

When Impotent Meets The Omnipotent

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Father, we just come to You, Lord; the Author and the Finisher of our faith, what You have begun, You will finish. So, this morning, we surrender our spirit, our soul, our body to You, Lord; speak to us, teach us, empower us, so that we can walk in what You tell us. In ourselves, we cannot do it, but through Christ Jesus, we too confess; I can do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens us. Thank You, Father, thank You, Lord – all of the eternity we will be thanking You for Your Son and for Your Spirit. Thank You, Lord, speak to us now, teach us, show us, mold us in the image of Your Son. For in Jesus' name, we pray, Amen!

So, we are coming back to the Kingdom of God, but it's not easy, okay, but we have to practice that art. Like the old illustration I used to get, when we were all young and we travelled in buses and all kinds of modes of transport, when those turnings came—I think, from the border to the capital in Bhutan, you have to go through around 27 or 28 hairpin curves. So, when you are going, those drivers—it's not power steering—he is exercising, these days it's power steering, it's so easy, you know. But in this time, the pastors still have to use that old steering to get their people and their minds back to God and to His Kingdom, especially now, even more in the time of pandemic and panic. C'mon, chill! God is in control, He is always in control; learn from the ancients, learn from the greats, they were not rattled—of course, they were rattled in the physical, but the spiritual always overcame, you cannot live blind to the physical reality, but the spiritual was stronger than the material world. Therefore, they always came back and you have to see how they saw.

So, the primacy—that's how you prove that the Kingdom of God is primary in your life, where the voice of the King is ultimately that matters, that you allow the eternal to triumph over the temporal and the spiritual over the material. In *2 Corinthians 5:7*, it brings the natural tension, which only believers go through—unbelievers don't go through that—we are called to walk by faith and not by sight – not only on Sunday morning when the service is going on, or relatively easier, ambience, setting, everything is there but after that. You walk by faith, but in that walk of faith, it also involves how we think. The Kingdom of God also has an ideology which is called truth, and truth never changes, and the kingdoms of the world also have their ideologies and God is trying to frame us in truth, also, we have to daily hear the King's voice – that's the voice of His Spirit. So, eyes on Christ Jesus, the person and mind on the things that are above. You all know by now all these verses, right? Colossians chapter 3, verse 1 and 2: Eyes on Christ, mind on things that are above and not below.

Colossians 3:1-2

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

This is how we look at life, we have been raised with Christ. This is something which we have to do. Like, all those who have gone into this very high mountain ranges, I know the one which I have travelled umpteen times in my life, it's from the border town called Phuntsholing to the capital Thimphu at the highest point, on the way where you have a huge hydel project which India built in Bhutan and they sell electricity—that electricity from Bhutan reaches all the way to Delhi, we have built the hydroelectric projects over there—so, when you reach the highest point, it is written, “Bird's Eye View,” you look down, you will see all these township of the project but they all look like matchboxes. That's what God is talking about – Never forget where you are seated, from that vantage point, look at life; then you will see how small your problems are. That's the only way you can handle it.

If you look at from any other vantage point, you will look at life as too difficult, too problematic. God says, "That's why you have been raised. If you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts and minds on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God." What are the things above? His Kingdom, His purpose, His will, His name – that's where our minds should be.

"Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth," so, Bible is very-very careful, He says, "I understand your physical reality, you are living and walking on Earth but don't forget spiritually where you are seated." That's the way how you should function, that's the life of faith, that's how Jesus walked. One man, the first man to walk completely, totally by faith was Jesus Christ; first man ever in human history to be full of the Holy Spirit, completely filled with the Holy Spirit. That's how He walked. How do you know you are full of the Holy Spirit? That is when you walk by faith, absolutely walk by faith – that's how Jesus walked.

So, please remember, these are all what we call ideals and ideals are important in the Kingdom of the God, like they are important in the world. You have to keep aiming at it, "Lord, I want to be filled with Your Holy Spirit one day and walk in that manner all the days of my life," that involves both hearing the voice and also, truth, never get complacent about it. Like in Matthew 7 and verse 24, in the sermon on the mount, when Jesus talks about the two houses,

Matthew 7:24

²⁴ "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

Now, this is not talking about the hearing of faith of your healing, your deliverance, it's not talking about that; it's talking about truth. You see, this is one of the fundamental issues of Christians, most Christians are like king Saul, they have no deep conviction about anything – are they saved? Yes. Are they anointed? Yes. But do you have deep convictions? That's what the Bible is talking about. Do you have deep convictions? That's how your mind is framed by Truth. If you do not have deep convictions, you know what, your mind is mixed; that represents the crowd that came out of Egypt, that mixed multitude, and we don't realize churches are full of mixed multitudes, their minds are not framed by truth. That's how you build your house on the rock and then when calamity comes, and all these things happen in homes and families, churches and societies, you are not shaken, not that it doesn't affect you; it only affects your body, it's not affecting your mind because your mind has been framed by the deep truths of God.

So, Jesus was absolutely that man on the rock, He was the rock, He was the first man to walk in the flesh completely controlled by the Holy Spirit, absolutely led by the Holy Spirit of God and He showed us the way. It's Martin Luther who said, "If some emperor were to destroy all the copies of the Bible and only the Gospel according to John and the book of Romans were to survive, Christianity would still be as strong," because the Gospel according to John is kind of different from the other four Gospels – if you look at Matthew, it begins with genealogy; Luke begins with John's father, Zechariah and Elizabeth; Mark suddenly begins with his ministry but John is completely different. And you need to realize, people will say, "John heard from this one, Matthew heard from that one," they are forgetting they did not hear from anybody; they heard from the Holy Spirit. I get irritated when I read, really good biblical scholars trying to bring human element in. You think Matthew went around asking and then wrote the Gospel? Then where is the authority of the Scripture there? No, it's not. So, the Holy Spirit was involved in writing all of these, but the fourth Gospel –the Gospel according to John, shows us the way of how Jesus walked; He became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace, full of truth, both, absolutely deep-seated convictions and controlled by the power of His own Spirit –His Holy Spirit.

So, you will see, it's an eye opener if you look at the Gospel according to John; it is the way, even the statement He makes in the Gospel according to John, He is teaching us how a person, who is filled with the Holy Spirit, live; how does it happen. You see Jesus walking and He has got people walking behind Him, and then He turns and looks at these two disciples and asked them, "What do you seek?" meaning; a Spirit filled Person has the discernment to know who is seeking God and who is not seeking God. He gives the

discernment. It may be a crowd before you or behind you, but He knows those who are seeking God and those who are not seeking God, and you don't waste your time and attention on those who are not seeking God – through it all you will see, you will always see. And He tells Nathaniel—that's the sign of a Spirit-filled Man— *"I saw you under the tree"* meaning; a Spirit-filled Person is able to see people who have no guile in their hearts. And that's the key, because one of the things, in life, is that you want to encounter and be with people who have no guile in their hearts, and Jesus is able to see through and He says, "That man has no guile in his heart." He is able to understand the times and He is also able to look at His mother and say, *"My time has not come yet."*

There is time and a season to do certain things in the Kingdom of God and the Spirit-filled Person is aware of God's timing; He doesn't do before or He doesn't do after, okay. He is able to see the state of His own heart, He understands, "My heart is a temple of God; it is not to be used for merchandise." Remember? When He goes into the house of God and He says, "Take all these things away! My Father's house is a house of prayer; it's not a house of merchandise," and your prayer life itself can be a prayer life of merchandise – buying and selling. And He has got the absolute assurance of the indestructibility of what He is building and He says, "Destroy this, I will rebuild it in three days," Spiritual Man is able to look inside and is able to see that what is being built by the Spirit of God is what matters, and it cannot be destroyed by time or powers above or below. He is able to look at incredible theologian and see that he's not saved, you need to be born again.

I know one of the toughest times when I had to tell a Bishop that he needs to be born again. So, you go through the statements and look at Him sitting with the Samaritan woman and telling her one of the most important things about life that there is a worship that will happen which is deep-rooted in convictions, which is called Truth and the Spirit; which is the only thing that will lead to true worship, and I am telling you, still, people do not have deep-rooted conviction—it's not that they are not hearing, but they are also simultaneously hearing so many other things, they are not able to separate themselves from the ideas of the world, and that's what one thing social media does. And most of the forwards, even which Christians, sent, if you look at the core of it, if you have discernment, it's humanism; it is not Christ centered, it is humanism –it sounds good, it looks good, but it is still exalting man and not Christ.

That's why in the Gospel according to John—I spoke on Thursday, we were looking on Gospel of John, because we are trying to bring the focus back to how you become a kingdom person. How do I keep my mind on things above while living on earth and fulfil the purpose of the King? And we saw the signs, and the signs –the miracles in John are called signs, meaning; it's bigger than something that you experienced in life, there is a message behind it, don't miss the message. So, we saw, like contemporary situations; the world is facing two major crises, which is the major physical crisis of every physical human being, right? Whether it is human, plant, or animal – what is that? Lack and disease. How do plants die? Either there is no water or disease comes and plant dies; animals –whether lack or disease. At that common level we are all the same; it is either lack or disease. We saw how Jesus comes and deals with both.

That is why it is so important to hear. Lack may not be same in everybody's life but lack is lack, and whether it is a lack in resources or something else, the answer lies in hearing from Jesus and doing whatever He says, implicitly obeying – it doesn't make any sense to us but it's still the only way out of your lack; whatever lack you are facing. In the same way with disease; you have to hear and obey, and don't try to add anything to it, take Him at His Word and go. And in every case, you will see, the healings of Jesus Christ were not similar, He did different things; they had to do something and only when they did the way He said it, the healing took place. That is the importance of hearing. One is deep-rooted conviction that we need to come to and second: we need to hear the voice of God.

I think, Pastor Vijay and we were talking – that's what God tried to do with Israel when He brought them out of Egypt; He had to take them out of Egypt, He didn't straightaway take them into the Promise Land, He took

them into the wilderness. Two things. One: so that He could give them the Truth and they would learn to listen to His voice, both things.

You have grown up for 400 years in the ideology of Egypt, so many ideologies, wisdom of Egypt as it is called, and you have seen it, you have seen the manifestation of power over Egypt, they exercised power over you and so much of that has gone into you. So, either you will be a slave or you will try to exercise same kind of power over others. These are all ideologies. He wanted to empty them out of these ideas and replace it with Truth and also, they would learn to hear His voice. And that's the answer, "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God,*" they fail, the second generation succeeded.

So, today we will go to John chapter 5, we look at the greatest sign of all His signs – it is in John chapter 5.

John 5:1-3

¹ After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

He who was born under the Law of woman; Jesus who was born under the Law of the woman is fulfilling the demands of the Law, the demands of the Law is that, every Hebrew male above the age of eighteen or something has to go to Jerusalem at least three times a year for the feast. So, after this, there was the feast of the Jews and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. So, He stays under that practice because He is born under the Law, He happens to keep the Law and fulfil the Law, so He goes and He is going up to Jerusalem and He is led by the Spirit.

If you look at verse 2,

² Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches.

So, He is being led by the Holy Spirit—if you read Nehemiah, there are ten gates and Ezekiel prophesized there will be twelve gates and eternally also, there are twelve gates; so, right now, there are ten gates but the Spirit of God is leading to a particular gate. This is the fundamental thing which you have to learn about life. You may be approaching a situation, there may be ten ways – which way will you choose? Because the way you choose, there is something also, appointed by God there. You could enter in and go into feast through another gate, but you miss the Holy Spirit's appointment for somebody else which God wanted to do through you, you missed it. So, He is very open to the Spirit of God and if you remember, Nehemiah, when he builds the wall, this is the first gate that is set up. He is the Shepherd and He goes through the Sheep Gate and the Sheep Gate is to bring the sheep in, this is not for the people; this gate is where they brought all the sheep and the goats for sacrifice – the Fish Gate is there, the Sheep Gate is there, the Dung Gate is there, the King's Gate is there, the Horse Gate is there, all kinds of gates were there. Now, He doesn't go through the Horse Gate, He doesn't go through the Dung Gate. Scripture says that He goes to the Sheep Gate—let's come to the verse two.

² Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches.

Actually, this word 'Bethesda' – it is the only place where it is used; you don't have Bethesda mentioned anywhere else, Bethsaida is there, but Bethesda is the only place. And you know why it is mentioned here? Because He obeyed the Holy Spirit and went to that place, otherwise, it wouldn't be there in the Scripture, you wouldn't even know there was such a place. Why do we know that there was wedding at Cana? Because they invited and He went, that's the only reason, otherwise, it's not there in the Scripture. It's interesting because Bethesda means house of mercy and five of course we know, is a number of grace. So, house of grace, house of mercy, with these five columns representing grace, there lay great multitude of sick people – that is the history of Israel and often the history of Church.

³ In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water.

Let's go to KJV, it's interesting what KJV writes in verse 3.

³ In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

Impotent means people who have no power, that's the truth because when we use the word sick, we relegate it because we have to look at what does it mean to me now, what does it mean in all times. There is mercy, there is unlimited grace available from God – His mercy is for a thousand generation; His grace is sufficient for everything and there is a whole set of impotent people lying there. And that's the truth of people in the house of God, in the church, this is the truth. So, I wanted to give a title, *"When The Impotent Meets The Omnipotent,"* what happens?

We are all impotent, powerless in our situations and then He comes in, the Omnipotent comes over there. All kinds of people, helpless, a people without hope; they have no hope, *"great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered,"* waiting for what? The moving of the water. We know in the next chapter, the angel comes and stirs the water, but let me tell you something—an angel has never healed a single person from that day till today, ever in human history; it's the Holy Spirit who heals. Angels are only servants who do God's bidding; they don't heal anybody, they don't deliver anybody, they cannot. All around the world for thousands of years, this is what has happened—from Genesis chapter 1 verse 2,3 onwards, everything happens when the Holy Spirit moves over the waters, His revival is brought by the Spirit of God when He moves – restoration is brought by the Holy Spirit when He moves and these are a set of impotent people waiting for the move of the Holy Spirit; they are all lying over there.

Let's go to verse 5 and 6,

⁵ Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years.

'A certain man,' anybody can fit yourself into that narrative – thirty-eight, eight years; you can pick your numbers, the number is relevant over here if you wanna apply it but there is a certain man, okay, anyone, and Jesus goes there.

⁶ When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

Jesus knew, Jesus knows everything – that's the beauty about it. You need to realize, it doesn't matter how long you have been powerless, it's not hidden from Jesus' eyes, He knows and He goes. If you look at his answer when Jesus asked him a question, "Wilt thou be made whole?" Don't get too familiar because we have heard it many times in different contexts, but the question is still the same – everyday the Spirit of God asks the same question: "Do you want to be made whole?" And what does a man say?

⁷ The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

"I have no man," meaning: there is a certain man who says, "I have no man to help me"—there are two kinds of people, ultimately, if you divide people: one, those who live in dependency, who truly do not know Christ, fall into these two categories; either they are completely dependent of something other than Christ or they are entirely dependent upon self, they are independent. The devil will lead people into one of these two: either he will make you totally dependent and make you believe, "I have no man, therefore, I am powerless," or I need no man. And the dependent and the independent are actually both on the same condition; they both are lost.

First, let us look at the independent. These are the people who have actually worked hard and have overcome lots of odds and have made a success for themselves—they are successful people; not unsuccessful. They really struggle with the Kingdom of God – the fundamental basic truth that salvation is a free gift and cannot be earned coz they have always beaten every odd and they are successful because of their own, they don't need self-help, they don't need help from outside, they can never be in somebody else's debt because they are self-made people and they really struggle with Jesus even after they get saved, and it is represented by Nicodemus. Nicodemus didn't become a member of the Sanhedrin, he has worked hard as a Jew, as a Hebrew and he has reached a pinnacle of his religious career. So, it is not easy for him. We will come back to Nicodemus.

Then there is a second person, second group of people represented by this man. If you ask them why they cannot be healed, why they cannot succeed, in any area, they will give you all the reasons why they cannot be successful. The problem is – after some time, your own excuses become your comfort, that's a mat, you are very comfortable with your excuses. So, to everyone Jesus ask this question: "Do you want to be made whole?" I am telling you, to this question, it is easier for those who are dependent to come out; the independent will still struggle because it would mean they have to take the help of another. Do you remember the first independent, we see, in the Gospel according to John, in John chapter 3, verse 2?

John 3:2

² This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

These independent people in the Kingdom of God—it's not like closet where Jesus talked about praying; no, it's not about that; they pray secretly, they struggle secretly, they even cry secretly, their needs are never known by another man because their pride does not allow them. They have a secret life, but nothing changes in their life, God doesn't intervene because they getting into their secret closet and praying is not about keeping the command of God, it is basically because of pride, because the humble will share – God says, "Confess, ask," even Paul will say, "Please, remember me in your prayers," Jesus said to Peter, "Remember Me in your prayers," "Peter, please sit up and pray." So, Nicodemus is a sign of that. He comes to Jesus by night; he doesn't want anybody to know that he doesn't know like Jesus, doesn't want anybody to see his face; probably, he covered his face and all and no lights like this. Jesus receives them too. But God never blesses pride. So, we see him coming, we don't see him going, we will see only later in John chapter 19, "Nicodemus who came in the night..." So, please, let me tell you. Nicodemus and this man represent two categories and if they don't encounter Jesus genuinely and humble themselves, they will both exit the church; they cannot stay too long, they will exit. To the independent, Jesus says something in *John 3:5-8*.

John 3:5-8

⁵ Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'⁸ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

He says, "You know what, Nicodemus, let Me tell you; you have to start all over again." 'You mean, all that I did and studied and worked for today is worth nothing?' He says, "Nothing. Start all over again, not only that, continue that way; you will be entirely dependent upon My Spirit, you don't know where He will take you tomorrow, which way He will take you the day after tomorrow, you do not know." Nobody tells the Holy Spirit where to go because He is the only One who knows the heart of the Father. It's not written over there, but Nicodemus exits in the night, he exits, he goes back by the night. So, to everyone who is independent, God has nothing to say, He says start all over again, there is no other way. Please understand, these are the fundamental things which are there in our hearts, which we have to deal with.

To the other one who is dependent and he says, "There is no one to help me," Jesus says in John chapter 5, verse 8,

John 5:8

⁸ Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk."

All your excuses are over today. No more excuses. Rise, take up your bed and walk, take up your excuses with you, no more excuses after today. And lot of people in the Kingdom of God have made iniquity into an excuse, iniquity is like very scriptural now, because falling back on iniquity is falling on somebody else's reason why you are like this but God says, "No! *Whom the Son sets free is free indeed.*" Generational curses

– are these all true? Yes. But do we have to walk in it? No! You can break free and walk free. So, He says: no more excuses, pick up your mat and walk. Let's pause here for a minute; let's go to back 6 and 7.

⁶ When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? ⁷ The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, what is his answer? "I am alone," when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

You know what he is saying? He is saying, "I am alone, no one cares." Now this is the reality of life. People sit and die, literally alone – both the poor and the rich; the sick and the healthy, people are alone. Nicodemus did not come with a crowd, he came alone. Usually, independent people surround themselves with a set of weak people who are dependent upon them, so they are still alone. "How long have you been alone?" 'Thirty-eight years.' In his case, number is given. This is the reality you have to face; people are alone. "How long have you been married?" '15-years.' "Oh! Are you happy?" 'No, I am alone.' "How long have you been working in this company?" '20-years.' "Oh. You must be happy?" 'No, I am alone.' "Jacob, you must be very happy. How many wives do you have?" 'Four wives, eleven children.' "Are you happy?" He says, 'No, I am alone.' "Samaritan lady, how are you today? How many husbands did you have?" 'Five' and who are you with now? 'A boyfriend.' "Are you happy?" 'No, I am alone, that's why I came to the well alone.'

You need to realize this is the reality of life. God who said, "It is not good for a man to live alone," after man fell, he has been alone. In Genesis chapter 32, verse 24, God waited finally and Jacob was left alone and God met him and wrestle with him until the breaking of day. He was surrounded with people but he was still alone. The first time when he separated himself from all of them was when God met him and you will see, after that Jacob won't be really alone, he would have encountered God. Lot of things which people do is because they are alone—spiritually—loneliness is killing this world. Why are people addicted to lot of stuff? Because they are alone. Why are people addicted to drugs? Because they are alone. Why are people addicted to movies? Because they are alone. Why do you wake up first thing in the morning and look into Facebook? Because you are alone. "Did somebody like my post?" Everybody is surrounded by people but they are alone. Why are there workaholics in the world? Because they are alone and the work is their escape. Jesus was a hard worker but work was never His escape, and He was never alone; even when everybody left Him, He says, "No, I am not alone, My Father is always with Me."

2 Samuel 11:1

¹It happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, 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.

But David was alone, he was bored. Technically speaking; he had nobody to talk to – surrounded by wives and concubines and children but nobody to talk to, he was bored. And Jesus is the only One who seeks out people who are alone. That's the incredible nature of Jesus. You go through the entire narrative of Jesus Christ; He was always available, He could be approached. In John 3, Nicodemus comes to Jesus and in John chapter 4, Jesus goes to the Samaritan woman because she cannot approach anybody. So, those who cannot approach anybody, Jesus approaches them. Why are these things mentioned in the Bible? Because, the whole world, people—especially, in this pandemic, people are dying of loneliness without realizing Jesus is right there with you, will you just open your eyes and hearts and see? He is right there! He will go out of His way to meet people. In *John 4:6-7*, see what He does for the lonely.

John 4:6-7

⁶ Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. ⁷ A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink."

He went out of the way, and He went tired and He waited for the lonely person to approach Him, and knowing that she wouldn't start a conversation, He started a conversation – He never drinks any water over

there, it's not even written He drank water, but He starts the conversation with the lonely. He asked her a question, He asked this man a question – are our ears open to hear Him speak? Could you just shut down your Facebook and your social media? You will hear Him speak. You have been on Facebook for all these years, aren't you still alone? You sought out bar after bar, nightclub after nightclub and all, aren't you still miserable and lonely? Could you just shut all these things down and you will hear Him speak to you. He spoke to her, she didn't speak to Him; he didn't speak to Jesus, Jesus spoke to him and Jesus knew he had been alone for so long. That's what he was trying to say: no one understands. He says, "I do!" he says, 'No one cares,' He says, "I do." "Didn't you have five husbands and a boyfriend, still you have to come alone?" look at verse 6 of chapter 5, it's interesting.

⁶ When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

Let me tell you something, this man didn't know who Jesus was, this man had no faith, he prayed no prayer, he was not inside the city, the temple, he was outside. All around the world, there are people locked down in their houses, they don't know Jesus but Jesus knows them; they have no faith but Jesus still comes; they have no prayer to offer but He is still there; they are not inside the church, they are outside and He is still there. In John chapter 4, with the Samaritan woman, and John chapter 5, with this lame man, Jesus is teaching the most important lesson of His ministry –the greatest sign: everyone is saved by grace and grace alone, the mercy of God, the grace of God is simply free; we didn't seek Him, He sought us; we didn't choose Him, He chose us; He sought us and chose us. In Psalms 68 and verse 6, this is what the Scripture says:

Psalms 68:6

⁶God sets the solitary in families;

"He sets the solitary," the lonely ones in families and of all He has picked, these lonely ones, and when they listen to Him and believes in Him, He puts them into the family of God; you will never be alone, never ever be alone, "I will be with you till the very end, I will send somebody like Me who will be with you, in you, you will no longer be orphans." He sets the lonely—NKJV will say, the lonely, in families.

He brings out those who are bound into prosperity; but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.

Fullness, the fatness of the soul but the rebellious, they will dwell in a dry land. This is our God! This is the greatest thing He does and the fundamental thing you need to realize is, both with this Samaritan woman and this man who has been impotent, lame for 38-years is, neither of them sought God, that is the truth of salvation. Let's go to Romans chapter 9 and verse 15 and 16.

Romans 9:15-16

¹⁵ For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." ¹⁶ So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.

He says, "I choose," why He chooses us, we do not know. But we know His choice is right, but it has nothing do with us, it's the sovereignty of God. He says, "I show mercy to whom I show mercy, I show compassion to whom I will have compassion," right? That's what Jesus is saying: There are so many widows in Israel, but I send My prophet to Samaria, why? Because it's My call. There are plenty of lepers in Israel, but I healed a Syrian general. It's My call, I showed him mercy. Go back and look at chapter 5 of John and verse 3 again,

John 5:3

³ In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

What does it say? There was a massive multitude of people. Jesus went into one, "You want to get well? Pick up your mat and walk," and He walked away. Think about it, think back to your first day in school onwards: wasn't there a multitude of people sitting around you? Did He touch all of them? No! Did you do anything for Him to touch? No! That's the mercy of God. I can remember all the days—I cannot remember exactly the

numbers—all the days of my school in Bhutan, I don't think any of them He touched; school days, college days, think about it! College days, at least you will remember. College days I can remember, only two He touched; hostel days I can remember, He only touched me and He walked past the rest. Why did He do that? Because He shows mercy on whomever He shows mercy. You and I didn't deserve it, we were like the Samaritan woman, outcast; we were like that man with no power to save ourselves. He shows mercy to him He shows mercy – He chooses. And when He does that, what happens in verse 8 and 9,

⁸ Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

⁹ And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

Let me tell you; here, nothing of faith is happening, there is no prayer, no faith, nothing – this is a gift of miracle, He is walking on Jesus' faith. This guy didn't pray, Jesus didn't lay hands upon him, this man didn't had faith, he didn't even know who Jesus was. Later they will ask and he will say, "I don't know the man who told me to," he doesn't know. How did we get saved? Not because we prayed, not because we had faith—even that faith was a gift—we *are saved by grace through faith, not of ourselves, it is a gift*, both the faith to receive the grace also was a gift, in ourselves we have no faith; it has to be given as a gift.

This is important, because if you realize this is how we are saved, and this is how we will always be saved, there is no room for self at all, absolutely nothing. There is nothing you can do to add to the work of God. And that's why the independent hate it, though they want to get into Heaven, they don't like the way because every step of the way, the independent have to humble themselves. While, when dependent ones start walking, he doesn't mind it, "Thank You, Lord, I was trying to depend upon all these people but nobody was there, but now, You are there, thank You Lord," that's why the Mary Magdalene and all will follow Jesus, even His dead body they will follow, they don't care whether He is dead or alive, they are not going to stop following Him; while all the others stand far off.

Understand this difference because this is important. So, He stood up and walked, what about the others? They were still lying there. Think for a minute about it. When he stood up and he picked up his mat and walked, how come there was no commotion there? "Hey! Hey! How did you walk? We also want it." Is there any reaction there? No. You got saved and your life changed, was there a commotion? Did your friends want your life? Nobody is interested in Salvation.

So, God is supernatural, He knows to whom to show mercy and to whom not to show mercy, because people are not really interested in the Kingdom of God, they want solutions to their problems. Because the Salvation is the sign; the sign of all signs, it's not the healing of man, the healing of the physical part of your body, that's not it—the sign of all signs, the greatest sign is that, 'I am a recipient of mercy.' When he stood up and walked, there is nothing happening there, people are still lying there, Jesus walked away, he also walks away. Go back to Romans chapter 9, and verse 17 and 18, then 22, 23.

Romans 9:17-18, 22-23

¹⁷ For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." ¹⁸ Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

Now go to the terrible part; 22 and 23—humanity divided into two groups.

²² What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, ²³ and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory,

So, there are only two kinds of vessels all over the earth and He is the Potter, and there are two kinds of vessels: vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath. You know, yesterday we had so much questions about why this wicked people prospering, don't you realize they are the vessels of wrath and God is long suffering? Very patient with them, but ultimately, He says, "You are kept for destruction, I will display My power through

you. When you are destroyed, the world will know My power.” “This one also, you are a vessel of mercy and on you, you are prepared for My glory.” Are you getting the picture? This is the truth. That’s why the rich struggle. In Luke chapter 18—we are not talking about material wealth alone, that’s only one factor.

Luke 18:24-25

24 And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! 25 For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

Why does He say the Gospel is preached to the poor? Because it is very easy for them, one: they don’t have money; they don’t have great ideas in their head; they never went to college and their mind didn’t get messed up; they don’t have any fame to have shame; they don’t have any of these. So, it’s easy for them to receive the Gospel but we are talking about people who are rich in so many other ways. Because riches give you independence – I am not talking about money alone, there are people who are very rich in ideas. That’s why Paul tells, “Don’t get into arguments, just walk away.” And the church is full of people with ideas, not so much truth.

Like I keep saying – feminist Christians, humanist Christians, socialist Christians, liberal Christians. Let me tell you pastors, very intellectual pastors – do you know how many of these intellectual pastors are so rich in their thoughts, they are actually Chomsky’s fans—pastors are Chomsky’s fans! Chomsky is one of those linguistics, actually he was a linguist but he is into everything, he is a rogue Jew; he fights for the Palestinian cause and not the Jewish. The simple things which I ask is—Christians all over U.S, yes, they are all known for the Palestinians cause—my simple thing to them is that, who does the earth belong to? Do you know earth belongs to God? Do you believe what God told Abraham – ‘I give to you and your descendants forever’ – do you believe in that stamp paper? As a Real Estate Owner, as a Land Owner, does He have the right to give to whoever He pleases? What is this Palestinian cause for a believer?

I don’t have to agree with the Jews, but I agree with God. Chomsky is a very dangerous man. Once, I was sitting in a professor’s class who was Chomsky’s student, disciple, and I was listening to him and he said one statement which struck my head; after 25-30 years, it’s still there in my head, he was Chomsky’s own student, disciple, okay. He was fantastic, brilliant in the world, he said a line, “One of the fundamental Chomsky’s ideas is that – the Word does not have meaning,” and think about who Christ is. You need to understand how dangerous they are, people go gaga over it, “Oh, I read Chomsky! Did you hear the latest from Chomsky?” they don’t hear the latest from the Holy Spirit; they hear the latest from Chomsky, I am talking about the setting from which I came in, everybody is just throwing names around; even the Christians, “Oh, did you hear Ravi Zacharias?”

Did you understand what he said, first? Because I know your language. Can you really understand Ravi Zac? His ideas he is putting across, really, can you grapple with the ideas he is trying to talk? Don’t throw this Ravi Zac at me, because Ravi Zac is talking to a crowd who is absolutely saturated with Marxism, socialism, humanism, feminism, with all these ideas. So, what he speaks only matter to them, not to me. He is trying to tackle with ideas, the power of Truth opposing all these ideas. You don’t know what Marxism is. You don’t know what socialism is. You don’t know any of these things. What are you listening to Ravi Zac for? Just to show off? His illustrations are only the things you understand, actually. You know, one of the fundamental ideas of Marxism is called dialectical materialism—people don’t even understand what it is. It means everything has to be seen and understood in the terms of only a material world and not metaphysical, spiritual, nothing, only material and that is the fundamental thesis on which Marxism and socialism is built on.

That is what’s happening entirely in the west, that’s why in socialism, human beings don’t have value; you can take and give it to the others, hard work and all, that is all irrelevant because you are looking at dialectical materialism. Capitalism is the other extreme. These are all ideas, and the Kingdom of God is based on truth.

The truth is what God has said, and what He is. And people do not realize what God is talking about—even in the church, people are either capitalist or socialist, and they get into causes. You need to realize; the energy of the church is entirely diverted into causes which are not connected with the Gospel. The minute you get into causes, what happens is, the Holy Spirit steps away, and these are ideas, they are rich.

So, Jesus is saying, “How difficult it is for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom.” You see, how easy it was for the Samaritan woman! How easy was it for a man who was lame for 38 years! How difficult was it for Nicodemus? He just walked away in the night. How easy was it for the Samaritan woman to understand the concept about worship, while Nicodemus is struggling to understand the concept of being born again? You see the difference?

You pick a simple, poor, humble man and give him the Gospel – he believes, he gets saved. You pick a rich man, an intellectual man, and try to talk about being born again; he struggles and we do not realize we all struggle with these things. So, the question we have to ask is – what am I inside? And we are not talking about the cash inside the wallet – am I rich or am I poor? Other thing is the culture; there are culture vultures, no? it’s all about culture. You need to realize; it permeates into you until you are not even aware of it. You can call the white man, “Racist! Racist! Racist! Black lives matter!” then why are you dyeing your hair blonde? Why are you lightening your skin color? Why are you not satisfied the way God made you? Why are you so dissatisfied? The white man – forever lying in the sun to get his skin darker; nobody is satisfied.

The problem is: (even in the Church) you cannot speak to anybody, everybody carries offense on their shoulder; there is a chip, they talk worried about the antichrist chip, the chip is already there. I was talking to Nepali and Hindi churches; everybody is worried, ‘Pandemic,’ ‘Pandemic,’ ‘Pandemic,’ but, does anybody tell you why there are so many casualties in the west or in the U.S, especially? Because of obesity and obesity is the result of your unhealthy eating habits. My question is, have all the mothers gone back to cooking? No! they are still waiting restaurants to open, home delivery.

See, God can do everything possible, but the question is, will you pick up your mat and walk? Pick up your mat, your excuse? One of the funny things, if you look at it, which really happened is, when this lockdown and severe lockdown took place, and even in our cities, it’s still lockdown; all the hospitals are only for COVID patients, nothing is happening in any hospital, right? But, before this happened, If you went to the hospitals, the hospital was packed with patients but now, there are no patients. So, the question is, where did the patients go? Think about it! Where did the patients go? Every nook and corner; the hospital used to be full of OPD, but now, there are no patients, so where did they go? You know where did they go? Their mothers started cooking, or they started cooking in their home and illnesses started going. Isn’t that true? Earlier, you book gas, it takes two weeks; now you book your gas, it comes the next day. You know why? Because all the restaurants are closed, so, gas is in over supply. That fellow was to get only commercial cylinder, but all the domestic cylinder was going to him.

What we are saying is, pandemic is a sign. Did you get the message to change your lifestyle? That’s what God is saying. How long can God lock it down? He says, “I will open it up.” Those who got the message, got the message; all the others, “Oh, miracle has happened, pandemic has gone.” We are not getting the message because we are too rich to change. That’s what God is saying, “There are vessels of wrath and the vessels of mercy.” Will you change? You know how simple life became? Especially, the first 30-40, 60 days of lockdown where nothing was available except whatever you could get, that too stand in the que for two hours to buy vegetables with social distance, remember? Nobody was complaining in their house about what was being served, because that was all that was available. People do not realize the price of negligence now; they will pay it later.

You see, none of us are really, really used –most people are not really used by God when they are young, because they simply don’t have the spiritual and the mental capacity to hear and understand what God is saying; even if you hear, you will run like Moses and make a mess of it. You need to realize this fundamental

thing; these are the Kingdom principles. Unless we are like Paul—even he goofed up a lot, the beginning, many years ago he goofed up, if you look at Paul’s life. Thing is that, it takes time to mature, to understand the principle of what patience is, long suffering, all that concepts about the Kingdom, it will only come later—the problem is that, devil knows it. So, what does he do is, before the time comes up, he will mess your body up, so that when the time comes and you know all this, there is no body to serve God; everything is aching, everything is creaking, you are not able to pray, you are not able to sit and the habit is set in, now you have to eat what you always were used to eat and you keep justifying itself without realizing your life for God is a waste. These are how you look at it. This is what it is called about order in His courts.

There are certain things which can be done only when you are young, those are the years you have to frame yourself and say, “I know Lord, there is a call of God upon my life because there were a thousand of people on that pool but You touched me and I got up and walked. You know what, I am going to change my life now. I don’t know when You will choose me, when the day of choosing comes, I will see that I have done according to Your Scripture whatever I should do that I am ready, I am prepared.” People don’t realize this because God has mercy and all those who come to the Lord late and all, that’s a different thing, I am not talking about that, much of the people who hear are young. The question God is asking is: are you poor or are you rich? Are you a vessel of mercy or a vessel of wrath? You remember Acts 7:22?

Acts 7:22

22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.

And he was very rich in himself. Oh, you couldn’t have a conversation with Moses, boy! Out of his lips came the wisdom of Egypt. God didn’t want him, God showed mercy on him, he didn’t realize that he was alive and smart because God showed him mercy and so many boys were drowned in Nile but he was protected because of God. There were many boys born in Hebrew homes, but God showed mercy on one boy and he didn’t realize that. He thought he was chosen because he was smart. At 80, you see a different man – now he is poor. It’s an incredible scene if you have to see in your mind’s eyes. There is Moses: old shepherd, old man, with his staff, and there is Pharaoh: mighty man, sitting on that golden throne, all the pomp and glory of the greatest empire on earth – two people: they probably grew up together, went to school together, studied together, that’s why he has got so free entry into the palace, because he probably knows the king, they were princes together—but the world has no clue, this is an object of mercy and that is an object of wrath.

You look at him – a poor shepherd who has come from the desert holding a shepherd’s staff, and you look at him – he is standing there with pomp and glory of Egypt; nobody will know that is a vessel of wrath (pharaoh) and this is a vessel of mercy (Moses). And God says, “How do you see yourself?” Pharaoh versus Moses – that’s what Paul is using the illustration, God is telling Paul: The scepter versus the shepherd’s rod; riches and wisdom of the Egypt versus what God has spoken, one line message. What is that? The God of Hebrew says, “Israel is My first born, let him go!” and here stands all the pharisees with their wisdom, Nicodemus and all of them, years of seminary training, and here comes a simple man, dressed crazily, one line message, “Repent! For the Kingdom of God is here.” What a difference! They are all rich and he is poor. And Jesus asked, “Why did he go to the desert? What did he go to see? What did you go to see?”

Matthew 11:8-9

8 But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. 9 But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet.

“You should be dressed decently” but truth doesn’t need a costume, truth simply stands on its own. You tell me, until Jesus dies, the beginning and He is dead – in between, tell me how Jesus was dressed? Swaddling clothes, one piece; in between we know a woman touch the hem of His robe, other than that we know nothing about how He was dressed. Do you know how He looked? Do we know His height? Do we know His

weight? Nothing! We know nothing. You know why? Because, before Truth, all these things are irrelevant. It is true in the world; it is true in the Kingdom of God also. Do you know how Mao looked like? Does it matter to you? No. Do you know how Karl Marx looked like? So, ideas framed them and those ideas still live though they are dead, they are deadly ideas.

Jesus came, He didn't bring an idea; He brought something that is called truth. And that Truth should permeate, and we are struggling, and that's why Jesus comes and says, "Do you want to be made well? Do you want to be made whole?" And that's the question God is asking: Stop making excuses! Stop your excuses, you are never alone; I am with you, you can never again say that you are alone, I have come, you can never say I have no husband; I have come. "Bring your husband," 'I have no husband,' "okay, but now I am here. What do you say?" I have no one, but I am here, what do you say?

The fundamental lessons we have to learn is the lessons if you don't learn. You see, you can come into the Kingdom and never progress further, ideas have grappled us and we love those ideas; it's like that man – you are dependent upon an idea to justify everything that you do, justify your lack of spiritual progress, because in the Kingdom of God, everybody knows, at least by ideas wise, what matters is the spiritual progress, none of the other things matter. If you really know the Kingdom of God, you can have houses, you can have bungalows, you can have cars, you can have millions of dollars in your bank; all those are irrelevant; the only thing is, how far have you gone in Christ? And when you have not gone further in Christ, you know what happens – there is an issue, what is stopping you? God has met you, He has shown you mercy. So, God says there are two vessels: one is the vessel of mercy, the other is the vessel of wrath. You go to 1 Peter chapter 2, verses 6-8, interesting.

1 Peter 2:6-8

⁶ Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." ⁷ Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone," ⁸ and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

There is a stone put over there. Some people fall unto it, they receive mercy; some people will ultimately be crushed--that's what Nebuchadnezzar also saw. But He comes to everybody and everybody can go to Him; there is nothing stopping. Nicodemus can go to Him, God won't stop him, "No, you are rich, stay out," He doesn't say, He doesn't stop anybody, you can approach Him and He is always willing; you have to see Jesus throughout the Scripture, He is always willing, He is never unwilling. If you look at Him, you will find Him in all kind of strange places having meals with people, He never discounted anybody.

The question is, are we willing? Do we understand what mercy is, that we cannot earn mercy? Our basic problem is with mercy and grace: you cannot earn mercy; you cannot please God by your works. But to the one who says, "Lord, I am alone, I am helpless," to the one who says, "Lord, I have no husband," God says, "I am here! I AM has come, pick up your mat and walk, I have come. No more excuses."

Now, the question is, how do you know that you are a vessel of mercy? I mean, I can't leave you with theological argument and go, right? You also need to know which vessel I am. "Oh, thank God, I am a vessel of mercy," and one day, you wake up like that rich man and end up in hell. In the twinkling of an eye, everything changed; everybody thought Lazarus was—according to current Jewish theology and current prosperity theology—Lazarus was an object of God's wrath, "Look at him; poor, beggar, head to toe, sores," so, according to prosperity gospel; he is suffering, he has no money, he is sick, and he is alone, dogs were his company, "Oh, I can quote the scripture also, dogs are outside the kingdom, definitely, this fellow with the dogs are outside." And look at this man, dressed in purple, if you look at his robe carefully, there is a dove also printed there, eating sumptuously. This man is an object of mercy and that man is an object of God's wrath and then both die, then Jesus says, "Do you know who was the object of God's mercy?" this one, (poor

beggar) and the object of wrath, this one Rich man). Jesus told this story 2000 years ago, when this incident happened, we do not know, but if it happened some time then, 2000 years of Christ hasn't, the story has not changed of the rich man, he still thirsts.

God is asking this question. Do we really understand mercy? How do I know I am a recipient of mercy?

Romans 12:1-2

¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

He is begging, he says, "Do you know that you are a recipient of God's mercy? You know that you are a recipient of God's mercy, what should you do? Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, give your life now over to Him. There were a thousand of you lying over there, but He touched you, He could have walked by you too, but He touched you. He is not going to force you, now it's your choice. He touched you, He showed you mercy; what are you going to do now? You can choose what you are going to do. Will you offer your life? Will you offer your mind and your ways? Will you change your mind and your ways?

"do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind," you cannot have the ways of the world without thinking of the world; the thinking comes first. Do you still think like the world? Have you offered as recipient of mercy? Is the service too long for you and the movie was too short? Do you still complain? Do you know that you are an object of God's mercy? Do you think yesterday's prayer service was a little too long? How do you see? Has your perspective changed? In John 5 verse 14, He understood.

John 5:14

¹⁴ Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."

Why did he go to the temple? He didn't know who Jesus was; Jesus didn't tell him anything, he didn't even know who Jesus was. Why didn't he go home first? "Daddy, mommy, brother, see, I am healed, I am walking!" did he go home? "Uff, 38 years – I didn't go for the bar, I was waiting for an opportunity; I have plenty of money saved under my mat too, let me have a drink; haven't gone yet," but where did he go? Where do people, who know they have received something they totally never deserved go? They go back to God. He didn't know who Jesus was, but he knew where the temple was, so, he knew even if somebody who I don't know healed me, it is the God of Israel who healed me, I need to go and worship Him, you cannot keep me away from His house anymore because now I am made well, now I am made whole. You know where I am first going? I am first going to the house of God because I received mercy.

David rose from the ground and asked, "Is the boy dead?" they said, 'He is dead,' he rose, he washed himself, anointed himself, changed his clothes, went to the house of God and worshipped, why? "Because I received mercy; I should have died, he died, he did nothing wrong; I did, God took him, He spared me, I need to worship Him." Do we think that we were so perfect last night that we woke up this morning or is it mercy? Mercy! That's why Scripture says, "His mercies are new every morning." This is fundamental and even for all the ones who are hearing around the world, who have gone through all your abuse and all your suffering and all that you have gone through, let me tell you, this is fundamental in God's Kingdom – don't react according to your wounds; react according to the mercy you have received. Because James will say this in chapter 2 verse 13,

James 2:13

¹³ For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

You know what Jesus told this man? He told him, "Don't sin again, something worse will happen to you," meaning: Jesus knew his sin, Jesus knew what had brought him to this level of 38 years and Jesus is the only

One who could have passed judgement – mercy triumphed over judgement. The woman caught in the adultery; imagine, caught in the adultery, thrown before Him; Jesus knew, He didn't need evidence, He knew she was wrong but you know what He said? "Go, sin no more."

You know what Jesus told Him? Look at what He told him.

John 5:14

¹⁴ Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."

Let me tell you something so that all people will understand what He is trying to say:

You smoked a cigarette, that's how it started; You moved to grass; you moved to harder stuff; and finally, you have a needle in your arm, you know what it is –you are a cocaine addict now, and Jesus meets you here—I am just using the illustration—Jesus meets you here and says: Pick up your mat and walk; you walk free. What is Jesus telling? "Sin no more." You know what happens? When you sin again, you don't go back to smoking; you go back (directly) to needles, that's the way it works – you don't go back to cigarettes; you go back to heroin and you die. That's the nature of sin: you don't go back to where you started; you go back to where you finished and you are just one step away from destruction and God says, "Sin no more."

That's how it happens. Are you getting the picture? David married single women; David marries widows, then he took Uriah's wife; killed him and married her, and Jesus met him there— "I have sinned," 'Sin is removed, but the sword will not depart.' He is telling him, "Now if you go back, you will die because now if you go back, you will not go back to single women or widows, you will go to married women and you will die." Sin also has progression; so has righteousness. And God is telling us something over there, "You are a recipient of mercy, don't forget!" The independent ones, the rich ones, He says, "Be very careful." He says, nobody can live like that without destruction, because the first independent being in the world was the devil and God is not like that; the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit always work together; They are humble, They share with each other, They do things together and They are never alone.

So, God says: are you rich? You know how difficult it is for the rich to enter into the Kingdom of God? You have a church full of intellectual, you know how difficult it is to minister? See, you haven't come from academic background, most of you – only Pastor Vijay and I have come from academic background; I will tell you about academic backgrounds—I am not talking about schools—the higher levels at academic backgrounds when you are teaching at higher level, you always need to be on your toes, one step ahead of your students, it's always a battle because they are all smart alecks who want to prove that they are better than the profs; throwing ideas like you throw paper planes, in philosophy, literature classes, they throw ideas – they are rich. The problem is, today's world is so different from the previous world: everybody has gone to school, everybody has gone to college, everyone is educated, and education is not in skill anymore, it's in ideas and we have young humanist, young feminist, young socialist, and they are all throwing ideas and movements carrying placards; only thing, they don't bring into the church but they sit with that in their minds and they are not listening to the message or the Word, they are opposing everything, and we don't realize it is there in our heads too. Have you put away all those things? Can we truly say, 'I am a new creation in Christ Jesus, all the old things have passed away'? No! Very few people can say, and one of the few people in the Bible was Paul, who was an intellectual in Jewish theology, he put it all away and he says, "I don't even consider it, I consider it as rubbish," but he could argue with the Greeks in Athens. That's what I am talking about. People don't realize they have been framed by ideas and it's very difficult once ideas take hold in your mind, those are the strongholds in your mind. Turn to James chapter 2.

James 2:5

⁵ Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

The question is, are you poor in this world? When it comes to ideas, you are poor, very poor, “I don’t know socialism, I don’t know Marxism, I don’t know feminism, but I know Christ.” Go to any one of these simple semi-literate churches and tell the ladies, “You know, it is written submit to your husbands in all things,” ‘Aiyya, garo, okay I will obey. Jesus said it, right, I will do it,’ after that no troubles in the house, simple. You take one of these sophisticated ladies in English-speaking churches: “What do you think I am a foot mat?” Foot mat is never used in the Bible, they have vocabulary from outside the Bible. “Aiyya, love your wife as Christ loves, be gentle okay, when you use your word, don’t use like a fire hose, be gentle okay,” ‘Okay Aiyaa.’ Try telling that in English-speaking church, you see the response: “You don’t know what my wife is like,” and they will quote from Shakespeare and all.

Do we understand how we rich we are? Unless we look into the Scripture and only then we realize what Bible says – He has chosen the poor of this world; poor in monetarily or ideas or culture wise, any of those things. Oh, culture is the big thing—can you make the poor comfortable in your house? or will they be uncomfortable?

I will tell you a real story, I think I have told this before also: A young girl, nice girl, decided to like this boy and wanted to introduce him to her parents but he was a simple guy; never sophisticated or anything, he didn’t know how to use a fork and spoon and all—you know if you go to some of these high class restaurants and all, they get this all kinds of fork and knives, you don’t know what to do with them; for everything there is a fork – this is all part of culture, God gave us two hands, man made forks. My simple question to people is that, if you eat with a fork and a spoon, fantastic, but don’t impose it on others. I ask them a question; how do you think Jesus ate? How would Jesus eat if He were to come today? Simple as that. Don’t make into a culture issue because it becomes a culture issue.

Let me explain it to you; so, this girl brings a boy and they are from a much more educated, cultured background and he is not. So, when they sit to eat, they are all using fork and spoon and knife and all, and this guy only knows how to use the spoon, so he is little embarrassed, he is trying and all things are falling off; the father is very kind and understanding, and looks from the corner of his eyes and he sees it, and without drawing any attention, you know what he did? He slowly put his fork and his knife and he started eating with a spoon. The boy noticed that and he realized: oh, he is eating with spoon, I can also eat with spoon. With spoon he is fantastic.

That’s what God is saying. Do you make people at ease? Because the Kingdom of God is full of poor people. Can you be like one of them? Jesus was like that; He could eat in a rich man’s house and He could sit and eat in a poor man’s house, He had no issues, today culture is the big issue. Most of the high class restaurants in USA, Jesus won’t be allowed to come in because He doesn’t have the appropriate costume. And I am telling you, this is the parameters of intellectual riches, material riches, cultural riches – these are all big things. Do you think when you reach Heaven, God is going to look at all the ladies, “Oh, how soft your hands are, honey,” or the ones who are broken because they were taking care of six kids and washing the clothes because they could not make ends meet and they washed all the clothes by hands and their knees were all cracked because they were praying for their children when they went out, “Lord, bring them.”

I remember one incredible pastor, he’s passed away, I mean very powerful man who had one of the largest Baptist ministries. He remembers and he says, “First time as a teenager when I was given permission to go with my friends and we got into that car and I was at the back and the boys took out the bottle and they were passing it around; I simply couldn’t, I simply couldn’t, all I could see was my mother’s face, I was more worried because I can’t lie. The first thing she will ask me will be, ‘Jack, did you drink?’ and if I said yes, I knew she would wail as if her heart had broken and I simply couldn’t handle it.” He said, “Please stop the car,” he got down and walked back to home, and he said, “When I went back home, quietly entered through the kitchen, and as I entered through the kitchen, what I saw was my mother on her knees saying, ‘Lord, my son has gone out with his friends for the first time, let him not fall, my Father, let him not fall.’” He said: “I

never went back to that company never in my life, I didn't know God but I saw her heart and I said I cannot break her heart."

This is Kingdom! These are poor mothers; they are not rich mothers. That's what God is talking about. Are you a poor father? Are you a poor mother? Or are you a rich father? Are you a rich husband or a poor husband? Are you a poor wife or a rich wife? What ideas are there in your mind? Did you ask question, the source of every ideas, does it agree with Bible? And when it doesn't agree with the Word of God, are you willing to be alone? Alone in your classroom, I am sorry but this is what I believe, you will be mocked; that's why Paul says, "I am willing to be a fool for Christ Jesus' sake." Because your conviction is very strong, very deep and he will not change because you know these convictions come from God, this has nothing do with man. Therefore, you will not change.

That's what Jesus is talking about: "Building your house on the rock," and then if you fall, it was not rebellion; it was sin and David bounce back because convictions were very strong; Saul had no convictions –that's the difference with Saul and David; Saul had no convictions; David had very strong convictions. This is the greatest sign God will ever give you that 'I am a vessel of mercy.' Go to John chapter 4, verse 48, when the rich man came when his son was dying, remember?

John 4:48

⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe."

Sign, sign, signs-wonders, when are you going to get the message? Every sign has only one message! How many signs do you need before you get the message?

You know we tell our children, "How many times do I have to repeat before you get 2+2 is 4?" that's what Jesus is saying. Signs after signs, signs after signs, when are you going to get this thing that God is a good God? Just go to Him; He is kind, He is merciful, He will forgive you, you will become a child of God. How many signs do you want? How many wonders do you want? Why can't you believe? It's one thing to say 'God is good all the time' and to believe that He is good all the time. One is words, the other is deep rooted conviction– God is good all the time. Nothing can happen to me which will make God bad because He is always good. Look at Matthew 16 verse 4.

Matthew 16:1-4

¹ Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. ² He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red'; ³ and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. ⁴ A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." And He left them and departed.

He says only one sign will be given – the sign of Jonah: three days and three nights, the Son of Man will be in the belly of the earth. You know what that sign is? That is the greatest sign of God's mercy towards mankind. And if you receive that one sign: I am a vessel of God's mercy, not wrath because He poured His wrath on Him, He became the vessel of God's wrath; I became a vessel of God's mercy, then I am a sign! I am a message! When people look at you and me, they should say, "He is an object of God's mercy." That's what God is talking about.

You are not rich; you are rich in faith. Everybody wants to be rich in everything else except rich in faith. They want to be rich in name, rich in culture and rich in the intellect degrees and rich in all these things. Ultimately, when the end comes, the only thing that will matter is – where you rich in faith? How much of the Word did you believe? Which in faith here means both. How much of those convictions became your own, became your life? How much of the Word did you hear and was led by His Spirit?

Please, get these things because the world is divided into two groups: the independent and the dependent, and then God comes and says, “Do you want to get well?” simple question, not even asking you if you want to get well, He is asking, “Do you want to be made whole?” That’s the question He is asking even today because everywhere in this last days, that will be the struggle, that’s where people will fall away from their faith.

Everything changed in Christendom, I am not saying per se it was bad, but it became completely different. You know what happened? I will tell you – when Peter and John began, there were two things that were mentioned about them: first thing they said, “Gold and silver we do not have,” and second thing they said, they were unlearned man but they were with Jesus. Today, if you want to be considered successful, even in the ministry, you need to have gold and silver and you need have a degree from very high-class seminary, you don’t have to be with Jesus. Do you know how ministry began in the books of Acts? But God has never changed His format, you can have degrees, that’s all irrelevant – are you rich in faith or not? Have you been with Jesus? That’s the format for every believer. Are you rich in faith? Are you growing in faith? Are you growing deep in your convictions where you will not change? One of my kids—very new believer, I think one and half year, may be listening online—she told, “Uncle, in one of your messages, I heard you speak about pork and after that I cannot eat,” while their daily diet is pork and spinach, and she is the only child in the family who doesn’t eat. You know, she said, “It hit my heart, I am convicted.” You know why she is convicted? Because she is very poor in the spirit, she is not bringing any ideas over there – why should I, why should I not and go for a scientific study on it, nothing. My wife said, “We are thinking of cooking duck, is it okay to eat duck?” I said, on the random, *Leviticus 3:17* says this, now, I am not trying to make you miserable or anything, I said: this is what *Leviticus 3:17* says.

Leviticus 3:17

17 ‘This shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings: you shall eat neither fat nor blood.’ ”

And the Bible will say, “The fat and the blood belong to the Lord. The duck’s meat unlike the hen, is saturated with fat, you cannot separate it. If you ask me, “If I eat duck, will I die?” No, but I will always feel terrible— my Father said something and I did something for the sake of my belly. Is the duck tasty? Yes, it is tasty, I have eaten ducks; is crab tasty? Of course, it is yummy! I have eaten all these, but there were times in my life where God spoke to me about certain things and I have stopped. Now, I am not imposing it on anybody but these are my convictions, and one thing I know; when I reach Heaven, I will neither miss duck or crab, or shrimp, or pork; nobody is going to miss any of these things. “Aiyoo,” then you are an Israelite who came out of the Egypt, because these all become stumbling blocks as you go further. There is liberty, I am telling you but it is up to each one, but once you have heard: obey! God doesn’t tell everything to everybody at the same time, but as you go further, He speaks and it could be a simple thing that can stop you.

Bible says, “They ate manna every day of their life, and there was none feeble,” meaning: nobody was weak, there was none sick, but you know what their complain was? It didn’t taste good; they were sick of it. But let me ask you this fundamental question; first, you have to always ask purpose – what is the purpose of food? First is, strength; second, I shouldn’t fall ill; third is taste, taste is third, not first. Did God meet the fundamental purpose of food? There was none feeble, there was none sick and they were upset. And you look at everything, there is a fundamental purpose behind everything. Everything in concerning this life is mentioned in the Bible and you have to realize, is that met or not and if that’s met, be content but the problem is; the material pulls us down and it is passed unto us as the will of God, so you know what happens? Are people saved? Yes, but they are alone because they don’t experience God, they are alone and they are not able to move forward with God and their end is here. That’s why Joel says, “Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near.” The end is here, very close.

When John MacArthur preached last week that the judgement is at the gate. “Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!” why? Because there is no conviction. They are still in the valley of decision; they haven’t

made up their minds yet. Think about it, even about basic fundamental things about the Kingdom of God, people haven't made up their minds yet. They are still like Elijah's crowd; caught between two opinions and they will not say anything. Didn't I catch you on Thursday? If you were given a green card and the million dollars, where would you go? What did everybody say? New York. Why? Because you don't value your liberty, you value your stomach. Between Blasio and Kuma, you will be crushed. Unless, you love a bohemian lifestyle; you won't want to live in New York, unless God wants you there. Think about it, how do we make our choices?

We are still not getting it, though we have been here for 12 years and we have heard, and we are still not getting the fundamental principle is also because we have swallowed so many things and accepted it as truth. One of the things we have swallowed is, the prosperity gospel that it is your divine right to be rich and wealthy and nothing will touch you; along with that, they sold another lie; and you go like that, trumpet will be blown and everybody will be taken – these two things. And they absolutely sold you and told you, "For sure, 100%, with the pastor's seal you will be taken before tribulation." Nobody is sure. Jesus never mentioned anything like that. You put these together; you have become complacent, we don't realize, lot of people who came to GTC also came with this doctrine and there is nothing guaranteed.

There are so many pictures in the Bible, you cannot say this picture alone, it's very dangerous. You have Noah's picture of judgement, you have Sodom and Gomorrah's picture of judgement that the man was taken out only before fire fell—that fellow was a Dumbo, somebody had to pray and the angels had to drag him out. Now I don't think in the last days God is going to send angels to drag unbelieving believers out of this world, He will say, "Perish with Babylon or come through tribulation," and then there is Egypt, and Egypt picture is dangerous: ten plagues, seven plagues in the book of Revelation; they are almost identical and the issue is, until the tenth plague was over, He didn't move Israel out of the Egypt. So, what if the church has to go through it but they have to be in God's protected place called Goshen, can you hear where Goshen is? It's not one place anymore, it has to be different places and it's only possible if you heard and obeyed the voice of Moses – for us it is the voice of the Holy Spirit: "Go there and stay."

And what if this pandemic is like the first 3 plagues, everybody has been afflicted; the church and the world, and Egypt and Israel were afflicted, it didn't matter where you were, you were afflicted. At the fourth, God made a division, what if you think—unlike illuminati—this is God's warning also, everybody is dying: the righteous and the unrighteous; after that I will make the division but the division will only happen if you hear carefully and you are in your appointed place. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision, they still haven't made up their minds even about fundamental things: what to drink, what to eat, what to wear, what to read, how to think, how to spend their time – haven't still made up their minds. This is the danger in which the church is caught, because certain churches will put out certain doctrine and certified it: this is the way this is going to happen – Jesus says, "No man knows," He says, "Even I don't know."

Eschatology has gone out of the window. On November 3rd we will know, another eschatology will have to start whichever way it goes, nobody knows, nobody is able to read. And God says, "Do you want to be made whole?" All that you have been sitting on for 38 years. The funniest thing is that: He didn't tell him, "Get up! Arise and go," He said, "Arise, pick up your mat and go," you know why? Because this is your whole set of excuses on which you sat.

Many years ago, in North-Indian church, I told them this is what will happen: you don't take your mat and you go. You go home – husband, if you had a wife, parents, children, everybody is happy, so excited, let us say his name is Zacchaeus: "Zacchaeus, has come home! Did you see he is healed?!" they cook a nice meal, he is also happy, everybody eats. One day, two days, three days, after that, "Zacchaeus, you can't sit like that and eat, you need to do something and work to live." He says, "But I don't know anything to do. I never went to school." After that you realize nobody is happy about your miracle because you have become a burden. "Why don't you go out and do something?" Then you realize: I know one thing to do, go back where nobody

knows in this crowd and beg, “Amma,” and take your money in the evening, get up and go. You know what happens? You will go back to your old lifestyle. Pick up your mat and walk, no more excuses.

Salvation is not an invitation to go back to your old life; salvation is an invitation to go to an absolutely brand-new life –for if anyone is in Christ Jesus, he is a new creation, the old has passed away. And everyone who is listening, it’s gone. So many of you are struggling because even though you are praying for your breakthrough, in your mind you want to go back and build the past, right? You want to build the past? You are struggling and you have a dream and a vision, “Lord, I want a breakthrough, and I will build up my past with nice bigger structures,” God says, “No! You are not going back to your past at all; not your past life, not your past job, not your past business, it’s all over. When I start with somebody; I start with him all over fresh, it’s a completely different lifestyle, it’s completely something new.” And we need to be ready for that without being afraid: pick it up and go.

All of them stopped him and said, “Why are you carrying the mat in sabbath day?” he said, ‘I don’t know, the one who healed me, told me.’ “Who is it?” ‘I don’t know, I don’t even know His name.’ Think about it, isn’t that true? When I got saved, I hardly knew who Jesus was, I didn’t really know my Bible, I didn’t really know who He was. But it didn’t make any difference for my salvation. I was not saved because of my knowledge of Jesus; I was saved because I received His mercy. Don’t forget these fundamental lessons today! Don’t forget these fundamental lessons today what salvation is, it’s a completely new life God is offering, and if you are a vessel of mercy, then walk in mercy, walk in truth -truth and mercy have kiss together but you don’t have to bring out justice, that’s not your job, leave justice to God’s side, don’t do anything because nobody knows the actual truth, leave it, unless you are called to make a judgement in something, leave it alone.

Truth and mercy have to kiss each other. You have deep rooted conviction, yet, when you look at people, you are very merciful, you know why? Because you too were recipient of mercy. That is why that parable of Jesus Christ – remember about the man who refused to show mercy to somebody who owed him a little? He said, “Throw him in, release the tormentors on him,” because that’s the one thing we need to realize, we are the recipient of mercy. And it’s a fundamental trap Christians get caught in: they receive mercy and they don’t show mercy and they get trapped again. Know the viles of the enemy, understand what the Gospel is. As I close, *Hebrew 4:16*,

Hebrew 4:16

¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

You don’t have to be afraid, you don’t have to be afraid at all, doesn’t matter how many times you fell or what you fell in. You know why we are afraid to go for mercy? Because we don’t understand the fundamental concept about both mercy and grace – it cannot be earned or deserved. Remember the mother who came begging for the life of her son who was to be executed the next day morning, to Napoleon emperor? “I beg for mercy for the life of my son,” Napoleon said, “Madam, your son doesn’t deserve mercy,” she said, “Emperor, your highness, if he deserved mercy, it’s not mercy because mercy is not deserved.” Everything is over, the final petition of those who have to be hanged is to the president, it’s called mercy petition – it’s not that they deserved, judgement has already been passed, what is that? Death by hanging. What is the appealing? Appealing for mercy to the head of the state, nothing else, I am falling at your feet, have mercy. And we need to realize, from the first man to the last man, everyone who will be in Heaven is because judgement was passed; death by hanging, in hell forever – God Showed Mercy. God says, “Now, you show mercy because I also showed you mercy.”

Be very-very careful about these fundamental principles of God’s Kingdom, it’s a Kingdom of mercy and grace, you can never earn it. That’s why Bible says, “No one will stand before God and boast, ‘I did,’” God says, “You didn’t, that was mercy and grace.” Amen!

Shall we pray!

Closing prayer:

Father, this morning we just come to You, Lord, we just thank You, we just praise You, we just worship You. Like that man, Lord, we all come to You, as impotent men and women to an omnipotent God. All power is with You, and You extended Your scepter, showed mercy to us. The kings, mighty kings of this world only showed their scepter but You, King of kings, Lord of lords came and laid hands on us – the leper, the sick, the infirm, You went to them. Everyone who is condemned in the world go to the rich and the powerful and beg for mercy, but You on the other hand, came to us and showed us mercy. Help us never to forget this, Lord, never, never forget, we are recipients of God's mercy, called to walk in mercy, and when we walk and receive and then we go into the temple, into Your house to worship You, we will be met by You, we will never be alone again, because You will reveal Yourself to us. We were never meant to be alone and lonely, because He said, "Father will send somebody just like Me, He will be with you and in you, forever," and You promised us, "I will not leave you as orphans." Oh Father, we just thank You, Lord, we just thank You. By faith, I bring everyone around the world, those who are listening, some have been abused in ways that are unimaginable but they too are recipients of Your mercy. You didn't show them mercy because they were abused, You didn't show them mercy because they suffered; none of these things qualify for Your mercy; You showed mercy because that's Your prerogative as King. I pray, Father, we too will become vessels of mercy and walk in mercy. We will not be rich in the things of this world; we will be rich in faith. Your Word says that You have chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith, we will be rich in our convictions, we will be rich in what You say. Your Word will be our food and we will not be like the children of Israel, in the desert, saying, "We are tired of this manna," no Lord, we will never be tired of You, You are our life, Your Word is our life, Your Spirit is our life. This morning, we surrender as a church, GTC worldwide, pour out Your mercy and grace upon us, O Lord, and help us to walk in it. Thank You, thank You, Father. We give You glory, we give You honor, we give You praise. For in Jesus' name I 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! God Bless You!