

Hear, Do Not Fear!

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Father, we just come to You. We look to You the Author and Finisher of our faith. Troubled times, Lord, truly, truly troubled times, Lord. There's panic. No government seems to have a handle on this with all their power, might, and resources are at their wit's end. But Father, You are never surprised. You are never out of control. You're sovereign over all the affairs of men. There's nothing that moves in this universe without You knowing, without You allowing, without You being in perfect control we have the privilege and honor to call You, Father. So, Father, I pray that our hearts will be lifted up to You as children look to their Father in faith, in assurance and in loving confidence, in awe and in reverence. We pray, Father, speak to us. We need to hear from You, Lord. Speak to us. Speak, Father. Help us Father, to not be troubled or anxious for anything. Let the fear subside and faith arise that we'll be able to hear what You're telling us, Lord. Thank You, Father. For in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

The title of today's message is Hear, do not fear. The only way you will not fear is if you hear from God. It's like the little children. When the power goes in the room and they're afraid and they scream, "Daddy!" and you hear the father's voice saying, "I'm there." And thunder doesn't matter. Lightning doesn't matter. Darkness doesn't matter, because that voice gave you assurance. Above anytime in my lifetime, this is the time people need to hear from God and not from man. President Trump cannot calm the market. Nobody seems to bring any semblance of calm. People are panicking, because we are living in literally biblical times. Unprecedented times. There are two levels people are going: either it's absolute panic or ignorant complacency. Like the young people jumping in the sea in Florida. They don't care. So they governor had to say, "Go back home." You're spreading the virus. So, either it's absolute panic or ignorant complacency. One of the reasons why I say is, the world in which you and I live right now is a completely different world from anytime of mankind. It's simply because of the telecom revolution that has taken place. Once radio, TV and internet, because there are a lot of people who listen to FM. We may think more than TV, because lots of people listen to FM, then TV and then of course, the young generation with the internet. Of course, it has changed the world. And there is so much information and so much misinformation out there both medical and spiritual at a time like this. Because when you have a pandemic, a pestilence and a plague, there will be so much of medical advice. Everybody becomes a doctor whether they have a degree or not. So the common man gives medical advice. The nurse gives medical advice. The MBBS doctor gives, the MD gives, what you call him? The epidemiologist: he's the expert in epidemics. So, he gives another advice. Everybody seems to be like listen to me! And there is so much spiritual advice also from cow's urine to cow dung, all kinds of spiritual advice, and is saying do this and do that. So, information and misinformation. I have to address this issue as a servant of God and not as a physician. From the spiritual point of view from the Word of God, it's not a point of view, God doesn't have points of view. He just speaks. You can take it and live or you can ignore it and die. He doesn't have an opinion. We have opinions. God doesn't have opinions when He speaks, He speaks the truth.

Why is the pandemic or plague or pestilence different? Even the Bible uses terms like 'plagues' and 'pestilences' and the modern medical term is 'pandemic'. Epidemic and pandemonium put together, you have pandemic. That's my reading of it. One of the reasons why this pandemic or epidemic is different from all time, because there are certain things in the Bible that can happen only at certain times. They're time specific. They cannot happen always. Simply because of the scale of it. Because from the book of Genesis all the way to the book of Revelation, the Bible talks about plagues. And unlike major calamity that has happened in human history including the greatest World War II, nothing has touched as many countries as this epidemic. Even World War II did not affect so many countries. Please understand that. Because that is not in our lifetime. My mother isn't here. It was in her lifetime. She's going to be eighty-five. So, she has seen India's independence. She has been part of World War. I have heard from my grandfather how it was the World War and the stories. And still there is a generation that knows what World War II was like. And World War II never created havoc in Hyderabad or lockdown. There was no panic or nothing like that. So even in our own time when India fought Pakistan in 1971 war, the last one, Kerala was not even touched, because planes did not even have that range. But Kerala is the first state to shut down. You have heard about curfew. The entire state of Rajasthan is under curfew. Parts of Sikkim is under curfew. Lots of places are coming under curfew so you need to understand. The last event comparable to what is happening today, do you know what it is? It was Noah's flood. Nothing else. Last event that is comparable to this. This is a world-wide pandemic. That was something worldwide. What was common? When that happened, everybody in the world knew. You did not need telecom for that. Everybody knew because the water touched everybody. Today this pandemic, everybody knows. So, when

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something like this happens, please work your ears, stand up and take notice because God is not whispering or calling, He's shouting for our attention. Different ways, the Church and the world. One of the questions that I keep getting asked especially during this season all the time even till last night, people calling to ask, pastor, is this the end? Is this the end? Well, I say, if you don't take precautions, this could be your end. This could be your end, but the answer is end of what? Because the end of everything is usually the beginning of something. The end of the world as we see it is definitely getting closer and closer, but if you ask me if this is the end personally, looking at the Scripture, I don't know and I don't think so. I think we're getting close but this is not the end. But the Kingdom of God is very close, it's literally like He's at the door. And Jesus called this labor pains. But the problem is like I said, end of what? Beginning of what? End of your life and the beginning of judgment. It's appointed that everyman should die once and then judgment. So, the end of life is the beginning of judgment. That's the way we have to see. If it's the end of the world, then it is the beginning of the kingdom. See, we hear these very good instructions. Please follow it. Wash your hands. Cover your face. Stay home. Maintain physical social distance. And we're willing to follow it. We spend time, money, resources into buying masks, going around the city buying masks and sanitizers and we're willing to do all that, because we are seeing it as the end of this body. Our life as the end of this body. But connected with the end, that's why I ask people end of what? If we were to say repent, then people would get upset. In Church and in the world, they actually get mad. That's why you look through the newspaper, TV channels, internet most messages on the Church, you will not hear that word. But if you read the Bible whenever there was a calamity, a plague, a pestilence, a judgment, the word that was spoken was repent. You can't change the nature of God. There are pastors preaching that these pestilences are caused by germs. And it's not a judgment of God. So, God is God over everything except germs. Germs have an independent existence from God. It's like the joke I heard long time back. A professor saying in his biology class, God told after the fifth day and the sixth day to all the creatures, "Be fruitful and multiply." And one set of them said, "We will not multiply. We will only divide." That was the amoeba. But God had the last laugh. So, He said, "You multiply by division." They thought he didn't know math. So, there are a lot of preachers trying to change the character of God and the nature of God, trying to teach. Like I keep telling in every meeting, we are not God's PR people. You know what PR is right? Public relations department. Prime ministers and presidents all have PR people to make them look better than they actually are. I am not God's PR man. My job is to shrink as far as possible and present Him as much within my ability as He is. We don't have to play PR. So, the question is: is God the god of plagues? Yes, He is. He is the God of plagues. Let's look at a portion in *Habakkuk 3*.

Habakkuk 3:3-6

³God came from Teman, The Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah His glory covered the heavens, And the earth was full of His praise. ⁴His brightness was like the light; He had rays flashing from His hand, And there His power was hidden. (So, it's absolutely clear this is God.) ⁵Before Him went pestilence, And fever followed at His feet. (So, disease and symptom, both are given. And then) ⁶He stood and measured the earth; He looked and startled the nations. And the everlasting mountains were scattered, The perpetual hills bowed. His ways are everlasting.

He's the God of the pestilences and the God of the plagues. Because after the plague will come, what? Famine will come. I'm telling you. Be prepared. I mean, this is the time to sit back and listen to all the old messages. We've been preparing a Church, in our Church and other Churches and the world that listens to prepare for a time like this. So, you cannot say, "I did not know. I was not warned." Because after pestilence comes, famine. Famine means shortage. Already you see famine: shortage of masks and sanitizers, of medical equipment, of ventilators and vitamin C. Everything. Most of the people who died like official numbers Italy's death numbers have gone over China's. And you know why? It is simply because of shortage of ventilators. Hospitals are overwhelmed by the need. So, famine in a particular thing, but we're talking about famine in general. Why I'm saying this is because this is the famous chapter, *Habakkuk chapter 3*. This is the chapter at the end of which He says, though I see nothing, no fig tree, no cattle, no harvest, nothing, but I shall rejoice and praise the Lord. Before God goes pestilence, famine follows pestilence and the man of God stands there and says, "When I look with my eyes, it is dry." You clean the earth out, but I will stand there and I will praise You and I will worship You, and You will make me stronger in the time of famine. You will actually make me stronger when people are not able to walk in famine, I will climb. I will climb.

I was sharing with few people, I don't know whether I preached it, but I was sharing with few people – when Elijah was asked by God to speak, not prophesy, speak and command that there will be no rain or dew in Israel, until the word of the Lord comes from his mouth again, he spoke for a specific time, but we know from History it was for three and a half years. So, what he proclaimed over Israel was drought. The heavens had shut down completely. Land goes dry. Drought comes

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and the result of drought is famine. Famine is a result of drought. The drought did not end for three and a half years, but the famine never touched Elijah. Please understand these fundamental principles. Drought is one thing. Famine is one thing. Even if God doesn't take away the drought, He will feed those who trust Him. The drought did not end. But for Elijah at Cherith, the famine did not touch him. Then, he moved into a poor widow's house and because he walked in and she welcomed him the famine ended in that house too. The drought never ended for three and a half years. But there were three people in that country who were untouched by the famine that followed. Understand fundamental principles so that when these times come we know how to stand and the only thing that matters is do we really believe? That's what I said, "Don't fear. We need to hear, because faith comes from hearing and hearing comes from the Word of God." So, what we see out in the world is to what length man is willing to go to save his body. What about our soul? The Bible talks a lot about plagues and pestilences and famine and of people who came through it or perished in it. Both. But all these are issues that only will concern us in this life. If you go to,

Revelation 21:3-4

³And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

So, there is a time coming when there will be no famine, no pestilence, no plague, no death, no sorrow, nothing. Even if you come through this plague but you don't come to this place, it still does not matter. That's why God calls the rich man, "You fool! You saved your body. What about your soul?" And through these plagues and pestilences God is drawing our attention to the importance of the salvation of our souls.

All the stuff we see happening is happening in this world.

1 John 5:4

⁴For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

Now, there's no pestilence happening in Mars or not even on the moon. Nobody worried about war on the moon or an earthquake in Neptune. Nobody is. Everything that has been prophesied is connected with this world. And Scripture says there is only one way you overcome this world, it's by faith. If you're born of God by faith, you are called to overcome everything that is happening in this world by faith and through faith. And faith comes from hearing and hearing from the Word of God. And that's our struggle. It shouldn't be a struggle for you now because you have learnt to hear for a message for an hour and a half. But it's not that I'm talking about. You can hear a message for two hours and not hear from God. So, the most important thing specially in the last days is to hear from God. And God keeps on saying in the final book, the book about the last days over and over the refrain is all those who have ears, let them hear what the Holy Spirit says. So, when it says, "It's by faith, we overcome," please note this – faith is not a denial of facts; it is not an abuse of common sense. No, it's not and often people presume or confuse presumption with faith. Presumption is thinking God said. Faith is knowing God said. Faith is not a denial of facts or the reality in which we live in. One of the simple things what I mean is please wash your hands. I'm a child of God so it does not matter. It does matter. Understand Scripture very clearly how life works. When the devil tried to tempt Jesus to jump from the top of the temple, He didn't. What it means is a lot of people will try to jump but it is foolishness to force God's hand. Trust of faith never applies tricks to prove the one we trust is trustworthy. It's one thing to take a bold step of faith because you heard and another to test the Lord. So please follow the guidelines given by the appropriate authorities. Follow the guidelines. Bible is a very practical book too—full of faith, full of practical advice. *Matthew 10:23* Jesus says to His disciples—

Matthew 10:23

²³When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

What He's saying is – if you are persecuted in one city, don't stand there and say, "The anointing of God is over me and I'm a child of God. I rebuke you in Jesus' Name." They'll take your head off. "Run," he said, "run." Just run. The next city. Run. Keep running. It's practical advice. I had this best friend in college. He had a black belt in Karate. He was a very good guy. So,

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I asked him, “When you joined the dojo, what’s the first thing they taught you?” He said, “Run.” It’s not fight, it’s run. The Bible is very practical. They probably wouldn’t have expected Jesus to say that. He says, “When you’re persecuted in one city, this chakra (wheel) will come and you can throw it and you can cut the heads of your enemies.” No, he said, “run.” Lord, I’m your child and there’s a pandemic, He says, “Wash your hands.” How many times? As many times as they have told you. Should I wear a mask? Yes. You’re not breathing the Holy Spirit out, you’re breathing in viruses so wear a mask in public places. So be practical. Don’t test the Lord your God. Jesus is very, very clear. *John 8:59* is a very anticlimactic verse. If you read that verse, it’s really anti-climactic.

John 8:59

⁵⁹***Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself*** (That’s not what we want to read. We want to read He lifted His hands and they all fell backwards) ***and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.***

Scripture says, “He hid himself.” What an anti-climax right? Did He have the power? Did He ever doubt that He is the Son of God? No. Did He create everything with the power of His word? Yes. Did He hide himself? Yes. Be very practical. Don’t presume. Don’t be foolish.

2 Corinthians 11:32-33, Paul will talk about an episode in his life earlier.

2 Corinthians 11:32-33

³²***In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me;***³³***but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.***

He’s not saying, “You’ve sent an angel for Peter, I’m no lesser than Peter. I’ll wait here.” He got into the first basket and escaped. We have all these false ideas when we think about all these things because we have seen so many movies and Amar Chitra katha, and we all think about Paul with the halo around his head and walking like this. No, he was sitting in a basket, hiding and he ran for his life. These are great Apostles. Please don’t mistake presumption for faith. Wash your hands. Cover your face in public places. Avoid public places unless necessary. Isolate yourself. Stock essentials. Don’t hoard. I don’t have to stock, because I’m a child of the living God and manna will come into my house. I’m not saying manna will not come, but for that you need to be very sure you have heard. I do not deny the hand of God. He can work always. But as long as you have very clearly specifically heard, be balanced. Also, please note this: there are different judgments of God in the Bible. Plagues and judgments from God. Certain judgments are different from other judgment. You have to be very carefully. Don’t presume you know what is happening or I know what is happening. So be wise. *Ezekiel 21:3-5*. This is what God says to His own people.

Ezekiel 21:3-5

³***and say to the land of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Behold, I am against you, and I will draw My sword out of its sheath and cut off both righteous and wicked from you. ‘***⁴***Because I will cut off both righteous and wicked from you, therefore My sword shall go out of its sheath against all flesh from south to north, ‘***⁵***that all flesh may know that I, the Lord, have drawn My sword out of its sheath; it shall not return anymore.”’***

Don’t presume that, “I am part of the righteous. So, I’m safe from God’s judgments. The judgment is only for the unrighteous.” God says, “Don’t be too sure.” In certain situation when God removes His sword from the scabbard or the sheath, what happens? The righteous and the unrighteous die. So, there are phases of the judgment. Even if you are righteous, beware, be even more righteous. Cling to Him.

In certain phases of God’s judgments, it does not matter where you are. Right now, if you look at 165, 175, 185 countries, this plague has reached. A few places left are some remote places in Pacific islands. And if they are sitting there secure, the wind can blow the virus there too if God wants. People will realize, honesty, I also think, people in the countryside with self-sufficient campus and we can quarantine ourselves until this virus is over. All that, you think, which is okay. It is rational thinking; the problem is – the Word of God says something else.

Ezekiel 7:15

¹⁵ The sword is outside, And the pestilence and famine within. Whoever is in the field Will die by the sword; And whoever is in the city, Famine and pestilence will devour him.

“It doesn’t matter if you are in the country side or in the city. Once I have raised My hand there is no safety.” Outside the hand of God, there is no safety. Let me tell you one thing – now, all of you’ll are big and the little children are not here. So, it’s a good advice to give you. Otherwise, they will learn a trick. When I was small, one of the regular supplies I got was constant whacking from my father. It was constant and the week hardly went without whacking and I think that’s how we got exercise also. I used to get caned nicely but after sometime, I realized is that, when my father was getting ready to smack me, the closer I cling to him the lesser the effect is. Which is true, have you ever got a whack with the tip of the cane? My God, it hurts. The closer you stand, the lesser the effect is. So, when the hand of God rises over nations in judgment, cling to Him closely. Less effective it would be upon your own life and don’t run further away from Him; instead. run to Him and cling to Him. So, now, we have established the fact that the God of blessings is also the God of pestilences, plagues, earthquakes, famines and wars everything. He is God of all. The question is only mercy will prevail, don’t presume. One of those young days, the first time I got whacked for something I didn’t do and it’s a very rare occasion. Usually, when I got, I deserved it. Once I hadn’t done anything, some child went and complained against me saying, “Sir, your son did this,” and I got the whacking of my life. It was not so bad like other ones but this time my self-righteousness was hurt. You see, I hadn’t done anything wrong. The pain didn’t matter but the hurt was inside. So, I ran from my house and it is in the mountains. I wandered for some time and there was this military training ground. Near that, there was a small cave. As a young boy, I discovered it and I went inside and fell asleep. My mother went mad. She went all around the town, every street, every galli (lane), every shop asking and my father was unmoved. She was calling out my name, I was nowhere to be found and I was fast asleep. These towns in Bhutan are simple, every town revert inside and there is only way if you want to get out you have to cross the bridge and there are the police. My father just took the telephone and called them up saying if an Indian boy passes by, then stop him. That’s all and he went back to his work but my mother was running all around the town and my father is totally unmoved. If you look at him, you will think he doesn’t care at all but actually he is scared but he made only one call and that was enough. Afternoon or something, I opened my eyes and I heard somebody screaming and I looked out it was my mother. Then, my mother caught me, cried and after everything. she took me and locked me up in somebody’s bathroom and said, “Your father’s temper is still high. So, wait. I will let you loose later.” So, in the evening, she came and opened the bathroom door and she told me one thing – “I know your father very well. If you don’t want to get the spanking of your life, do one thing. Just go straight, fall at his feet and ask for mercy.” It’s a good advice. I went straight, fell at his feet and said ‘mercy’. And, he didn’t whack me. Let me tell you, when judgments of God roll, the only thing that can save us is His mercy and nothing.

That was the problem with the *Book of Job*; he is questioning God, “Am I not righteous?” One thing he forgets is to cry out for mercy. So, when, finally, God stands up and speaks, he says, “I repent and say mercy.” Good that Job went through that because we learn from it. If he hadn’t asked for mercy, else we would had only two chapters in the *Book of Job*. So, please. With God, start with mercy; don’t end with mercy but start with mercy like Noah did. New creation when everything is finished, he comes out of the ark and builds an altar and offers a sacrifice saying, “Lord, thank You for mercy over my life.” It begins with mercy. Because only mercy of God will prevail. So, even when you pray, be very clear and be very sure that mercy is the large part of your prayer. But we need a solution, right? Can’t go through an epidemic and after this epidemic another will come, famine will come, wars will come. So, we need a solution and it is only from God and it has to be from God and given by God. Very familiar portion and everybody is speaking that and I also have to speak because that is the solution.

2 Chronicles 7:12-16

¹² Then the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: “I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice.

At the best point in Solomon’s life, He is talking about the worst days that will happen. God is interesting, right? Imagine, Habsiba comes to me and says, “Uncle, uncle here see I got first rank,” and I look at her and say, “When you fail and you don’t get a job, don’t forget to come to me.” That’s God at the best day in Solomon’s life. Temple has been constructed and dedicate to God, the presence of God has filled. Everybody starts worship because the Shekinah glory and in the night, God comes and says, okay.

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¹³ When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people,

And that's what's happening in one part of the world. From Pakistan border to Punjab onwards all the way to East Africa, the locusts are eating away the harvest.

¹⁴ if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. ¹⁵ Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place. ¹⁶ For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.

So, that's the solution and there's no other solution outside of God. And if you have read it carefully, the solution lies with us and not with the world. The world has no solution. The American Congress, President and the world all together are planning to put in one trillion dollars into the system to boost but the stock market even crashed another 900 points yesterday. Three years of gain is gone in all 1-2 weeks, everything is gone and there is no solution. These are manmade and the manmade solutions cannot handle the God made disasters. For God made disasters you need God made solutions and solution is not in their hand but solution is in Gods hand and only Gods people know it. So, He didn't say, "The world knows it," but, "My people." But before you go into the solution, you also have to realize what God said. He says, *when I stop the rain or send the locusts or pestilence*. So, you always have to realize what the purpose behind something like this and why does God send something like this? Remember the first time the word plague is used in the Bible is found in *Genesis 12*.

Genesis 12:17

¹⁷ But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.

The Egyptian king has taken Abraham's wife through whom the promised seed is supposed to come. And God plagued his whole house so that they will let her go. There are all astrologers, magicians, soothsayers and everybody sitting over there and they will check and they will realize it has got to do with this one woman. His palace is full of women taken from other men but this one woman has created all this trouble. Let her go! Do you know why God allows these things to happen? So that His people will come out of the Pharaoh's palace and worship Him and serve Him alone. From the first time God send a plague, the Bible the plague was so that His people would leave Babylon or Egypt and worship Him alone. So please understand, otherwise we are missing. The Book of Exodus, is the book of plagues. The only purpose behind each one of those plagues or pestilences were, let Israel My people go that they might worship Me and serve Me. The first 3 plagues Egypt also experienced and Israel also experienced. Then in the fourth plague, this is what God says.

Exodus 8:20-23

²⁰ And the LORD said to Moses, "Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh as he comes out to the water. Then say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. ²¹ Or else, if you will not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand. ²² And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there, in order that you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the land. ²³ I will make a difference between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall be."

So, in the fourth plague, the fourth plague becomes two signs. One, the pestilence upon Egypt. Two, God is making a separation between Egypt and His people. Right now, we are not seeing that distinction but we can have that distinction. And the final and the deadliest plague was Exodus 12.

Exodus 12:13

¹³ Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

This was the worst and the most important one. All the others would only cause primarily physically and economic damage but this will cost your life. So, even in this plague, by chance, if you catch this Corona Virus, don't die without Blood over

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your home and your life. Don't die without being under the Blood. So, you will see consistently God has plagues, God has reasons and solutions.

Exodus 32:35

³⁵ ***So the LORD plagued the people because of what they did with the calf which Aaron made.***

That's why the stock market is down because the calf is outside the stock market. It's a bull. If you start worshipping money, God says I will plague you. I didn't call My people to worship money. "I called My people to worship Me. You don't serve money, you serve Me." So, Aaron made it and God plagued. We will come back to *Numbers 16* but let us go to *Numbers 25:8*,

Numbers 25:8

⁸ ***and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her body. So the plague was stopped among the children of Israel.***

Why I'm saying is that in each one of these cases of plagues, somebody had to take drastic action before the plague stopped. The plague did not stop on its own. Either Pharaoh had to relent or somebody had to die. Either you have to repent or die. Oh, house of Israel, why should you die? We know the plagued that came upon Israel because David numbered. Pride set in. One way it is good that we never numbered our Church and all the Churches which are numbered are now online. So, there are no numbers. Online Church is a very good thing because there are no numbers. If you look at David in the *Book of Samuel*.

2 Samuel 24:25

²⁵ ***And David built there an altar to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel.***

So, there is a whole record of plagues and there are different things people had to do before the plague stayed. You have to personalize it. Now, we will go back to the solution because we only see the problem, we don't see the solution. Only God has the power to stay, no leader no government. If this plague goes, six months or a year later it will come back in another form. Next time it will kill 100 million. This takes away 75 million; the next one will kill more. So neither government authority nor medical authority can stop. When vaccine is found for this, another one will come for which no vaccine will be available. Remember *Psalms 103:7*?

Psalms 103:7

⁷ ***He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel.***

You need a solution; you need to know God's ways. Don't ever in another problem however small it is in your life or however big it is across the world, universal, try to find a solution to a problem that skirts God's righteousness and holiness. Don't do that and that's not a solution. You are just postponing the destruction. That's why the vaccine for the flu doesn't work for COVID-19. You were vaccinated for flu but that vaccine won't work for this. Don't ever try to find a solution, small or big that skirts God's righteousness and holiness that doesn't work. Like we heard a couple of Sundays back when a nation or the whole world reaches a tipping point and I believe that world has reached a tipping point and God says, okay. If you look around the air is clean, the rivers are clean, pollution isn't there, streets are empty, people are spending time in their homes, movies theaters are shut, cruise ships are not going, gambling tents are all shut down, bars are closed and those who are going to the beverages stores in Kerala to buy liquor are maintain 6 feet distance and standing. What a virus can do right? Don't learn the lessons that you learn while this virus lasts.

So, let us go back to the solution in *2 Chronicles 7*.

2 Chronicles 7:12

¹² ***Then the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: "I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice.***

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First thing He says is, *"I have chosen this place."* This is a dedication of the temple. *'For Myself'!* As a *'house of sacrifice!'*

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? ²⁰ For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

So, the temple has changed. So, don't read Old Testament without understanding its ramifications in the New Covenant. He says, *"I have chosen you as a 'house of sacrifice'."*

In *John chapter 2*, after the wedding at Cana, everybody is feeling so good because of the wine that they have had, Jesus goes to Jerusalem and makes them sober.

John 2:13-17

¹³ Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. ¹⁵ When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. ¹⁶ And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" ¹⁷ Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."

So, one of the first acts of Jesus in His ministry was to clean the temple out. *"If My People who are called by My Name!"* He says, *"I have chosen this house, put My name on it to be house of sacrifice."*

Romans 12:1-2

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.

I have chosen this house to be a house of sacrifice. Do you really, really think we can understand the will of God unless we are willing to sacrifice? All of you are sacrificing for your board exams and a career and everything, right? Do you think you can (understand the will of God) without sacrificing for God? It will cost your body! *'By the renewing of your mind'*. Think about it, honestly. Now the government is making it possible for us to spend more time with God. But the question is- will we? Do you think prayer is really easy? Do you think study of the Word is very easy? Do you think seeking His face is really easy? That is why the instructions of the government do not apply to us in the New Covenant because we are the temple; we don't need a building to gather. *"Oh! Sunday service has been cancelled so I don't have to worship today."* Who told you? So your worship was associated with a place? No! In *Hebrews 13*, it says, what does that temple or that house do?

Hebrews 13:15

¹⁵ Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

When you have a body and a mind that have been offered to God, you don't have to worry about singing; it will automatically come. You don't have to conjure it up; it will be there because you are the temple of God and sacrifice is the natural outflow. Otherwise we will sacrifice to Kohli, Kohli will get whitewashed in New Zealand and our sacrifice finishes. *2 Chronicles 7:13* is very clear – this is the absolute sovereignty of God.

2 Chronicles 7:13

¹³ When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people,

It is 'He'! Even if it escaped from a lab in Wuhan or came from the meat market there, it can only escape because God took His hand off. Because He said, *not even a hair from your head falls*. All of us woke up this morning, absolutely sure (maybe for a few ladies) nobody checked their pillows to see how many hairs fell, but God knew. So, be very clear about this. Whether you are facing a very small issue in your life or a pandemic of this universal scale, God is the only one who can

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actually stop it. But did you hear any call for prayer except from one president for last Sunday from any nation? You don't hear this call for prayer as if everybody is embarrassed to include God into the picture; that if you bring God into the picture, you look like a retard in this post-modern society. "Don't bring God in. You are a fool? Science is a 'god'. We are investing in science and vaccines." It's all good. He is not asking anybody. He is just asking His people- "*If My people who are called by My name*" because everyone does not have solution or access. To His people, He asks four things: *you humble, you pray, you seek and you turn away from your wicked ways*. He says, *I will do three things: I will hear, I will forgive your sins and I will heal your land*. That's the order. Don't change the order. So, the first thing God tells us to have a solution. That's our problem! First thing what does He say? Pray? No! He doesn't say, 'pray'. Everybody prays; very few humble. Simple meaning of 'humble' means 'come under'. One of the most interesting statements about Jesus Christ is found in *Philippians 2:8*. We want to know practically- what is humbling?

Philippians 2:8

⁸And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

As soon as He became a man (God became flesh), He humbled Himself. How do you know He was humble? Because He was obedient. How do we know we are not humble? Because we are disobedient. Interesting statement about Jesus! As soon as He became human, He humbled Himself and He obeyed His Father all the way to death because humility and obedience go together. Humility is the attitude of the heart; obedience is the outwork of it. Both have to be there. You can have outward obedience without inward humility and you can have inward humility without outward obedience; it still does not work. So there are no quick fix solutions because there are no quick fix solutions in the Kingdom of God that skirts His holiness and His righteousness.

We look for verses which say, "Just pray and you will get an answer." We love it! "Just confess. Just proclaim. Just pray. Just confess. Just declare." That's why we like that preaching because one thing that is not demanded out of it all is, what? You don't have to sacrifice. You don't have to humble yourself or sacrifice. You don't have to humble yourself. If somebody says, "Just pray or just confess *Psalms 91* over your life." How easy, right? No masks, no sanitizer; just *Psalms 91*! Even if you don't know any other Psalms, everybody knows *Psalms 91* now. Current favorite is *Psalms 91*. Before this came, favorite was *Psalms 23*. At least one good thing is that because of calamities, people are learning Psalms.

Did He say straightaway, "I will hear from heaven and heal your land"? No! He didn't say that. He said, "I will hear from heaven, and first forgive your sins and then heal your land." We want healing without forgiveness. Don't bring sin into the picture because when sin comes, then His righteousness, His holiness, everything comes into the picture. So please keep that out. "You are my healer, just heal me." So you need to realise there is a problem. The problem is 'sin problem'. The problem behind all these is sin. If there is no sin, there is no judgment. That's why incredibly righteous man like Nehemiah and Daniel and all, when they stood in the gap, they confessed their own sins and identified with the sins of the people.

If you see, most pastors and all world leaders are very scared to address that matter. We want to skip over that and go straight away- "Lord, heal this land." We will say, "Lord, heal India." He says, "What happened few weeks back in Delhi? What about that? You forgot? What about that? 42 people died, right? You want Me to skip over it? Did you remember that? The history of India?"

Old days, when I used to preach I would say that. You sit in a railway compartment, you are travelling from north to east, west to north or wherever in India and imagine, a 90 years old man is sitting over there, a 70 years old man is sitting over there, a 50 years old man is sitting here and 30 years old man is sitting here and a 20 years old man is sitting here. This 90 years old man could have been involved in 1948 partition riots, raped and killed people, never caught and never punished. This man could have been in riots in Delhi 1984, where 3000 or 5000 Sikhs were killed, raped, murdered, burned; never caught, never punished. This fellow must have been in Gujarat riots, who killed, murdered, raped; never caught. This man must have done these all 3 weeks ago. Everybody sitting in India free and you are saying, "Lord, heal the land"? What do you think our God is? This is our issue.

In global news, 'Coronavirus'- total death till now is 11,400. In how many weeks? But in one day, 1,50,000 babies will be aborted today and you want God to keep quiet and heal our land? These issues don't matter to God? It doesn't bother us?

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Do you know what's happening in American Congress when they are bringing this bail-out, 5,500 billion or a trillion packages and all? A whole set of people are fighting in that 'coronavirus package', abortion should be included. They are funding for that. That is a 'right' now! Killing babies have become a human right! You cannot skirt these problems. So when you and I pray, you cannot stand before God and say these things don't matter. It should matter. They may not repent, but God says, will you stand in the gap? Nobody wants to talk about these things but if you don't talk about these things now, when will you talk about these things? These are the reasons why judgment will come because everybody is more worried about offending people than offending God. So 'repent' is a very bad word! So first as pastors, will we humble ourselves before God and preach unpalatable message? Remember *Deuteronomy 8:2* and *8:16*?

Deuteronomy 8:2

²And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

"I led you in the wilderness to humble you, to test you." The first thing that God was trying to do was to humble them.

Deuteronomy 8:16

¹⁶who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end—

Let me ask you. In those 40 years, in spite of all these, did anybody get humble? No! Don't ever think these plagues will humble people. So, we have to humble ourselves. Don't expect these things to humble people and when these things happen, it is a sign to us – "humble yourselves." That's why we saw *Philippians 2:8*. What does it say?

Philippians 2:8.

⁸And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Hebrews 5:8

⁸though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

Everybody is suffering. Everybody is in this situation but are we learning more obedience? Why this is important is- sometimes it is easier to learn something from the effects it causes. Meaning, all of us sitting here, what is 'paracetamol' (we don't know its chemical composition and how it works chemically in the system) we don't know but we know one thing- when you have fever and you take it, your fever goes. So, we know 'paracetamol' by its effects and not by its chemical composition and description and all that (we don't know). How do you understand humility? By its effects! It's as simple as that. It is by its effects. If you want a solution, even if you want to stay it in your own locality, if you are able to stop it in your locality, first thing God says is- humble yourself. When you and I humble ourselves only, we will understand God and His Word and what He is trying to do and what He is trying to speak to us through different situations. We like *Psalms 91*; right now, current favorite, top of the charts. 16 verses are there in *Psalms 91*; 4 are for me and 12 are for God. That's how you divide *Psalms 91*. 16 verses, 4 verses for me and 12 verses God will do. So, you cannot randomly speak over it. God says, I will take the weight upon Myself to do 12; you do 4 meaning keep what is there in 4.

Psalms 91:1-2

¹He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. ²I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust."

First, He says, when you are in a particular state of being, this will be your confession, naturally; you don't have to worry about it. This is the result of being in a particular condition. Your confession does not make your condition. Your condition makes your confession. Then, you go to verse 9.

Psalm 91:9

⁹Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place,

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You did this!

Psalms 91:14

¹⁴ “Because he has set his love upon Me,

So, we have to ask these questions. Have we made God our dwelling place? Did we set our love upon Him before we speak *Psalms 91* over our lives? This is not a mantra. We make fun of them; we also have our ‘Jehovah mantras’! They may have ‘gayatri’; we have ‘Jehovah mantras’. It doesn’t work like that. The 12 verses connected with God, I don’t have to worry about God’s side at all.

Psalms 91:1

¹He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High...

That’s the whole thing. Now in this current situation, we have to learn, not to visit the secret place, but ‘dwell’ in the secret place. It takes a whole lot of humility to dwell under somebody’s hand. That’s why God tells to humble myself first. ‘Dwell’-stay there consistently in the secret place. Let it be your state of mind, your life; secret places. We all like secret places.

Matthew 6:4

⁴that your charitable deed may be seen in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.”

Matthew 6:6

⁶But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”

Matthew 6:17-18

¹⁷But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”

Talks about three things – giving, praying, and fasting. When Corona virus has hit the world and the city, everyone is worrying about taking, i.e., stocking and hoarding. Is anybody worried about giving? We are all worried about taking, stocking. But if you and I dwell in the secret place, we should be more concerned about giving, right? If part of our lifestyle is praying in secret, quarantine should be welcome, right? Work from home is a joy! But if playing was the habit, then quarantine is miserable. We are more worried about eating and not about fasting. In *Psalms 35:13*, the psalmist says,

Psalms 35:13

¹³But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled myself with fasting;

I worry about food (not mine). I was telling my wife, “We got all these 40 children that we need to take care of, buy for them, stock for them – Pediasure, diapers, emergency medicines,” till yesterday. “Buy, buy, buy!!!” Let me tell you honestly about this problem, as God’s people if you are used to dwelling in the secret place, one of the facets is fasting. Three-day fasting, 7 days fasting, 14 days fasting, 21 days fasting, 40 days fasting. If fasting is your lifestyle, does 14 days matter to you? It shouldn’t bother us at all. Why are we panicking? How long will the government shut down the city? 21 days? “Cool! I got 21 days to fast. All I need is water.” Is any city going to be shut for more than 40 days? No. I am used to it; 2 times, 3 times, 4 times in my life we have fasted for 40 days. My question is what are we panicking about? Our focus is completely wrong. We are panicking exactly like the world, instead of seeing it as an opportunity; government mandated sick leave. Sit at home and fast for next 7 days. I don’t need to stock so much. I need water. Why are we not seeing it differently? Or are we just afraid like them, the world? “Oh quarantine! 14 days self-quarantine! 21 days, 30 days” Read *Isaiah 26:20*,

Isaiah 26:20

²⁰Come, my people, enter our chambers, and shut your doors behind you; Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, Until the indignation is past.”

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We are used to quarantine because we see the hand of God. God says, "Go to the secret place and hide yourself till my wrath is over" Quarantine yourself. Go into fasting and prayer. I don't have to tell you all this. This is God ordained quarantine, in the Bible. Do we see stuff that is happening right in the world with different eyes? We are more worried about eating when we should be concerned saying "I got an opportunity to fast." Are we stocking? We look at all the people panicking, perishing, and dying in India or elsewhere. Don't go by these records. Don't say only 20 died. No. Nobody knows how many died because only 20 died who were tested. There are no testing kits available to test and find out. You can go to any one of these medical diagnostics, they cannot test for Covid-19. They don't have the testing kit for that. People are dying in the hospital without being diagnosed that it is this disease. How many tens and thousands and millions have died, nobody knows. Only one thing they say, by the cemeteries and the crematoriums, with the spike we know more people have died than official figures. People are dying! What is our response? We read *Psalm 35*, right? Now read the whole context, why did he humble his soul with fasting? Incredible Psalm!

Psalm 35:11

"¹¹Ruthless witnesses come forward; they question me on things I know nothing about.¹²They repay me evil for good and leave my soul forlorn."

The psalmist says, 'wicked people have gathered around me' I believe it's David.

¹³ Yet when they were ill, (when my enemies were ill, what did I do?) I put on sackcloth and humbled myself with fasting. When my prayers returned to me unanswered, ¹⁴ I went about mourning as though for my friend or brother. I bowed my head in grief as though weeping for my mother."

This is a man of God. The whole world is perishing. Until the plague, they may have been my enemies (meaning persecuting the church) but now when they are sick God says, "Do you see the heart of my servant? Because this is what I expect from the people who live in the secret place." This is the actual outpouring of a life. Yes, they are not our friends, they attack churches all around, shut down, beaten up, burn Bibles. All these things are happening but now that they are ill, what do we do? "We prayed and He did not answer", and we say, "it is God's will." No. How did he work? My friend, my brother, my mother. This is an old covenant saint. So, what is our response to Covid-19? Global response and church response are two different things. "My people call by My name", that is why every calamity is an opportunity to draw closer to God and draw His life. He will change the entire trajectory of your life but, unless we see this truth we will not understand. It doesn't matter what we were earlier. Today, we learn new truths. We cannot change on our own but once we know the truth you say, "Lord, this is the truth. This is what I want to be. Someday, I want to be like this. Let me start on this journey. I want to be a man after your own heart."

Why did God call him "a man after God's own heart"? We could begin terribly, like Aaron did. He began terribly. First time Moses is not with him, he just crumbled under pressure. He is a very weak leader. He needs Moses beside him. When Moses beside him, Moses says; he speaks. When Moses is away, he doesn't know what to say, what to do. Moses is gone; he comes, messes up Israel; makes that golden calf; people worship, they debauchery; God judges, 3000 people die; Moses is mad at him, he says, "My Lord, what could I do? They forced me." He is a weak man. Next time again you will see in *Numbers 12:1*.

Numbers 12:1

"¹² Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses..."

You know, immediately, the leader is Miriam and not Aaron. He allowed his sister to coerce him, "Come with me. We need to confront this younger brother of ours." Very weak man! He couldn't stand with God against the people or his own sister, whether in the family or outside, he was incredible weak man. We know that when we read *Numbers 12:9-10*, when God comes there

Numbers 12:9-10

"⁹so the anger of the lord was aroused against them, and He departed. ¹⁰And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, suddenly Miriam became leprous, as white as snow. Then Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she was, a leper."

So, you know, she was the instigator. It was not Aaron that was a leper, it was Miriam. She was the one who started it but, even that man will end very well. There is rebellion; Dathan, Korah, and Abiram go down. People see that. They screamed, hauled, shout. Next day, again they came against Moses. This is what I am saying, "people hardened." Calamity after calamity. It's not making people more and more humble; it's making them more and more stubborn. That's my fear for the church. We are seeing all these things; it is not making people take one step closer into the prayer closet or the word. It's not changing lifestyles. We are still leaning upon the arm of flesh to come through this. It is not radically changing their lifestyle because what God says, "You have 24 hours; I am giving you quality time. Your office will say, "work from home", government will say, "don't get out of the house." And, if you get out of the house, you will have nothing else to do. You have shut down everything. Will you please come and sit with me?" You still won't. The government of Germany had to ask Netflix, "please stream yours not at HD quality because we are asking the people to work from home. So, if they are all watching movies, the internet will crash. So, until this crisis is over, can you put it at 480?" Why? Because people are locked in their houses watching movies. God has long white hair; ancient of days, you know. He must be pulling it and say, "What more can I do to make this people?" Now the plague comes, and the people are dying. After all this they turn against Moses and Aaron.

Number 16:42-48

⁴²Now it happened, when the congregation had gathered against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the tabernacle of meeting; and suddenly the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared. ⁴³Then Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of meeting. ⁴⁴ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ⁴⁵"Get away from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." And they fell on their faces. (He said, "Get out. I want to destroy this people." They fell on their faces before God.) ⁴⁶ So Moses said to Aaron, "Take a censer and put fire in it from the altar, put incense on it, and take it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them; for wrath has gone out from the Lord. The plague has begun."

This is why you need to have a man who knows the ways of God. God is saying one thing, he is doing the opposite because he understands God. God says, "Stand aside, I want to destroy this people." He tells his brother, "Run, bring the incense. Run, where the plague has started." For the first time, you will see Aaron being a leader. You know what he did?

⁴⁷ Then Aaron took it as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the assembly; and already the plague had begun among the people. So, he put in the incense and made atonement for the people.

Verse 48 is the most beautiful. It will be the epitaph. If Aaron had a grave, I would put this verse there. 16:48 is how he finishes.

⁴⁸ And he stood between the dead and the living; so, the plague was stopped.

See how a man finishes. How he began and how he finishes? The plague is going on. People are dying. I think 14700 or something. Thousands are dying and the plague is killing everybody. He stands right in the middle. That's what Jesus did. He stood right in the middle. The death stopped. You can turn calamity into a triumph in your own locality. If God sees you standing in the middle between the dead and the living; and only we know the truth. We know the source. We have the access. And God says, "What are people doing? Why my people don't see the heart of David who went on mourning when his enemies died, when they became ill, they were being destroyed? Don't you see Aaron was a weak man and stood there between the dead and the living and the plague just stopped. He was not afraid to run to the middle of the plague. "If My people were called by My name." That's why Peter said in *1 Peter 5:6*,

1 Peter 5:6

⁴⁶ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,"

In prayer, in fasting, giving of ourselves. If an actual lockdown comes for 14 days; the question is: after the lockdown is lifted, would it have life changed radically? Even the secular people are asking after the virus is over, will the world have changed radically? Or the people will just go back to their old lifestyle? The government will say, "Please book a vacation, we have to lift all the airlines from the red. Take a cruise, please. Travel, hotels are to be built for tourism industry." Will life

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change? Will we all just go back to our old lifestyle? Will we have learnt the lessons of the plaque? Will we change, men? Because I have to start with men. Can't stand the charges to start with women, so start with us. Will our prayer life change? Fasting life change? Above all, our Word life change?

Matthew 5:1-2, again, a very familiar portion,

Matthew 5:1-2

"And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. ² Then He opened His mouth and taught them"

Men! Will you take that extra effort or sacrifice to go up, sit with him so that you can be taught of God? It's extra effort! They went up the mountain to sit with Him. We want Him to come down and teach us. You will listen, you receive a teaching but that's not from God, that's from man. If you want teaching from God, you have to be willing to go that extra mile. Sacrifice! I am talking to men now explicitly to men, even if women are listening it is for men. Because the headship, the first thing about the headship is, men has to be taught. It doesn't matter how good your muscles are, if your head is empty. That's why we send our children to school and not to the gym. If muscles were what was important, we would have all send our children to gym. No, we send them to school. Can men be taught? Will you take that extra effort? Because if you are not taught, how do you lead? To lead you need something here between your ears, to lead your family in God's ways. Everybody is leading but which way? Can we pray?

1 Timothy 2:8

"⁸I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath.

Because God knows men well; He says anger is our major issue and doubting. Doubting is secondary, but first issue is anger. Can you just lift up holy hands and pray? We wash our hands with sanitizer; that only made it clean outwardly. I am talking to men. I asked the first question: can we be taught?

1 Corinthians 14:35

"³⁵And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church."

I am not talking to the women here; I am talking to the men. Can men teach their wives? Men tell their wives, "Listen to me," but what are they listening to? In the Church, the apostle is saying, "Please don't sit here and ask questions. If you have any questions ask your men because he should be teaching you. He should know enough Scripture to teach you the ways of God." The question to men, (unmarried learn now) married: are you able to teach your wife the ways of God? The question to women is, "Will you allow your husband to teach you?" Because many women have one physical husband and many spiritual husbands. They listen to every other man on YouTube except their husband, breaking the commandment of God. The purpose of man hearing from God and woman hearing from man is that these three will become one. The three-fold cord cannot be broken. Man listens to BBC news and woman listens to Derek Prince, what house is that? Because 14 days are coming, and like China, don't apply for divorce because you suddenly discovered your spouse under quarantine.

Ephesians 6:4

⁴And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

In most homes, mothers teach their children and not fathers, fathers teach them Cricket, cards, how to gamble, some fathers even do this, "Come here. Take a drop of my liquor," but Scripture says about Christian homes – husband teaches the wife, husband teaches the children. I am talking to the me. That's why God is giving quarantine, start where it matters because ultimately, every lane is a set of homes the basic unit is the hope in God's Kingdom. It's a hope. We are looking at the big picture, global pandemic. Is it a global pandemic? No, every home is gone and I am trying to do stuff to restore the homes so that the nation can be restored. That's the problem. So, we don't want an answer to a pandemic like this; you want an answer – "Just give us few mantras, we will speak and the pandemic will just goes away and our lives remain unchanged because we love what we are." God says, "But I don't know what you are." We should not be worried about death. The end of pandemic is death, right? We are one set of people who would not be even worried about death because

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He has taken care of death. Our focus should not be on the pestilence or death; our focus should be what are you trying to tell me through all this because every crisis is a call to seek the Lord, “If My people humble, pray, seek, humble, pray, seek, humble, pray, seek, right and turn away from wicked ways.” See, you cannot turn away from wicked ways until you have done the first three because if you don’t humble, pray and seek, you may not know your wicked ways but when you humble, pray and seek, even your good ways start looking wicked.

As we come to the kind of conclusion, I don’t have to send you as you have nowhere to go anyway, lunch is there, you can’t say I have to hurry back for what? To catch the virus on the way? No, stay still.

Revelation 1:9-10

⁹I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ...

He is a companion in these three things, if you are not part of these three, he is not our brother. Don’t call him brother John. Don’t say ‘brother John’. “I don’t know you.” If you are part of this, he is part of us.

...was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ (technically not for 14 days, for many years he was quarantined in this rocky island with no fellowship, nothing). ***¹⁰I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet***

So, one man seeking the Lord, technically, if we were in his place, we wouldn’t seek. What is more to seek? And little later, he starts getting revelation of Churches, he is a last apostle living; everybody else is dead. So, through the last apostle, God gives a judgement of the Churches that are there and historically speaking, how Churches will fall out in time. It’s interesting, in chapter 2, verses 2-4, through John, because after he wrote, saw this and wrote this, this scroll may be a month, two months, may be three months, one year later must have reached Ephesus and the pastor of Ephesus is reading this scroll, when he is reading this scroll, he is feeling good, wow! Apostle John heard from the Lord and saw this vision about my Church!

Revelation 2:2-4

²“I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; ³and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary. ⁴Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

Boom! Did you see? He heard and this Church which is very good and was actually good because one man heard, he was able to reveal their one wicked way. If John hadn’t heard, they would not have known that their way is wicked. “If My people who are called by My Name, humble themselves, pray, seek...” We need to humble, pray and seek, He will reveal our wicked ways and we will not know our wicked ways unless He shows it to us and suddenly, this Church which was looking so good, realizes one way is wicked and that is a really, really a wicked way – you have fallen for your first love. In verse 5, God says,

Revelation 2:5

⁵Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works (that’s what He tells in *Chronicles* also), ***or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.***

2 Chronicles 7:14

¹⁴if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways (that is repent), ***then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.***

But the question is: did Ephesus repent? No, and Ephesus was swept away. With all their good works, they were swept away. This is what God is talking about. Everything that God is doing is to bring us back to God. So, don’t please forget the purpose of the pestilence and the trouble and the stuff that we are going through. If we are not willing to sacrifice before God, body and mind because it will take enormous amount of labor for many of you to sit with this and study. It doesn’t come easy. Start getting our minds reoriented into the ways of God or oriented into the ways of God. We will also be swept

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away. God is not a respecter of persons. Swept away. This pestilence will go; we may escape this but we may not escape the next one. In the *Book of Amos*,

Amos 4:6

⁶“Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, And lack of bread in all your places; Yet you have not returned to Me,” Says the LORD.

He is talking about everything that we used to talking about – nothing to eat. When we don’t have anything to eat, we don’t have to brush your teeth, you teeth is so clean, nothing is caught in between, “I gave you clean teeth, lack of bread in all your places, I caused you real hunger, hoping that it will cause you to humble and say, ‘Lord, please have mercy’, did you come back to Me? No.”

Amos 4:7

⁷“I also withheld rain from you, when there were still three months to the harvest. I made it rain on one city, I withheld rain from another city. One part was rained upon, and where it did not rain the part withered.

“When you actually needed rain, I kept rain away from you.” Remember, that’s what *Chronicles 7* – withheld rain, locusts, pestilence. We saw before our eyes – first, California burning; and then, Australia burning, burn, burn, burn; and finally, God sent rain and fire went only because of the rain; not because of all the governments trying to help Australia. Finally, God sent the rain and the rains out the fire out. You seeing before our eyes – fire first. Then, we heard locusts from Punjab all the way it is; and then, we hear pestilence. Order seems still be the same. So, nothing has changed in the history – rain, locusts, pestilence. When we withhold rains, what happens? You have wild fires; everything goes dry. All it takes is one spark, one spark. Some of you will lose your temper, the spark, because you are very dry. You need rain.

Amos 4:7-9

⁷“I also withheld rain from you, when there were still three months to the harvest. I made it rain on one city, I withheld rain from another city. One part was rained upon, and where it did not rain the part withered (I was trying to catch your attention with all this). ⁸So two or three cities wandered to another city to drink water, but they were not satisfied; Yet you have not returned to Me,” Says the LORD. ⁹“I blasted you with blight and mildew. When your gardens increased, Your vineyards, Your fig trees, And your olive trees, The locust devoured them; Yet you have not returned to Me,” Says the LORD.

So, you see, God does not just casually allow calamities to come. The purpose behind every calamity is that we return to Him. The only purpose is that. “See, I am trying to catch your attention, the only way I can catch your attention for your soul to return to Me is to pinch your body. It all affects the body. You are such bodily creatures. So, if I have to get your attention that your soul returns to Me, I have to do something that touches your body but that you feel immediately, Ah! Touch your body, but the purpose behind is that you would come back to Me with your soul but you don’t.”

Amos 4:10

¹⁰“I sent among you a plague after the manner of Egypt; Your young men I killed with a sword, Along with your captive horses; I made the stench of your camps come up into your nostrils; Yet you have not returned to Me,” Says the LORD.

That’s what He is telling to Christian nations. Primarily, to Christian nations He is speaking much more than to us, “America, where are your young men? All gone to drugs, finished, a generation hooked, gone. And then, I send pestilence. Are you still crying out to Me? No.”

Amos 4:11-12

¹¹“I overthrew some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were like a firebrand plucked from the burning (meaning, you are just like Lot, you should have burned but I just plucked you out); Yet you have not returned to Me,” Says the LORD. ¹²“Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel; Because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel!”

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Don't worry about what the plague is doing to our bodies. We have to look at our reaction in our soul and if we don't react in our souls like Israel, then we didn't learn the lesson. The response of the plague by the world and the Church differs, the world fears, the Church hears, "Do you hear Me?" Prime Minister said, "Tomorrow, Curfew from 7 am till 9 pm," and he said that at 5 pm, everybody should come out and clap hands. For what? For all the essential workers who are risking their lives to save, which is right – medical profession, doctors, nurses, they are on duty now. UK government has called around six hundred thousand retired doctors and nurses to come back to work. On call, they are there. They are falling out of fatigue and tiredness, trying to save lives. Medical professions are not enough. He said, "For all these people who are standing, giving, risking their own lives, working 24 hours shifts," he says, "what you should do? You should come and clap your hands." Incredible job, they are doing everywhere in the world. Sacrificial labour, for what? To save our body but for two thousand years or six thousand years, God's servants are trying to save our souls, I didn't see anybody clapping for them. They were killed, they were mocked, they were stoned, they were slaughtered, from Abel onwards, but what they were trying to do was something bigger than saving of your body; It was saving of your soul because there are only one set of people who can stay the hand of God. That's what we saw about Aaron in *Numbers 16:48* – Aaron was the first high priest who was supposed to make atonement for Israel. So, he stood bravely at the altar of incense, right in the middle where people were dying, where he stood, death stopped. This side was living; that side, dead. He stood and stopped but we are of a priesthood greater than of Aaron, the line of Melchizedek which never ends. You talk about and confess, "I am a royal priesthood," but do you stand between the dead and the living? Do we stand between the dead and the living?

When I was preparing this message, the last picture God me was this; He says, "Think about this, son; this pandemic becomes worse, really, really worse." So, you saw in Italy, first curfew. Next complete lockdown; now, marshal law, cannot get out of your house, the cops, the police men. Yesterday, they have called in the army. The army soldiers should have to come over. That's ultimately what will happen but you need to realize, you can call the doctors, you can call the nurses, you can call the cops, the police men, you can call the soldiers, but all of them are vulnerable to the same disease. So, the doctors die, the cops die, the soldiers die and the people die. So, God is saying, "Will you go into the midst of the plague because you are not afraid of the death? Will you go?" Because you are not afraid of the death, because that is what they did in Wuhan, the Chinese Christians, they were not afraid. They took Scripture on one hand, food in the other, they went and knocked to pass the food over, they were not afraid. When everybody was fleeing, they did not flee. They fled in the wrong direction. People are fleeing out; they were fleeing in. That's the story of Church history of Peter – at the end, Peter was to be killed, Peter was running from the Rome and he saw somebody going in. So, he asked, "Who is it?" And Jesus said, "It is Me." He said, "Lord, where are You going?" He says, "To take your place. I am going to take your place. You are running. I am going in to take your place. Somebody has to die." It's a story. You have to realize – this may pass, but next one will come, you will go back and hear the history of the Church, history of the Church has always reacted, those who knew the Lord reacted in the calamities like that – they were not afraid; they walked right in. That's what I said, "Don't do it by presumption," but you are always knowing that, "You know what? I am not afraid of death. At the end of all this is death, but my God took care of that first." "Any man who believes in Me, he will not die. Even if he dies, he will live." So, we are not afraid of death. So, we will look all this differently. You are caught in a situation, your next door neighbor has no food, "Okay, you can take mine. I am used to fasting any way. It doesn't bother me, one meal, two meals, three meals, doesn't matter." You have all these things already in your head. You don't just do things. Everything is done as you think – *as a man thinks, so he is*. Everybody talks about Dietrich Bonhoeffer's great book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, but Bonhoeffer, he was in England when Germany was taken over by the Nazis. He was a pastor and he was told by all of them, all the British pastors gave him good advice, "Pastor, stay here. Don't go back, because after Hitler falls, you should go back and build your Church again." He said, "If I go back after Hitler is gone, I have no Church to go back to. This is the time I need to be with them." He went and he was killed. He was hung by Nazi, Hitler. Get your perspective right. This is tough. The Kingdom of God is made of... This is how we look at calamity. This is how you say, "Lord, I am ready for it." Let the government call upon the doctors and the nurses and the policemen and the soldiers and tell them, "No leave." This is your duty. We are much more duty bound. When they all fail, we are still duty bound because we serve a higher King for a greater Kingdom.

So, as I close, we will read *Isaiah 60:1-3* and we will pray,

Isaiah 60:1-2

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¹Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. ²For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people (that's exactly what's happening, gloom, doom and darkness is covering); But the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you.

It's not that He will shine some light on our head and all; He actually shows in the way we walk. We are not afraid; we are practical – we wear a mask, we wash our hands and all. We are not being stupid also, but we are no afraid of death like people are. We are not hoarding off stuff because we are afraid. Yes, we are practical. We have people to take care of. We have to take care of all that, but one thing we do not have is that we do not have fear of death for death is resting. That can happen to a believer. He is going home. It's departure, not escaping troubles, no. Don't think about death that way. No, we are going home.

Isaiah 60:3

³The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

People who do not know, sitting in darkness, in gloom and all, they see us; they don't have to see us. Let God see us because we are all house bound. Start praying. Men, start sitting and praying. You know, you have no clue when you wake up. Let's say, Sravan wakes up and when little Ira wakes up and she sees her father sitting there with his Bible and studying and she sees first and she asks, "What is that Bible?" Second day, she grows up. You have no clue what confidence that gives a child – child sees the father praying, the father studying the Word, "My father loves the Lord, my mother loves the Lord," they are secured. They have to see that because children learn from seeing. They see. That's the security we bring into this world and all these things are shaken; why? Because Jesus said, "Everything that can be shaken, will be shaken." That's what happening. Everything, almost. You look at any facet of government, tell me – which facet of government is not shaken? Every facet of government is shaken. Everything that human government sits on is shaken – education system, board exams have been postponed. If government won't do, the court will do it. Courts are shut down. Judges have run away; everything has stopped. Nobody is talking about riots anymore. There is nobody to pick stones also. They also disappeared. Every sector has been shaken. Every sector, why? Everything that can be shaken, will be shaken and are we shaken? That is the question, because we are receiving the Kingdom that cannot be shaken and when we look inside, we will know whether there is a Kingdom or not. When God is shaking the whole thing, only Kingdom people are not shaken and even if they are shaken, they immediately come back to the word and say, "I am fine, I am fine. He is in control. I know my God. He is shaking everything. Everything is shaking," and God is saying, "When I am shaking, it means it is a good time to introspect." This is a good time to look up, re-evaluate our lives. I am telling you, I'm 55, in 55 years of my life, I never seen anything like this, nothing like this, and tell me, I know what news is. I read six international newspapers and five domestic every day, one line, I go through everything piece by piece to see what is working out, because I know what news has been, all my life, I never seen anything like this, nothing like this, the whole world in the grip of fear, absolute fear, and God says, "There not a sector that has been affected." Okay, the world may come through this, but that's not the point. We are not talking about the world; how will we come through this? Will our spiritual life change? Will our prayer life change? Will our Word life have changed? Remember, the danger, Jesus said, there were two judgements in the Bible. Jesus said, Noah's and Lot's – people were eating, drinking, giving in marriage, getting married, buying, selling, planting, building, till the day of the end came and suddenly, they were all taken away. This is what is occupying their minds. Minds were occupied by this, occupied by these things of this body and suddenly, destruction come and what I see is even when this whole thing is happening, parents are more worried about the exams that are postponed than the child who doesn't go to Church. Parents are more worried about the marriages of their unmarried children than getting into the prayer closet and crying for the salvation of souls. People are more worried about the money they lost in the stock market than being worried about losing their soul. See, all this is not changing our priorities. It's not changing. Many young people might be worried that IPL has been postponed. Honestly, it's time to evaluate our hearts. This season, evaluate, when you are sitting at home and watching or sitting here and listening or listen in the days to come, this is time to introspect and see – where am I? Men, especially, it all starts with men, all starts with men. It's only when men fail, God raises female leaders. Deborah has to be raised; Huldah has to be raised because men have gone, disappeared out of the scene. It all starts with a man, men have to go back to God. Use this time to lead. Every leader was once a follower. Every leader was once a very good follower before he became a leader. If you don't follow God, your house will fall apart, whether you are married or unmarried, starts with you, men. Learn, spend time with God. Tomorrow is shutdown, 7am to 9pm, shutdown, curfew, God ordained curfew, not Modi-ordained; God-ordained curfew – stay home, spend time with God, really spend time with God. I know, I am not asking you to read your Bible because it is difficult. Listen to the old messages. You all have internet, listen to the old

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messages, put on the headphones and listen to the messages. We study, we teach, you listen. It's not in the Kingdom of God, everybody studied on their own, God put teachers over there, they teach, you listen, make your notes, you do it seven days. After some time, you will start liking the Word. It's like every food you liked, it was not like you were born with your mother womb, you ate and you liked and more you ate, the more you liked. This is a season God is going to give you. I am telling you, this is not first shutdown. Another shutdown is coming. If things become worse, one day will become one week; one week will become two weeks. Oh, boy. In two weeks, you can come out of quarantine a different man – sold out. Every sin has been identified and nailed to the Cross. The Word has become your delight. Prayer has become very fashionable in your life now. Not praying but playing. You can come out. Honestly, make use of this opportunity, God-given opportunity. I don't say 'government-given' but God-given opportunities. And those of you who sit at home, start talking. Married people, start talking. Many of you are strangers in your own houses because you are afraid to talk. You've lived a covered-up life for too long and you are so scared to bring up issues. Your life is like this carpet – looks very good outwardly but roll it, you will see the dust underneath. You don't have the courage to talk. Make use of this time and say, "I want to talk. I really want to talk because these have opened my eyes. None of the things which I do is important. Job is not important. The work I do is not important. What I realize is – God and family is what is important." Most important – God and family. Not your work. You work for your family and you work unto God. I'm telling you, men and women, sit down and talk. And keep this in the middle so that you can agree because we all have opinions. God doesn't have an opinion. He does not have an opinion. He speaks. Amen? We will pray. Like I said, there was no prayer request today deliberately because there shouldn't be any prayer request right now. Everybody has only one request – all over the world, there is panic. Absolute panic. Nobody knows how many lives will be taken by this virus. Lives we know, people we love, people we do not know, people we do not love. But it is a wake-up call to the Church. We heard God speaking through His servant Amos, "Yet, you did not return." It's not an angry refrain; it's a grieved refrain. "I did everything I could to do to get your attention," God is saying. "Yet, you did not return." This is the time to return to God. Come back to Him. Put it right with Him. Ultimately, only one Person matters – it's God. Put it right with Him. Restoration can come only from God. No government can restore. They can give subsidies. They can inject money into the market. They cannot life into the soul. That's the sore prerogative of God alone.

Closing Prayer:

Father, help us to make use of this time You have divinely given the whole world and the whole Church. Let us not go back to our idols. Let us hide in You. So, in the midst of this plague, there is only one safe place. It is that secret place and I pray once this plague is over, everybody would have that secret place, a place that God knows where You meet God daily and put things right with Him, hear from Him and obey Him and walk with Him. Get out of this religion called 'Christianity' and start this walk of faith. I pray, Father, what the devil meant for harm, you will turn it around for our good that when this is over, we will have a different Church, a Church who is on fire for God; a Church who sets its love on You because He had made me His dwelling place. "Because he has set his love on Me," God said, in this hour of calamity, You will deliver us. Two things, Lord. Help us to stop visiting You. Help us to dwell with You. Help us to set our love on You and not on worthless things. Jonah discovered that secret from the belly of the womb of the fish, of the whale. At the bottom of the sea, he discovered that those who set their heart on worthless idols will perish. Help us to set our hearts on God. They, who set their heart on You, will never perish. For You said in Your Word, the world and its desires are passing away but He who does the will of God will live forever. Let this be a training time for the soul, for all of us, Lord. I commit the Church here, the Church that is watching and the Church that will listen – all of us into Thy hands, Lord. We are safe when we are closest to You so that even Your discipline is light on us, Lord. So, we will cling to You in the hour of calamity. As David said, "If judgment has to come, I will fall under Your hands, Lord," for I know You are longsuffering and You are patient. For Your mercies endure forever. I come under Your hand, do Your work in us, Lord. Let the Church emerge through this stronger than ever before, Lord. Thank You, Father. Protect Your children, Your Church. I plead the Blood of Jesus over the Church because You have given me authority over the Church. The Blood of Jesus over the Church and I rebuke this virus in the Name of Jesus of Nazareth. Your Word says, "No weapon that is formed against us shall prosper." Maybe this virus was formed in a defence lab to kill people but Your Word says, "No weapon that is formed against us will prosper. Every lying tongue that rises against us in judgment, we condemn in Jesus' Name." Maybe lying tongues have released this virus and is wanting to see God's people die but we shall not die but live and declare the works of the Lord. This pestilence shall pass over us. A thousand may fall at one side and ten thousand the other side but it will not come near us. Not because of who we are but because of whom we have chosen to dwell. As David said, "I have made the secret place My dwelling place. The pavilion of the Lord." We dwell in You, Lord. Thank You, Father. We pray every one will take advice today and cling to You. Let go of the idols of the heart. Thank You, Father. By faith, we lift up holy hands and we bless Your holy Name. For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Thank You, Lord. For in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

Benediction:

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