. That is the reason why casting down every argument, every imagination, every pretense and bringing it to the captivity of Jesus Christ.

Ezekiel 13:10

¹⁰ “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,

Now, tell me, what is the word rendered as tophel? ‘Untempered.’ In other words, it’s not a brick wall, it’s not even a stone wall, it’s a wall of sand and they put out nice untempered mortar which looks very good from the outside; rain comes, the flood comes, it’s gone, *it will not stand the test of time* because we are receiving a Kingdom that cannot be shaken. “If anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is.” Gold, silver and precious stones or wood, hay, straw? Untempered mortar and any doctrine which will just only do outward whitewash—reject it in the name of Jesus, which will not go deep. Several other ways, it’s all I tempered mortar in fact, in the book of Ezekiel, the whole thing is untempered mortar, untempered mortar and what is tophel. It’s a teaching, it’s a council which is foolish. What is it against in the new covenant?

1 Corinthians 1:18

¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.—

Ezekiel 13:11

¹¹ 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.

That is what they are against—the cross. It is the cross of the Lord and savior Jesus Christ, they are against. *¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God,*” and every doctrine, every lie which will not put Cross at the centre, we have to defeat it; Hushai the Archite has to do it, defeat the counsel of Ahithophel but it looks very fantastic, isn't it? And the way he says, “Take twelve thousand men and finish them off.” What is the whole purpose of Ahithophel's doctrine? To finish off the life of Christ inside of you, that's the whole purpose. And what does Hushai want to do? He wants to protect Christ inside of you, he wants to build walls so that the life of Christ will be protected inside of you. understand this, my dear brothers, in these last days because we are receiving a Kingdom that cannot be shaken.

So, five things we looked at today. Let's look at that from Hebrews chapter 13,

Hebrews 13:1-6

- 1. Let brotherly love continue.**
- 2. Do not forget to entertain strangers.** Deal with xenophobia in your lives.
- 3. Remember the prisoners.**
- 4. Marriage is honorable,** actually, we looked at 6.
- 5. Deal with covetousness.**
- 6. Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you,** in other words, protect the doctrines that has been given to you. and how do you do it? Verse 17,

Hebrews 13:17

¹⁷ Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

You know why? Because we are receiving a Kingdom that cannot be shaken. That's the reason why all these, because that Day, every lie will be exposed, let us be prepared now.

Amen! Let's pray!

Closing prayer

Father, we just want to thank You for this day, that You are a good God. You warn us because You love us. If we don't have Your Word, we would be deceiving ourselves thinking that we are right and okay when everything is not okay in our lives. Open our eyes to behold wondrous things out of Your law and grant us the grace to willingly submit to it, knowing that we are receiving a Kingdom that cannot be shaken, for it is Your good pleasure, it is our Father's good pleasure to give us the Kingdom, little flock, therefore, hold on and do not disobey His commandment to persevere. Thank You, Father, thank You Lord, we worship You, we praise You, we give You glory, for in Jesus' mighty name we pray, Amen.

Benediction

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