

Father we just come to You, Lord, in the Name of Jesus. We need You. We need You, Lord, more than ever before in life – as individuals, as families, as a Church, as a community, as a nation and as the world. There's none in the world who is safe. No one, Lord. This one little virus has flattened the heart of man. It brought the high and mighty to the level of common man, Lord. Help us, Lord, to look up to You, to learn of You, to stay hidden in You, to put our trust in You. Speak, Father, to us. You alone have the Words of life. Power, strength, comfort, peace, rest, patience, perseverance, endurance – everything comes from You, Lord. In that voice, there is everything. Help faith to arise as we hear You speak to us through the Word and receive the power we need for this hour, Lord. Speak to us, Lord. For in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

Why do we go back to the Word? Because in the Word there is life. At a time like this, we need the Word. If you turn with me first to *Romans 15:4*, this is what Scripture says, the written Word.

Romans 15:4

⁴For whatever things were written before were written for our learning (It was written before, it was not written now. They were written for our learning.), that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

So, Scriptures give you patience. If you see the timeline how God works, if you look at Noah's time especially, you'll see hundred and twenty years, God's patience and he was waiting for the plague or the judgement (or whatever you want to name it) to come. But he learnt to wait for God's timing. So, there is patience, there is strength, there is hope, there is comfort in Scripture, because you see that God is living God and the Scriptures are living. Though it was written, it brings hope.

If you turn to *Hebrews 12:1-2*, it talks about the second part of it. We already know about God. We know what God has spoken in history and Scripture.

Hebrews 12:1-2

¹Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

So, we have the comfort of Scripture as Scripture says here. We have also a cloud of witnesses, real people who went through real tough times. These are people of all ages. These are people who lives in actual times, starting with Abel onwards, Adam onwards. So, we keep that in mind. When we keep that in mind and these two Scriptures in mind, we look at Scriptures and we look at people. C.S. Lewis said, "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain. And pain is His megaphone to arouse a deaf world."

So, this Sunday morning, though we are very few in number because of the particular situation; yet, to those who definitely cannot make it here, because we are live-streaming. So, you can watch us live, you can hear us live. Nobody can complain also if the message is too long, because by the act of the government, you have nothing to do anyway. So, don't complain that the message is too long.

So, yesterday, we looked at 'Don't fear, but hear from God'. That one word you hear from God actually takes fear away. And when you read the Word of God, God needs to speak to us, because this is a living Book written by a living God and He still speaks daily to His children. The Bible actually says, "*All Scripture is God breathed.*" That's why it has so much power to encourage us and give us hope. Like I said, the characters in the Bible, the cloud of witnesses we looked at, are real people who went through incredible trials and testing. And God is speaking to us through their lives. Most of us will never go through what many of them went through; yet, their lives speak to us about the goodness and the faithfulness of God. That's why Scripture says, "*Even though Abel is dead, he still speaks.*" How does he speak to us? He speaks to us by faith. Though he's dead to us, he's not dead to God; he's only dead to us. Therefore, the God of Abel still speaks through Abel to us.

So, let us go back to the Word (we are in the Word) and deal with the most important thing right now. The first thing that needs to be tackled is fear. Worse than the epidemic, is the fear connected with the epidemic. Most of the things that are happening are connected with actual, real fear. Some are real. Some are factual. Some are not. But we are a called people who are told not to walk in fear. God specifically tells us to deal with facts. Don't walk in fear, because He has not given us the spirit of fear. And the fear, primarily, is the fear of death. If this epidemic does not kill, nobody would be afraid. The panic is caused because of fear. So, you will always see cases and deaths. When they see the number of deaths going up like today. Yesterday, in Italy, it's already eight hundred people. When they see those numbers, panic increases even more. And government really starts shutting down, putting strong measures simply because most of the people in the government who are ruling are old people and they are the ones who are dying first. So, automatically, you need to remember that there is a reason why the government is so active in this, because, incredibly, a lot of people who are in the government everywhere are old and then, they say, "It affects everybody," which is true – young, children, old, everybody. But we have to deal with fear first. I know you have heard it before, but you have to hear it again before we go to the core of the message. Because fear and death is how the devil attacks us. And he snares our soul. While faith and peace is how Jesus deals with us. The devil is the enemy of our soul. So, he uses fear and death. Jesus is the Lover of our soul. So, He uses faith and peace. So, let's deal with fear first.

I know I've said this before. I'm actually quoting some other person, I don't even know who it is, that a brave man dies only once, but a coward dies a thousand times, or a million times actually. And sometimes, the fear of something is actually worse than the actual event itself and all of us know it. The fear of it is worse. So, let us look first at this fear of death, because fear is always connected with death. If there is no death, man wouldn't be afraid at all. So, the Bible talks about what Jesus did with both.

Hebrews 2:14-16

¹⁴Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (So, the enemy had power over death. He used the fear of death to cause this bondage and he held people in tyranny.)¹⁶***For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.***

There are couple of things you need to realize about this – there are a lot of people who do not fear death, because they actually do not know what happens after death. That's ignorance. That's why Jesus spoke about hell more than about heaven. Don't fool around with death. After death is the second death and there is no escape from it if you don't make peace with God in your life. And the second death is in the Lake of Fire. So, understand that part. It's very important, because there are a lot of people who are walking around fearlessly because they think after death, we just cease to exist. But after death, you do exist. You could be either with God in heaven or you could be with the devil in hell. And the second death is what Jesus came to save us from. And the devil will try every kind of deception, every kind of lie to keep our closed from that second death. And that's the first lie – you shall not surely die. And then he got them in his power and this fear of death has been controlling mankind. In Christ and Christ alone we are free from both the fear of death and death in itself, because death has been overcome. Death has been overcome. Everybody sitting here, everybody listening, all know death has been overcome. But you also have to overcome the fear of death. Like you can die in different ways and everyone will say, "Lord, let me die peacefully in my sleep." Every other form of death is a little scary. This fear of death has to be handled like Jesus handled in *Hebrews 12:2* like we saw, "...for the joy that was set before Him." So, we also have this joy. What is that? I'm going home. I'm going to my Father's place. I'm going home. That changes our entire perspective. All believers have to change perspective. Then only, you'll overcome the fear of death. Now, you cannot overcome it just by thinking that, "I'm going home." You have to think about the Person of God that makes the home beautiful. Like if you have a home where the father is an alcoholic and the mother just screams and shouts, then home is not a nice place and you'll want to delay as long as possible from going home. That's why this picture of God has to be very clear and God tells His children about who the Father is and who Jesus is and the atmosphere of heaven. Once you reach heaven, the atmosphere is not like what we thought it would be. So, you have to reorient your mind with the Person of God who makes home, home. Then, the fear of death is gone. That's what Paul, who really, really understood God more than any man probably or Enoch, they were no more, they just wanted to go home. Righteous people like Hezekiah did not understand it. So, he turned around and cried while Enoch and Elijah just went. And Paul says, "I long to go. I long to go." So, get this very clearly. In Christ, you have to both address death and the fear of death. And Jesus was very clear with His disciples about how to handle. Like we saw last week that Jesus reveals a lot of stuff

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only to the disciples. The crowds never knew it. The Pharisees never knew it. To the disciples, He would always talk intimately and reveal. And this happens when Lazarus is sick and he dies. Look at *John 11:1-6*. This is the incident where Lazarus is sick and later dies.

John 11:1-6

¹Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. ²It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. ³Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick." ⁴When Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." ⁵Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.

It's a very, very strange incident. We know Jesus did not go. He's very clear. He loved them. He loved him. But He's actually using this incident, primarily, to His disciples and us as a lesson about death. In *verse 11*, this is what He says. This is after Lazarus died. Look at Jesus' reply.

John 11:11

¹¹These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up."

He is now, if you read from *verse 12* onwards, we will realize that His disciples misunderstand Him.

John 11:12

¹²Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps he will get well."

It's like Nicodemus saying, "How can I be born again?" He's sleeping. When he wakes up, he'll be fine. But Jesus was talking about death as sleep.

John 11:13

¹³However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.

They got confused. But Jesus now in the New Covenant is giving a picture of death as sleep. That's why he allowed Lazarus to die, because He's not just speaking to that generation, He's speaking to all generations that if anyone who dies after putting his/her faith in Christ Jesus does not die. They just fall asleep and they wake up in another place. He is telling us, teaching us something. Later we know that Jesus meets the grieving sisters and addresses their fear. He addresses their grief and their fear. That's why we have *verses 25-26*.

John 11:25-26

²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. (He will die, but he will die.) ²⁶And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

That is the reason why He allowed him to die and be buried for four days that no man will ever mistake that this man was really dead. He was not in a coma. He was buried for four days, so that we will never ever fear death again. Because death is just sleep. Turn with me to the *Book of Acts 7:60*. This is when Stephen is dying.

Acts 7:60

⁶⁰Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

This is the first death recorded in the New Covenant after Jesus rose again. Now, when this is written we who have all of Scripture should remember what Jesus said about Lazarus, what He told Martha and Mary, and when the first person dies, it is written that he fell asleep. Nobody is afraid to sleep. Actually, we look forward to sleep unless you're an insomniac. We look forward to sleep. Remember what they said? It is good for him to sleep, because they thought he would be resting. Sleep is rest. So, a good night's sleep really energizes you and sleep is always connected with rest. Meaning – you have rested from your works. Now, all you have to wait for is the reward. Exam is over. See, when exam is over and the results come, between

the end of the exam and the arrival of your results, there is a lot of rest. People really enjoy their vacation. You don't know what the result is. Ummid toh hai, pass toh ho jayega ("Expectation is there, but you know that you'll pass.") you don't know whether you'll get first class or not, but that is the period of rest. That is why you don't finish the exam on March 31st and get the results on April 1st. They give you gap. Why? So that you can enjoy your rest. If you die today, judgement is not tomorrow. There is a day set for it. In between, there is rest. So, sleep is always seen as rest and that is the way we have to look at life. Unless we address this fear, because the problem is not with the epidemic, epidemics will keep on coming. Wars will come. Famine will come. Earthquakes will come. In all these, there will be casualties. Death can come in many forms. And everything that Jesus prophesied over there, in all of it, there is death and death can be absolutely of natural causes too. Let us deal with this fear first, because once you deal with this fear, then you will be able to deal with this epidemic by faith. Fear and faith are opposites. Remember that question in *Mark 4*, when Jesus was sleeping and the storm was raging and they go wake up Jesus and Jesus asks them, "Why are you afraid? Where is your faith?" So, you cannot be afraid and expect your faith to work. Deal with the facts. The government, the media and even the ringtone you get are facts. Wash your hands, which is true. We always go under the impression that we know everything. Even in the medical field, they've realized, one new virus came in under the same family but this is a fellow whom nobody knew. So, even though it started in December and today, we are like at the end of March, they still haven't figured this fellow out yet with all our technology. It's something new. And all of us who were so gung-ho about our education, did not really know. None of us knew how to wash our hands. Honestly, I did not know that this is the way one should wash their hands. I didn't know. I mean the police showing it all is one thing, but the best video I got was from Singapore where somebody wore white gloves and use black paint and did, and then, you think you've washed but the paint hasn't been touched at all. That is when all these motions started making sense and when they had finished you realize the whole hand with the glove is now white. Then, you realize these are the areas I touched. When I usually went and washed my hands, I never touched many of the parts where a lot of viruses and bacteria were hanging around and went into us and we're alive because of God's mercy. See, even washing hands enables us to thank God because all the years of my life I never washed my hands properly, yet the virus got in and it was the mercy of God and God alone. One virus can make us grateful about all the other viruses that got in. All this should be turned into thanking God. "Lord, thank You." So, deal with fear. If you don't deal with fear, it will cripple your faith. Everything in our life connected with God is connected with faith. Our worship will go. We will sing with our lips, not from our heart. Our walk will go. We are supposed to walk with God by faith, our work will go. We are supposed to work by faith. Everything gets attacked. Everything gets destroyed simply because we allowed fear to come in. Deal with fear. This is the way you deal with fear. Jesus has dealt with death and actually, the fear is fear of death and Jesus has overcome death and death is going to be an exciting place. Death is something you and I look forward to. You have to look forward to. Honestly, you have to reprogram your mind. Renew your mind. The first thing about the renewal of your mind is not about the beginning; it's about the end of your life. You have to look at the end of your life which is called 'death' as, "Lord, I'm waiting for that day." Why? "I'm going home. I just want to be with You." And that's only possible, that's only really possible when you ask God and God enables you to love Him more than anybody else. If you love anybody or anything a little more than God, you will not be able to really face death, because it will be grief. "I'm leaving all this." So, Paul is very clear, "I love all of you, but I love God more. So. if you ask me which I want, I want to go. But if I stay back, it's for your benefit." He's very clear about it. It's not that we love anybody, we don't love anybody. It's like the statement of Brutus when he kills Julius Caesar, "It's not that I loved Caesar less, but I loved Rome more." It's not that we love our family less, it's just that we love Christ more. That's the way you tackle it. Once you've tackled it, you'll be able to look with clear rational faith-filled eyes how to handle this epidemic or any trial or test that comes in your life. Because everything can be seen through the lens of faith.

Second thing is this, for people who are listening, who will listen, with whom you'll share, this is first connected with believers, because believers struggle with faith. Unbelievers don't struggle with faith, because they don't have faith anyway. So. another thing you need to deal with is condemnation. In *John 3:16-18*, this is the most popular, well known Scripture.

John 3:16-18

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (That's the reason for the incarnation – nobody should die. They should have everlasting life.) ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (He did not send Jesus to condemn us but to save us.) ¹⁸ "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

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So, what is God talking about here? There is one way people walk under condemnation. This is connected with death. If you've lived terrible lives (everybody lives terrible lives), then, death is a very fearful thing. If you're a Hindu, it's always got to do with karma. Karma's got to do with your life and with your deeds. It's always fearful. This thing of condemnation is there, because law only brings condemnation. And there is this law written in all our hearts. So, you have to escape condemnation. I have believed in Christ Jesus. I may be disciplined but I will not be condemned. Please understand that. My father disciplined me many times, but he never said that I was not his son. He never said that. If any man, woman or child has put their trust in Jesus Christ, you have escaped condemnation. You'll be disciplined. That is the truth of,

Romans 8:1

¹There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, (Look at that first and the second part is equally important, but don't stress on the second part before you come to the first part) **who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.**

First, get into Jesus Christ and then, learn how to walk this walk. You can't ask people, "Walk that walk so you'll not be condemned." Then, you get into works. No. You get into Him. Then, He carries you through on how to walk this walk. My heart is there inside, all protected with skin, muscles and bones and everything and so is my nail here. But when I walk, they're all walking. Somebody would be like the heart of God – so close, like David. Somebody would be just outside like a nail. But when Christ walks, all are walking. So, the key is to be in Christ so that we escape condemnation. So, we have to deal with both – we have to deal with death and we have to deal with condemnation. So, we have to deal with it. So, if you have not believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, if you're hearing now or hear in the days ahead, believe in Him. It's as simple as that. If you are somebody who strayed away, then come back. These are the issues with certain things we have to deal with, because anger, if you don't deal with it properly, it will take you out of Christ. Cain walked away. Jealousy takes you out. Offence takes you out. If you don't deal with these things, if you look at the people in the Bible, what was that that took them down? They didn't deal with the issue and finally, they slipped out and they went away and they did not come back. That is why you have to deal with these issues, because you can go out. Deal with those issues, come back in and that's why repentance is the most beautiful word in the Bible where you come back to God.

So, now, let us go to the meat of the Word and this is how to deal with fear. Let's go to *Psalms 91*. There are certain portions of Scripture which speak very directly to us in certain situations. And in this particular situation where the world is through, even an unbeliever will try to read *Psalms 91* because people forward it to them but he doesn't understand it. Believers also struggle with the understanding. So, there are certain Scriptures that give us much comfort and strength and when we start believing in it and walking in it, they actually become life for us. Like I said, depending upon our circumstances, those Scriptures break forth with real deeper meaning especially when we are faced with situations that are beyond our control. But, before we go there, let me take you first to *2 Peter 1:1* and we will read from *verse 1* onwards.

2 Peter 1:1

¹ Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

So, when Scripture is written, everybody puts them in the same place. You, me, Peter, Paul and all who have received the same faith. So, the Scripture is written to people who have received faith and we all have received faith through Scripture and it is written to those who received it by faith. Otherwise, you cannot claim these promises. This Scripture doesn't become life for us. A man could read *Psalms 91* and mean nothing to him. Another man can read *Psalms 91* and it would become everything to him. Because it is written to those who have obtained this precious faith with us, along with us and to them, first, he says,

2 Peter 1:2-4

² Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,

And how do we enter into this? We know it very well but we will look at it again in *verse 3 and 4*,

³ as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue.

Bible, His Word; He has given us His power and everything we need for life, including how we can handle these pestilence and godliness, connected primarily with our next life. Godliness is good now and better then because God is holy.

⁴by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption (let us put, virus) that is in the world through lust.

Which is true. This virus came in through man's lust and greed. All these epidemics came through man's lust. Adam and Eve lusted to become like God and brought these pandemics all upon us. Everything is a result of sin. Before that, there was nothing. So, the Bible tells us something – how do we partake of God's life? It's only through these promises. *Psalm 91*, like I said yesterday; there are 16 verses, out of which 4 are connected with me and 12 are connected with God and these are powerful promises. And it is through those promises, when it becomes life, we partake of His life. Now, you need to realize there are promises in the Bible most of which are conditioned. And there are promises in the Bible which are un-conditioned. Like I'll explain to you in terms of a father, how a promise can be conditional and unconditional. Unconditional is I ask Andrew, "What do you want for your birthday?" You see, there are no conditions. Ask and it shall be given. Condition is – I set limitation on myself, whether I can afford it or not and whether it is good for you. Other than that, there are no conditions. Ask and you shall receive. Why? Because it's his birthday. But when I tell him, "If you get distinction for your degree, I will give you this," there is a condition. It's connected with something. "You get this, I give you this." So, we need to realize that most of God's promises are conditioned. Some which looks free are also conditional, though the condition is very little or small. Like, "*Come to Me all who are weary and heavy laden, I will give you rest.*" He is just appreciating and honoring our freedom to choose because He has given it and He says, "Come." So, all I have to do is go and we receive it. There is no great condition put over there. "I will give you rest." But if you want that rest to be continuous in your life, then He says, "*Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me.*" Now, the condition gets bigger and tougher. So, the mercy of God is unconditional. Anyone who goes to God receives mercy. "Come to Me."

Now, if you know the story of the prodigal son and his experience, if he wants to walk in the joy of the father, he has to walk in the ways of the father. But he walked away. He did not realize he was moving away from the joy and the peace of the father. He got it back only when he came back. Get these concepts in your mind.

Now, we will go to *Psalm 91:1*. We will go to the comfort, the strength, the hope of Scripture and also, one in that cloud that is our elder brother David. We all can identify with David because Jesus is called the Son of David. The first verse says,

Psalms 91:1

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

That's how it begins. So, there is a condition. The condition is, *He who dwells*. So, just don't randomly read *Psalm 91* and declare it over your life. It applies to those who dwell. The condition is dwelling, not visit or those who wish to dwell. Not those who check in and check out. These are things that happen in the life. It's as simple as that; there are choices that we make. To dwell is a choice. Like today, everything is shut down but few of you made a choice, you chose to come. Most cannot make that choice. To them, we have them another option and the option is to watch live. Now, that's an option and I don't think everybody is watching live streaming. It's a choice people make. It's not that anybody is doing anything, no. Nobody can do anything today unless you are part of government's essential services. So, nobody can do anything. You have a choice whether you want to sit and dwell on God's Word. So, how many people are making that choice?

Second, the first 30 minutes, we had disturbance. The question is: how many left? I'm just assuming. How many left because they did not have the patience to wait? Yet, if people are in a theatre and there is some problem with the reel and it breaks, nobody leaves. I've seen it in my young days, when reels used to break, nobody left. They went out smoked and came back. Nobody leaves. If you are in a restaurant and you ordered something, the chef says, "It will take 30 minutes," nobody walks away. They sit there and wait for it. We don't realize everything is actually a test and a choice. It's a choice, especially today to hear the Word. Unlike any other day people have no excuse, unless there are mothers with small children running around or not well or something like that. Almost everybody has access to telephone, 4G, internet everything. So, we are making a choice. The question is not to visit or check in and checkout; the promise is to those who choose to dwell. See, it is very interesting we are called to dwell in God. Yet, *John 1:14* says,

John 1:14

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Did you see that? Which is honorable and which is humiliating? Me called to dwell with God and in God or God coming down and dwelling among us? And He had to become like us to dwell among us. He couldn't dwell among us as He was in His glory. So, He had to cover His entire glory in corrupt flesh and dwell among us. That's what God did, He dwelt among us and He was tested at all points. Therefore, He sympathizes with us because He knows exactly what we go through. So, He came and dwelt among us and went through the gamete of man's experiences and He looks at us and says, "I know and I understand." When He understands and says, "Now, you come and dwell among Me and experience Me. Go through the gamete of My experiences and share in My divine nature," and you are not interested. Then, the question is: what can God do if we are not interested? Jesus came and dwelt with us and if you look at *John 14*,

John 14:15-17

¹⁵ "If you love Me, keep My commandments.

So, He says, "If you love Me and keep My commandments," don't worry how to keep it, there is a Helper who will help you to keep the commandments. That's the sum total of that portion.

¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—

He says, "It is good for Me to go because I can't abode with you forever. I have come in this flesh and I cannot be with all of you all the time. Even if I live eternally because I don't sin in this flesh; yet, the problem is I can't be with all of you. I can only be where we are gathered together in the body; with them, I can."

¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

So, He is saying something. "You know what? I'm sending somebody and He will be in you and with you." And because He will be in you and with you, you can experience God at three levels, that is in your body, soul and in your spirit. When I am experiencing healing in my body, I am experiencing God because He as a healer. When I feel joy, I am experiencing Him in my soul and when I'm having peace in the midst of all the tribulation I'm experiencing Him in my spirit. God says, "Because the Holy Spirit has come, you can dwell with Me because as He will be in you." What actually happens at salvation is the Holy Spirit baptizes us in Jesus Christ. That is what the water baptism means. Now, when we get baptized in the Holy Spirit, what happens is – Jesus baptizes us into the Holy Spirit. Why? Because they want us to dwell in them and ultimately, this experience which we live and we grow more and more into it if we walk with God like Enoch experiencing like this in three levels. Then one day, we will experience Him in no longer faith but in reality, we will experience Him in the body, soul and spirit simultaneously. That is what *Revelation 21* says,

Revelation 21:3-4

³ And 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. ⁴ And 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."

Now, we dwell with Him in faith and one day, we will dwell with Him in sight. We will get a body that will enable us to dwell with Him inside. This body cannot dwell with God. That is why for God to dwell with us He had to take this corruptible body. Jesus took a corruptible body; meaning – a body of flesh though His body did not see corruption, a body like this. Now, if we have to dwell with God, I have to have a different body. So, Scripture says, "We will have an incorruptible body." *He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.* All that is got to do is with this body in this life, all that is taken. So, please understand this when God says, "Dwell with Me."

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How does Psalm 91 begin? *He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High.*

Now, let us go further. The whole ministry of the Church is to teach God's children how to abide in Him and everything else in our life should be a result of it. This is what Jesus says in *John 15*.

John 15:4

⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

Basically, He is saying, "Dwell in Me and the fruit will automatically come." We always worry about what to do but that is secondary. What I need to do is secondary and what I need to really worry about is staying in Him. Again, if you look at it, it's a choice. I choose, we choose and it's a choice we make every day. That's the greatest gift God has given mankind is the freedom to choose. To abide in Him and to remain in Him is a choice you and I have to make every day of our lives. It's not a one-time choice; that's why *Romans 12:1*,

Romans 12:1

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.

It says, "Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice." Meaning, it has to be consistently and constantly done and it's a choice we make to abide in Him. Offer your bodies. Yesterday, when we were here, when Pastor Vijay and I talked, the news we had was that, curfew was from 6am to 9pm and by the time we come to the night, we realized that it is 6am to next day 6am. So, we had a choice to make. We all had a choice to make on what to do. So, we decided we will come early in the morning and we will have the service with a few of them who are close by, who live in the same building. People made a choice, couple of people made a choice to come and stayed the night here. Few people made a choice to come early in the morning and then, all of us will be spending the night here. It's a choice we made. Now, this is just one choice one day but this should become a practice. Now, everybody at home also have a choice and the choice is so simple and all you have to do is like I told my dear wife who is not good with gadgets; I said, "Honey, all you have to do is click and rest it will do for itself." We have made it as simple as possible. Just you have to do is click and it will go to another window and open it and you just have to do that. It's technology and wisdom comes from God and God cannot make it easier than this for His people to hear. It can't be easier than this. In verse 2, Scripture says,

Romans 12:2

² Do not conform to the pattern of this world...

It's a choice! Maybe God used a virus to teach us. It's a virus that stopped the world; literally the world has stopped. What is that you connect with the world? Everything connected with the world has come to a standstill. In India, today, everything is shut. Though it is called 'janta (public) curfew', it is not a 'janta curfew', there are cops on the roads enforcing it. But I understand why they need to enforce it because this virus is transmitted by social contact. Government is saying, "Restrain yourself. Stay in." So, everything of the world has stopped. All you have is a 'gadget' (phone)! This gadget is neutral. You can listen to the message (mine or anybody; different Churches are streaming) or watch a movie on YouTube or Netflix. It's a choice. Both from the same gadget! It's a choice that people makes. We have made our choice. We decided we are coming, we set it all up, worked on the Word, got the Word; we made our choice. Now we have to make the second choice. Am I going to hear? My question to people who don't hear is that what more should happen in the world before you will start listening? What more do you want? All put together- pandemic and earthquake and war and famine? What more do we want? That's what C. S. Lewis said, "In our pain, He shouts." But are we able to hear? It's the question! So, it's a choice.

How do we dwell? To dwell is one thing but this is a spiritual aspect. So, we have to explain that spiritual aspect little more clearly. *Psalm 91:1* is actually explained to us through Jesus, how you actually dwell in that secret place.

John 15:7

⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you...

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That's the key! He is not talking about us hearing the Word, listening to the Word or memorizing the Word but He is talking about it living in us. The Word abides in us. Will it dwell in us or abide in us that these are the Words of My Father? In *John 6:63*, Jesus says, "This is about My Word."

John 6:63

⁶³ It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The Words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.

They are both spirit and life. "The Words of My Father are Spirit and life."

Now, listen carefully. When the prodigal son asked for his inheritance when his father was living and he walked away, as he went further and further away from his father, he was walking away from the Spirit and the Words of his father and therefore, from the life of his father. The life of a man is encapsulated in his word and his spirit. Both! That's why Jesus said, "I am looking for people who will worship Him in Spirit and truth." Truth has got the Word. There are two things. Spirit is hidden; Word is revealed. Both have to match. What I am telling you and the attitude of my heart; both have to match. Then, it is spirit and word.

The boy looked at his father and he looked at the world. He knows that there is nothing wrong with his father but the problem is – he loves the world. He wants to go into the world. The problem is that to go into the world, he doesn't have money. So, he asks his father and the father in his mercy and kindness and grace, gives him the money. He takes the money and he walks. As he is walking further and further away, he is walking away from the life of his father; he is walking away from his words, which he has heard and the same spirit that was behind the words. He walks further and further and further and further and he goes into the world. As he goes into the world, he is receiving two things. He is receiving the Words of the world and the spirit of the world. Both! Ultimately, God shows a spiritual picture where that will take you. He ends up in the pigpen.

It was not the distance that mattered. We think it's the distance that mattered. The distance doesn't matter. You can walk away from your father's house 2 feet and be in a pigpen. You can be 100 miles away from your father's house and be still in that spirit and in that word. That's Daniel and Joseph! Joseph is taken away. He was taken away from his father, sold as a slave and later as a prisoner. Physically he is very far away but the spirit and the Words his father had spoken to him, it was hidden in him. All the days he was in Egypt, he was living the life of his father; the Word and the spirit never changed. We can't bring God over there; we have to bring God into Joseph's life through his father. Whatever he learned, he learned from his father. Then God gave him those 2 dreams. Are you getting the picture?

He who dwells in the secret place! Now, the term 'secret place' denotes intimacy. Yesterday also, I spoke; many are listening. Lot of married couples get intimate but they don't have intimacy. 'Intimate' is in the physical; 'intimacy' is in the soul. That is what God meant, "*Man shall leave his father and mother, cleave to his wife and they shall become one.*" It is one thing becoming intimate and another thing to have intimacy. In intimacy, you will realize there are a lot of words spoken. In being intimate, you don't need words. In intimacy, the Words spoken are often truth or always true; it will wound, it will cut but it will bring intimacy but to become intimate, you can speak a lot of lies. That's what happened with Tamar and Amnon. There were words spoken; the words were not true because after they became intimate, the hatred showed that those words were not true. So, please get this, "*He who dwells in the secret place!*" Secret place denotes intimacy and every man or woman or every child of God needs to have a secret place with God. Every married couple need to have a secret space, which not even their 'best loved' (if you want to use that term) child should know.

Intimacy is developed. It takes time and takes patience. You don't just get saved today and tomorrow enter into that secret place. No! You don't get married on April 1st and 2nd onwards, intimacy is developed. No! You get intimate but intimacy takes a long time to develop because for intimacy, there are few things. One – there is trust; two – there is loyalty; and three – there is openness. First thing is trust. I trust you. If I don't trust you, I am not going to be open with you. I trust you and I know I have your loyalty. I trust you! Meaning, I know I can say this to you and it will not go from you because it has got to do with me and us; others need not know. Second, I know you are loyal to me. I know that when you take this, you will not turn away and walk away from me. Trust and loyalty are important before you have a secret place. That's why when we marry people and we make them repeat that covenant, "Forsaking all others, cleaving to you in sickness and health, riches- all situations, I am loyal to you." I don't have it but God has it. God is loyal. God is trustworthy. That's why Scripture says, when we repent

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and confess our sin, it is forgotten; He will never repeat it. It will never be mentioned in heaven. "You can trust Me. I got your back." *If God is for you, who can be against you?* "I got your back. I am loyal."

So, openness is connected with trust and loyalty. It takes a lot of time. In many marriages, when they come for counseling, one of the things we say, when your marriage breaks off because he was unfaithful or she was unfaithful and all; so, I say, forgive. But trust has to be earned. Forgiveness is free; trust is not. Lot of people, what happens in marriages, when there is a breakdown of trust and sometimes men or women confuse and say, "He (she) has never forgiven me." But that's not the truth. You are confusing two different things. She has forgiven you or he has forgiven you. But he/she is saying, "You need to earn my trust!" You said this 15 times. I have forgiven you each time you came to me but the problem is- I don't know whether I can still trust you or not. So, I will forgive you even the 16th time but I will trust you when I see that your pattern has changed. So, don't confuse these two things. So, you cannot dwell in the secret place unless there is trust. In the beginning of Jesus' three and half years of ministry and at the end of His ministry, His tone is different. Look at what He says in the beginning of His ministry.

John 2:24

²⁴ But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men,

When He started, He trusted no men. He wouldn't trust anybody because He knew all men. He knew everybody including the ones who were following Him, including the disciples. He trusted nobody. What does Scripture say in *John 2:2*? Jesus was also invited to the wedding with His disciples. His mother and His brothers were there. So 'He trusted nobody'; it means everybody including His disciples and His own flesh and blood. He trusted nobody because for Him to trust somebody He has to trust as God. He trusted nobody but at the end of His life before He dies, in *John 15*, (just a few days before His death)—

John 15:13-15

¹³ Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.

He says, "Now I trust you. So, everything that the Father has told Me, I have told you. I have left nothing behind. I trust you. I trust you with My heart as the Father has trusted Me with His heart. I trust you." He doesn't say this to them earlier. At the end of His ministry, He tells them. In the beginning of His ministry, He trusted no one.

These are choices. Intimacy is a choice. Walk is a choice. His disciples chose to leave everything and walk with Him. They consistently walked with Him and they earned His trust yet there was one He wouldn't trust. That was Judas. He knew he was walking with Him outwardly. So, what happens? After Judas leaves in *John chapter 13*, He tells all these things. Enoch walked with God, Noah walked with God and God trusted them and revealed to them things. So, we have to learn to dwell in the secret place.

One of the ways we learn to have intimacy with God is not first waiting for God to speak to us but speak to God like David did. More than half the psalms were written by David and if you look at it, most of it, he is talking to God. God has no issues. My only issue with my children is that they don't talk. I had no issues when they were small and they came; they never disturbed me. I never looked at my children talking to me as a disturbance. Of course, when I am preaching, it's a different thing; I didn't expect them to talk to me but at the house, I never thought about them as a disturbance. I liked them talking though a lot of stuff they said when they were small were nonsensical, it didn't matter. That's how our complaints sound to God. "Lord, why is this happening?" "Nonsensical! I am in control. What are you talking about?" But God doesn't say all those things. One of the ways you develop intimacy with a person (here with the Person of God) is with 'conversations'. God has no issues. We are all children. We don't know the end from the beginning. We have no clue what holds; we don't understand everything that is happening. Like I said, if we did not understand till yesterday how to wash our hands then how do we understand God? So, God has no issues in us talking to Him. David talked a lot to God. He really opened up his heart and then God talked a lot to him. That's why we have the Psalms. The book of Psalms is basically a man talking to God and God talking to man. We look and say, "Oh! I wish I was like that." God says, "Yes! It's a choice. You can be." That is how trust is developed in a relationship.

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David immediately understood. Because he was interested in that walk with God, he understood that sins would impede his walk with God. Let me tell you this very clearly. We don't deal with sin unless we are zealous about our walk. I always tell this to couples- you are not ironing out your differences because you are not interested in your walk. You are not interested in walking together. That's why you say, "It's okay. You do your thing and I do my thing." It is like the railway line, two parallel lines going together. If these two lines were one line, then when something comes, it has to be ironed out because it is impeding my walk. So David was very zealous about his walk with God; therefore he knew the only way he could walk with God is by being blameless before God (not perfect but blameless). The only way I can walk blameless with God is by dealing with my sins. There is only one thing that offends my God. Ignorance doesn't offend my God. Sin offends my God. Sin should offend me because it impedes my walk. That is the key! Are we zealous for a relationship? In *Psalms 51*, it's an incredible confession of a rotten sinner. But if you look at the core of *Psalms 51*, what propels him to this confession is shown in verses 11 and 12.

Psalms 51:11

¹¹ Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

That's what is causing this confession. "Please, Lord, don't cast me away from Your presence. I want to abide there. I know what it is to abide there. I know what it is to walk with You. I know what it is to talk with You. I know what it is to hear from You. Lord, please do not cast me away from Your presence. Don't take away Your Spirit from me. That's what makes You real for me- Your Spirit." Presence and Spirit, both!

I can sit here (on the chair), but if I am upset, I don't speak. You have my presence, but you don't have my spirit. You know when fathers or husbands or wives are upset, their presence is there but they don't talk. You come to Church, the presence of God is there but He doesn't talk. You cannot say His presence isn't there because then you are contradicting the Word of God and you are also condemning everybody. One says, "The presence of God!" and you are looking at and saying, "What presence of God? I didn't feel anything." The presence of God was there. That's what he is talking about. "Your presence and Your Spirit!" That is what God is talking about- My Spirit will not contend with you forever. Do you think the judgment of God when it happened His presence was removed? No! His presence was there but His Spirit (left)! Do you think anybody can run away from His presence? No! But His Spirit! He goes silent. God takes this phone and puts it on silent mode. That's what the Bible is talking about and that's what he is talking about over there. He says, in that secret place, there is Your presence and there is Your Spirit.

Psalms 51:12

¹² Restore to me the joy of Your salvation...

If Your presence and Your Spirit is there, there is a corresponding reaction in me. In the midst of all these, I have something; I have joy.

...And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.

We don't realize this, these days, especially for God's children, are days of incredible blessings! Why? Because the government has made it possible and given time into our hands to enter into that secret place to put right things. Time is on our side. Time is not against us. Everything is closed. 1 day becomes 2 days and 2 days become one week and one week becomes 14 days of mandatory quarantine. It may come! In 14 days, your life can be absolutely, totally, radically changed. What are people worried about? Yesterday I had forgotten my scooter so I was going with Peter and I said, "For you, bachelors, how easy is life! For 14 days (forget fasting and all), you don't even have to fast. How simple it is! What do you need? 100 packets of noodles! Five cartons of juice! Over!" What is there to worry about? People are all queued up and taking sacks and going! If you have 20 bars of chocolates, then that's more than enough. Even if you don't eat, one bar of chocolate gives you enough energy to run the whole day. People make a mountain of a molehill. Do you know why? It's because for them, life is connected with all these. Jesus says, isn't life bigger than all these? Like for all of us sitting over here, who have a habit of fasting, that doesn't even bother us at all. Even if there is no supply, all I want is water because you have to drink water. It's not a big thing at all.

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So, these days are blessings. Get into that secret place with God. Get into that secret place with your spouse if you are married. Start talking. Even if you don't hear, it doesn't matter; you talk like David. God hadn't spoken to him for sixteen months but at Ziklag, he talked. If you are the one who sinned, you make the first move. God never sins. God did not say, "I will come near you." He said, "You come near Me and I will come near you. Then I will show you what all to wash, how well to wash your hands." You talk. This is not some vague idea. This dwelling in the secret place in the Bible is a real thing and Jesus practically showed us with his life how we can live there. Abide! Rest! NIV uses the Word 'rest'.

Let's go back to *Psalms 91*.

What is the result if you abide there?

Psalms 91:4

⁴He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler.

You have to connect 'abiding' to this verse 4. Long time ago, there was a 5 years old little girl I knew; very, very frightened! She used to be living in another place. She always used to ask me this question and I gave the child *Psalms 91*. Whenever she was afraid, she would tell me, "Papa, the feathers will be there?" I said, "Honey, feathers will be there." Because shadows and all that, the child did not get it. One thing the child understood was 'the feathers'. "God will cover me with feathers?" I said, "Yes, honey! God will cover you with feathers." You have to understand this. Let's read verse 1 and verse 4. You have to connect these two.

Psalms 91:1

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

Psalms 91:4a

⁴He shall cover you with His feathers...

Shadow doesn't have feathers. So, what is He trying to tell us? Allow Jesus to explain.

Matthew 23:37

³⁷"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"

When I was small, a long time ago, when we were living in Bhutan, it was in countryside and my mother always reared chickens. Because there were jungles close by and foxes close by, evening after school, I had this duty for 30-45 minutes to take the chicken out so that they would get some fresh air. You have to watch out because the jackal looks like dog and suddenly it will come and take and go away. So, what happens is the mother is very, very weary. One eagle sweeping makes a very peculiar sound. Immediately all the chicken come to her and she covers them with her feathers; she spreads her feathers. Till then it looks like a hole, but when the feathers are spread out, then if you have to get the chicken, you have to go through her. That's exactly what God is saying. That's what Jesus is saying. "O Jerusalem, you never understood My Spirit or My Word. You thought that I was a joy killer. No! I came to protect your joy and your peace and your salvation. How much every servant I sent and finally I came! All I wanted was to cover you and protect you from the destruction that was coming but you were not willing." It's also a choice! When He tells, will we run to Him and be under Him? Stay there! It is your hiding place.

Psalms 32:7

⁷You are my hiding place...

See, when the chickens run under the mother, who is their hiding place? She is their hiding place. We sing that song right – "You are my hiding place..." You need to understand they are all connected. "You are my hiding place." How awesome it is, right? That is what the psalmist is saying.

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There is a story that was told many years ago. It was on National Geographic. In the Yellowstone National Park in the USA, there was a wildfire there. So many trees and everything were burned. Later when the rangers were going up after the fire was all out, one of the rangers looked at a somewhat burned tree. The bottom of the tree was burnt, but was not fallen over. He sees a bird, absolutely burnt, sitting on the tree. He used a stick and he toppled it over. When it toppled over, from under its wings, three chicks ran out. The mother was burnt, frozen in death, but the children were safe. So, he, being a wildlife expert, understood, when the fire started and smoke was coming out, the mother could have flown away. But the mother knew that the children would not survive. What did she do? She brought them one by one down and then covered them with her wings. So, when the fire started coming down, she died, but they were safe. You need to understand this is what it means. The truth is the greatest weapon the devil had is the power of death. Jesus took that upon Himself and conquered death through death, so that we the chickens could live. That is what He did. And all who finds shelter under His wings are safe from the power of death. Fear of death should not control us anymore. Even if you die, you only fall asleep. That is why in the first death recorded in the book of Acts we saw –

Acts 7:60

⁶⁰.... ***he fell asleep.***

Everybody loves sleep, everybody looks forward to sleep when you are tired, except children. They do not want to sleep. But everybody who becomes tired, they want to sleep. So, He says you only fall asleep. That is what He told His disciples. “Our friend Lazarus has only fallen asleep. Let us go and wake him up.” That is what God is talking about. You know what all who sleep in Christ will wake up. Paul says, “Not them first, not us first. They will wake up, we will go up.” Everybody will get their body at the same time.

Now, remember this, *he who dwells in the secret place of the Most High, shall rest or abide under the shadow of the Almighty.* Imagine it is a very hot day. Not in Telangana or Andhra Pradesh, but if you look in Kerala, everybody will be carrying an umbrella because it is 10 months summer and 2 months rain. No other season in between. So, we need the umbrella all the 12 months. Every man and woman has an umbrella. And it is a black and white combination. Everybody wears white, and the umbrella is black. Imagine it is very hot, and you are walking under the shadow of the umbrella. It is not the umbrella but the shadow of the umbrella that is giving you protection. The umbrella has taken the heat. Suddenly, imagine, a thick, dark cloud comes and covers the sun. Now the umbrella becomes pointless, because something has come and covered it. Then what do you do? You fold the umbrella, keep it in your armpit and you walk. You do not need the umbrella anymore because the huge cloud has come and covered you. In *Psalms 23 and verse 4*, the psalmist says –

Psalms 23:4

⁴***Even though I walk through the darkest valley (That is the umbrella), I will fear no evil...***

Why? Because there is another shadow covering. I am dwelling in the secret place under the shadow of the Almighty. So, this one does not bother me because I know there is a bigger one above me. Both are shadows. The particular nature of the shadow is that the shadow never leaves you. Death is not going to leave you. It is going to pursue you. From the moment you were born, death is pursuing you. But God says, “So am I. I am watching over you, you do not realize it. The thoughts that I have towards you cannot be counted. Every hair on your head is numbered. You are the apple of My eye.” The beloved of the Lord rides upon His shoulder. He says, “Even as death is following you, I am also following you.” Therefore, Scripture says, “*You are with me*, that is why I will fear no evil.”

Psalms 23:4

⁴***....for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.***

That is what dwelling in that place means. You need to know when you are under His shadow, and though the shadow of death is pursuing you, you should not fear, because as a child of God we should have this assurance – I will not die before my time. When I die on my time, it does not matter by what means I die, whether it is a virus or old age. It does not matter. But I will not fear death. But if you do not want to die before your time, please remember, god has a plan and a purpose in your life. And I have told this earlier, many Christians live purposeless lives and yet, claim *Romans 8:28*. What is *Romans 8:28*?

Romans 8:28

²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

But they do not know His purpose. That is why knowing purpose is very important. Like I said, the knowledge of your purpose gives you strength. You look at the virus and say - even if I fall ill, I will not die because there is something to be finished. “...**called according to his purpose**”. See you cannot dwell in the secret place and not know your purpose? How can you dwell with the God of purpose and not know His purpose? That is why slavery could not kill Joseph. He went in as a slave at the age of 17. Let us imagine he was a slave for 3 years and then he went into prison. In that case, he was in prison for 10 years, in the most horrible dungeon in those years. Today forget prison, nobody wants to go to quarantine. They say it is terrible. What do they want? When the virus is ravaging the country do they want 5-star treatment or what? Just go there and help yourself and help the rest of the country. The toilets are bad. Yes, on your deathbed you will think about the toilet. Joseph was probably in the dungeon for 10. But he did not die. You think there were no viruses or bacteria in the dungeon and the food that he ate, and the rigors on his body? There were chains on his leg and neck. Fighting depression every day, where Scripture says the iron entered his soul. Fighting it every day, but he did not die because he knew his purpose and he came out better. Why is this important? Because when these calamities come and we are talking God’s Word, the Word has to become life. About Joseph it says that the Word of God proved him, tested him. Then all these will come true. It becomes life. In *Psalm 17:8*, Scripture says,

Psalm 17:8

⁸ Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings

God will ask “For what?” what if God turns and says “For me if you die or live is the same – pointless.” What if God says “You being absent in the body is better for Me. You are taking up lot of resources and space.” God has the sovereignty to deal with His children that way, but He does not. “You are the apple of My eye.” Hide me under the shadow of Thy wings. When calamities come, we have the guts to say that. Lord I am the apple of your eye. Everybody is the apple of their Father’s eye. So, hide me, because I have not finished my purpose. Hide me Lord from this calamity.

Psalm 57:1

¹Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, Until these calamities have passed by.

Until the calamity goes I will stay there. We look forward to quarantine. These things have to be fixed in your heads long early. All these things – going to prison, going to quarantine – all these things should be fixed in your minds. It does not make any difference to me. Wherever He takes me, He uses me, and I will stay loyal to Him. These things should not bother us, these things should not catch us unprepared. So, let these things pass me Lord, hide me. A secret place can be anywhere. You do not realize, sometimes, the ways of God. Here is Joseph in Potiphar’s palace. He is gone up, he is a big guy now. His master away, and there is the mistress after his life. If the mistress was after his life, you can be very sure that the maidservants were also after his life, because Scripture says that he was a good-looking, handsome and smart fellow. And she is tempting him day after day. How long can a young man resist temptation? He will fall. So, God put him in a safe place in the prison where you will not fall. The prison was his secret place, where he was safe from all that temptation. He hid him there. Only when you have dwelt with Him, and understood the purposes of God, you will realize, until the time comes for me to be revealed, this is the best place to be. I am safe. How do you know God was there and God ordained it? Because he had favour immediately with the prison-warden and God was with him there. Unless we see the heart of God as God is good all the time, and therefore anything that happens to me will work out for my good. Why? Because God is good. It may look bad now, but it will not always be bad. Good will come out of it because of God. That is what it says – Hide me until these calamities have passed by, and verse 2 –

Psalm 57:2

² I will cry out to God Most High, To God who performs all things for me.

From the secret place, what will I do? I will cry out to You and You are the one who works it all out for me. That is where our assurance comes from. When we know how to abide in that secret place, the *Psalm 91:2* is our confession. Here also, you will see the order –

Psalm 91:2

²I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust."

That is the confession of assurance that is rising from a dwelling place. *He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.* Now what has happened? You have conformed to your reality. Your reality outside and your reality inside are the same. Calamities are all around, but I am in the secret place. *He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.* You are not denying any facts. Calamities all around, pestilences all around, but abiding comes first and confession comes second. Both has to be there. You cannot believe in one thing and confess something else. That is why Scripture says *"if you believe in your heart and confess with your mouth..."* You have to believe. If you do not believe and you confess, it has no meaning. And if you believe and you do not confess, it still does not work. Scripture says *"if you believe and you confess..."* Abide and proclaim. If you are abiding, you will proclaim in the midst of calamity. You are not denying anything that you are facing. In Psalm 91, the psalmist gives an entire list of the dangers he is facing, both spiritual and physical. But there is belief and there is a proclamation.

Proverbs 18:10

¹⁰The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.

You are my refuge, You are my fortress, You are my God in whom I trust - that is a confession. What is the reality? Today is one of the happiest days of my preaching because I do not even have to look at the time. Because people have come here to listen. They have nowhere to go. *The name of the Lord is a strong tower.* Where does the righteous man run? To it. How do you know you are righteous? – Because you run into a place, your secret place, your prayer place in the name of Jesus. You run to that. You run there, not to the phone. If we have learnt the art of running there, we will actually stop asking people to pray for us, except for ministry opportunities where we will be praying for people. The righteous man runs into His name. Every Sunday Apple gives me the activity report. Everyday Apple is discouraged, I am not. Activity very less – Good for me, bad for you. Because I am on a plan, I am not giving you 1 rupee more than that. *The name of the Lord is a strong tower.* You need to realize this is a weapon of mass destruction. The name of the Lord is a weapon of mass destruction. That is why you run to it, because you know Him, you have dwelt with Him, you know the power of His name. In *Mark 16*, Scripture says,

Mark 16:17-18

¹⁷And these signs will follow those who believe (How do you know they believe?): In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸they will take up serpents (Demonic will not have power over them); and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them...

How does the virus get in? through your mouth, through your nose into your inside system. If you by accident drink that in, you need to believe in His name, it will cause me no harm. That is why I said, "Understand the facts." Do what you have to do – wash your hands, cover your face, stay away from public places – all that, you do. After that, if it gets in, believe. The Name of my Lord is a strong tower. It is His name that's the strong tower. And the thing is that we have to learn to use His name, because there is power in that Name. He says, "These things shall follow those who believe." Does that mean that for everyone who believes, these things are following? No. He says, "In My Name. The righteous run into My Name." The shadow, the shelter, the abiding, the tower, the refuge – everything is being connected by God over there.

If you turn to *Psalm 118:9-12*,

Psalm 118:9-12

⁹It is better to trust in the Lord Than to put confidence in princes. ¹⁰All nations surrounded me, But in the name of the Lord I will destroy them.

One version will say, "I cut them off in the Name of the Lord. I will destroy them."

¹¹They surrounded me, Yes, they surrounded me; But in the name of the Lord I will destroy them. ¹²They surrounded me like bees...

You know how a swarm of bees will come?

They were quenched like a fire of thorns; For in the name of the Lord I will destroy them. ¹³ You pushed me violently, that I might fall, But the Lord helped me.

In His Name, you have to. What is the virus for the believer? We look with different eyes. What is Corona Virus for the believer? It's the killer of my destiny. I see it spiritually. It's the enemy of my destiny and I will cut you off in the Name of Jesus. If I am not appointed to die now and I still have work to finish in God's plan, I will cut you off because I will proclaim as it is written about David, "I will fulfil God's purpose in my generation." Then, I will fall asleep. Not before that. That's what I said – this is not a casual shelter. These are all purpose-filled Psalms. The Psalmist, probably, David, is saying much later in his life but do you know how he began? With the same heart. "What do you think that I am, a dog, that you come against me with a stick? "You come against me with spear, with sword, with javelin and I come against you in the Name of Jehovah Sabaoth." The little boy understood the power of that Name. And his first enemy there, he cut it out in the Name of the Lord. It was not the stone that killed Goliath; it was the Name that destroyed him first in the spiritual realm. We are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms but we experience it in the physical realm when we believe and when we confess. He first destroyed him in the spiritual realm, the power that was empowering Goliath and then, he destroyed him with the stone and with the sword. This is what God is talking about – do we believe? And you have to open your mouth and say, "No, I have a purpose and I'm not willing to die before that because I have to fulfil my purpose. I don't want to come there with empty hands; I want to come there and say, 'Lord, I finished Your task' so that I want to hear from Your lips what You said – well done." How can I say 'well done' when I haven't done well? So, Lord, I want to finish and I will not let this virus steal my destiny. On the other hand, You are sovereign. You alone know. In Your time, if my work is over, I may think my work is not over, "Oh, there is so much to be done," but You think that my work is over and the second half of the work is kept for somebody else and not for me, then, "Moses, you need to die because Joshua will take them over. Your time is up." "But, Lord." "It's not yours; it's his and I'm the One who is doing the work. It's neither he nor you. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you." Constant in human history is God. He is the Man of war. We don't have a name. It is in His Name, we got our victory. So, you have to look at life without fear, with purpose. The virus will go. After that will come famine. The system is going to crash economically. Things are going to crash and if 2020, November, if Trump doesn't win, it's going to get worse. I personally believe this is a man-made virus. When I look at it. The entire virus is targeted at one man. People are dying but it's not targeted at all of them. They are called the collateral damage. These are all collateral damage. This is entirely dependent upon one man because everybody knew the economy was booming and if the economy is going like this, this man will win hands down. The only way you can bring him down and by bringing the economy down and that's exactly what has happened. But if God's destiny is that he should win, nobody could stop him from losing. But we don't know how much window of time God is giving us. His policies do not matter to us but the fact of the matter is – he's got the back of the believing Church and no man has stood up for Church and Israel like he has done. The problem is – there are a lot of Christian Pastors judging him as if he is a Pastor. He is not a Pastor; he is a politician. And judge his policies connect with the issues that matter to the Church. And when I look at the issues that matter to the Church as a servant of God, spiritual issues, I look at his stance and I say, "Lord, if it is Your will, give him four more years," because it's good for all of us, believers; because we are not looking at money; we are looking for votes. It's not Christians but it is the people who are voting. So, that's how you read everything.

So, this virus, I don't believe, is generally, like we think. Because if you look at it everywhere, who are the people who are dying? Old people. Why? Because everywhere in the world, the old people are conservative. The young people are not conservative; they are very liberal. They have gone away so far off the track. They are not prodigal sons; they are rebellious sons. And the old people are all very conservative. They still hold on to values. So, if you have a virus that will take off an entire section of population who particularly vote in an election in a particular way, then what is left? The generations of rebel and liberals, right? That's how I read it. I may be absolutely wrong or I could be absolutely right. Therefore, what does the Church do? The Church stands in the gap and prays, looking at the spiritual impact of this; not the economic impact of it. The spiritual impact. "Lord, if this virus is destined to harm Your Kingdom, let this virus die. It will not fulfil its purpose. It may kill people but the virus will not fulfil the purpose for which the enemy has sent it. It will not fulfil." Through it, the Church will still triumph.

So, you have to read it that way. "I will cut it off." But in some cases, it will almost bring you to the point of death. Those are the next verse we looked.

Psalm 118:13-17

¹³You pushed me violently, that I might fall...

That was the purpose of this whole thing. If you want to use the illustration I use, this entire virus is used to push one man violently.

...But the Lord helped me. ¹⁴The Lord is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation. ¹⁵The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous; The right hand of the Lord does valiantly. ¹⁶The right hand of the Lord is exalted; The right hand of the Lord does valiantly. ¹⁷I shall not die, but live, And declare the works of the Lord.

But some people may not die but they may be ill for a long time. They may be in the ICU and recover. I'm looking at it as an illustration but generally, in life, specifically, with this,

Psalm 118:18

¹⁸The Lord has chastened me severely, But He has not given me over to death.

Meaning – you will know God through this illness and you will thank Him, one day, for this illness. No, it's not over. There's a long way to go. The curfew is till tomorrow morning, right? We shall be like Paul. Your battery may run out. I'm not going to run out.

Psalm 118:19-21

¹⁹Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, And I will praise the Lord.

You chasten me but I will not die and I understand this situation I am going through. Please make me understand the meaning of what I'm going through –

¹⁹Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, And I will praise the Lord. ²⁰This is the gate of the Lord, Through which the righteous shall enter. ²¹I will praise You...

Through this illness, I came through death. When I came through, I realized,

²¹I will praise You For You have answered me, And have become my salvation.

And you will thank Him. We don't know which way God will answer. That's why we have to leave it to the sovereignty of God, how He deals the same issue with different people; how He will handle it.

Psalm 91:2

²I will say of the Lord...

What did he say? The question God asks is, "What do you say about Me?" What do you and I say of the Lord, when calamity comes? When calamity came, Job's wife said, "Curse God and die." When calamity wiped her family out, Naomi said, "Don't call me Naomi." What will you say of the Lord? What will we say? Because calamities actually define and show us who we really are. It was not the deliverance that took place that showed who Paul and Silas were inside. That was the gift operating. It was the prison chamber that revealed who Paul and Silas were inside. It was not his work and his labour of love in his father's house that revealed who Joseph was; it was slavery and prison that revealed who he really was. "What will I say?" Can we say, "God is good all the time"? We are not changing as what happened to us as being good; we are saying, "God is good in spite of all of that." Joseph did not whitewash evil. He said, "You meant it for evil but thank God, above that shadow of evil that pursued me for 13 years, there was a bigger shadow and I had found rest. You meant it for evil; He meant it for good." What will we say? That He will work it out for good? Will it be fear or will it be faith? I think it's *Proverbs 29:25*,

Proverbs 29:25

²⁵The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe.

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Worse than the epidemic is the fear of the epidemic. The fear in the air. *“I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge. He is my fortress. He is my God. In Him, I will trust.”* That’s how you dispel fear. *“Even if I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.”* It’s the reality. Shadow of death everywhere. *“I will fear no evil.”* Why? Because I have something very sure that I know it as experience – *Thou are with me.* It’s not a confession; it’s a reality – *Thou art with me. Thy Rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.* Of course, I understand the staff comforting. What about the rod? Does the rod comfort you? We get comfort from the staff. Jacob leaned on his staff and blessed his children. I went as one and now, I have become two companies. Staff. Everywhere, everybody loves the staff because it’s the sign of power, authority and comfort. What about the rod? He didn’t say staff alone. He said, *“Your rod and your staff.”* He said, *“Rod,”* first. Because if you haven’t gone through the rod, you will to have a staff to lean on to when you grow old. If you need a staff to lean on, the staff of God – the spiritual significance, you need to have gone through the rod. The question is: does the rod comfort you? How does the rod comfort you? What is the truth about the rod that comforts you? *Hebrews 12:8*, God says, *“This is the rod that comforts you.”* You understand the spiritual meaning of the sword? What is that?

Hebrews 12:8

⁸ But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

The proof of your sonhood is the rod of discipline. And if you haven’t found comfort in that rod, then you are illegitimate. You are not the real child of God because everyone the Father adopts, He disciplines. That’s the comfort. David and all were true children of God. He says, *“Your rod comforts me. Your staff comforts me.”* In Him, I trust. *“You are my fortress, my God; in Him, I trust.”* Therefore, I will trust in His rod and I will trust in His staff. Trust is something you put your weight on. So, the question is: in whom or in what did we put our trust in? So, *Matthew 6:33* was a command for all time.

Matthew 6:33

³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

It was a command about the Kingdom, seeking the Kingdom first. It was not a suggestion. Like I said, God doesn’t have suggestions or opinions. We make it that way but He has only commands. Because of the free will which He has given, we think those are suggestions. Now, the problem is – one virus has exposed everything. In *Hebrews 12:26-29*, he had said this.

Hebrews 12:26-29

²⁶ whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.” ²⁷ Now this, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. ²⁸ Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. ²⁹ For our God is a consuming fire.

He says, *“Everything that can be shaken is being shaken so that you will know whether you have the Kingdom; you will see what is the nature of the Kingdom inside you, how big is the Kingdom.”* You talk about any area of human activity in the world and you tell me – what is not shaken? Tell me. Tell me any department that is not shaken. What is not shaken? Do you see, the government of India has put everyone on the streets and they are holding back on set of people – the army. You know why? Because if the army gets affected, we’ve got enemies all around. So, they are holding them back. Other countries have brought the army into the road. India won’t do it because of the fear of a virus. Because they live in close proximity. One battalion, one and everyone has to be quarantined. Two battalions. Five regiments, 10 regiments and the entire core, we are surrounded. Which department is not touched of human activity by one virus? And when all these things are being shaken, it reveals the Kingdom within you, whether you are standing or depressed, discouraged, fearful. What is standing inside? The Kingdom? This is not for them; this is for us. They don’t know what is happening. We know what is happening. So, these are all given to the disciples. How are you reacting? Is it Dutch courage, false courage – *“I will come through this”*? No, he never said that. *“My God, valiantly. My God, my God.”* His trust was in God; not in himself. And his trust was in them. He used it in the Name of the Lord but he trusted in the Name of the Lord. Because the next one that comes will be worse. I’m not saying this. It’s all written. The Kingdom is being revealed. In what did we put our trust? In whom did we put our trust? Health, economy, stock market, government, God, leaders. God is exposing all these through our fears and anxieties so that we can get rid of it and rest in Him alone. Covid-19 will go. Something else will come. This is not going to cease until Jesus comes. So,

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we don't need a constant reminder. The world needs it. We don't need it. Half the Church may need it but if you are in that secret place, you and I don't need the constant reminder. What we need is a constant remedy. That is *Psalm 91:3*.

Psalm 91:3

³ Surely He shall deliver you...

That's my remedy. It doesn't matter whether the name change takes place. Today, it is pestilence. Tomorrow, it's war. Day after tomorrow, it's famine. It is earthquake. It's war. It's communal riots. Nations against nations, ethnos against ethnos. It doesn't matter. You are arrested, taken before the synagogue, before the authorities, all have been. Families have fallen apart. Fathers will betray children; children will betray. The love of God will wax cold. All these are different names. The reality is the same. What is the nature of the Kingdom within you that reacts to this? Constant remedy is this – "You shall deliver me." Who is writing all this? David. He has faced everything. Death in the hands of his own sons and God delivered him from that too. Famine, pestilence, plague, war, betrayal in families, betrayal among friends –everything, he went through. Did God deliver him from everything? You want to read the signs of the last days in one man's life? Read it in David's life. We went through it all. Therefore, he has the experience to write a Psalm like this.

³ Surely He shall deliver you...

Meaning – it's an ongoing process. Salvation is an ongoing process. I was saved; I am being saved; I will be saved. It's an ongoing process. And these are all aids, teachers to aid us through the process. What is pestilence? A teacher's aid. On the process, don't put your trust in anything. Don't put your trust in horses, chariots or vaccines. There is no vaccine yet. But the problem is – another few weeks, a vaccine will come; everyone will get inoculated and then, Covid-19 is history, thrown in the dustbin and they will go back to their old life. That is the problem. Quarantine is forgotten. Everything is forgotten. That's why we need to go to Him.

³ Surely He shall deliver you...

He lives for us but we will go to Him? That's the question. These are all reality. You look at *Hebrews 7:25*,

Hebrews 7:25

²⁵ Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him...

So, the question is: only those who come to Him can go to God through Him. Will we go to Him? If we go to Him with our little things and the biggest thing that we are facing, He says, "I will save you to the uttermost. Through it all."

...since He always lives to make intercession for them.

He lives for us but the problem is – will we go to Him? With the big and the small issues. Will we? We will go with the big issues and we think we can handle the small ones.

Psalm 91:3

³ Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler...

That is accidental. We don't even know where it is set. Or it's a pestilence. Day and night, everything is mentioned over there. He says, "Cast your burdens unto Me for I care for you," but will we cast? "Come to Me boldly, confidently through the Throne Room of Grace." Will we go? He shall deliver. Surely, He shall deliver. Focus on that. The trap of the devil or the deadly pestilence? How does He deliver? Because He covers us with His wings. Stay under. There is only one place. Stay under. But the problem is – everybody wants to stay directly under God. "I don't want anybody above me." It didn't happen with His own Son until He was ready to be on His own. That's the problem.

Let's read.

Psalm 91:4

⁴He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge...

That's nice. Jesus gave the chicken illustration also. But the question is: that is an illustration; how do I get there? Illustration is fantastic and I know it. I've practically experienced it in childhood and even now, you go to the countryside and you see a chicken and the mother and the chicks; you will see – that is exactly what happens. But the question is: that is an illustration and I'm not a chicken. And God is not a bird. How do I get under His wings? Shield, fortress, everything we read. Answer is given over there.

...His truth shall be your shield and buckler.

His truth shall be your defence.

...His truth shall be your shield and buckler.

The buckler is a small thing. It's a small shield, a round small shield in the left hand. The shield is the big one. So, whether it's a small problem or a big issue, both need to have it. We seek truth in big issues; we don't seek truth in small things. God doesn't overlook. Both in the little things and in the big things, if we find His truth, then there is safety. So, now, we have moved from wings and feathers to truth. That's where we find our shelter. We know very well. We heard this message over and over again. *Isaiah 65*. The God of truth. *John 14:6* – Jesus is truth. Then, *the Holy Spirit is truth. John 17:17 – the Word is truth*. And then, finally, the Church is the pillar and foundation. If the Church is truth, then every stone is truth, right? You can't have a Church which is truth with a few stones that are lies. "I am just a stone. I'm not the Church. I'm just a stone, a living stone in the living Church." Now, we understand why God begins everything with the word 'repent'? Repentance has been made to sound as if it's a terrible axe that cuts your head off or something like that. You know what 'repent' basically means in simple terms? Put away lies and bring on truth. That's what repentance means. Put away lies.

Shall we go back to *Psalms 91:4*?

Psalms 91:4

⁴He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler.

See how they are all connected, right? Do not confuse. God is truth. The devil is the father of lies. So, the Kingdom of God is the Kingdom of truth and righteousness while the kingdom of this world is the kingdom of lies. Lies are being shaken. "You can find safety in the economy." "You can find safety in the advancement of medical science. Science is the modern god." Only the god is late by three months now. "You can find safety in the stock market." "You can find safety because you are protected by all these special guards." The presidents are also falling ill. I like this virus. It's an equalizer. That's what repentance simply means. It's a constant life-changing activity. Replacing the lies in my life with truth. Not with truth.

Psalms 91:4

⁴He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler.

My truth is there. Pastor Vijay's truth. We all have truths of our own but that doesn't save anybody. It's His truth. His truth. David has his own truth justified many times. That brought him only down further and further. It's His truth. Isn't that the Psalmist who said in *Psalms 51*, "You look for truth in the inward parts. Your truth." We all have created our own idea about truth. Our entire life ultimately has to be saturated by the truth.

Like I said, truth has two parts – the hidden part and the revealed part. Both, you have to watch. The Pharisees also had truth, the revealed one. They did not have the hidden one. The revealed one is This, the written. The hidden one is the Spirit. They had the revealed one but they did not have the hidden one. Therefore, God called them 'whitewashed'. Outside, very good. Full of stinking rotten bones. He exposed the inside reality. That's why they were mad at Him. Outward reality and inward reality. God said that we must worship Him in Spirit and truth. Our shield and our buckler also have to have two parts – the revealed truth and the hidden truth. King Saul also had a shield. What was missing? The Spirit was missing. Remember at Gilboah, David's cry? "Your shield was not anointed." The Spirit was gone. He had the shield. And our major issue is with truth.

Remember, as I come to the end, *Isaiah 59:14*,

Isaiah 59:14

¹⁴ Justice is turned back, And righteousness stands afar off; For truth is fallen in the street, And equity cannot enter.

Everything is stuck because of one thing – truth has fallen. That’s what is happening. Nations are willing to use everything except the Name of God and God to come to His truth. The one thing to bring God into the picture. When you bring God into the picture, you see calamity differently. You see the eyes of Daniel, the eyes of Nehemiah. Before he can rise and build, he has to say, “I have sinned. my forefathers have sinned.” That’s why we are in this situation. That’s the truth. God is not taking the truth to cut our head. He is using truth to restore. We have sinned. It’s not one nation under the sky that has not sinned against the Living God. These calamities are a result of it. The wages of sin is death. And death comes in many forms. This is only one form and we don’t want to address that. Until the Church in the world rises up and addresses this fact, God will restrain His hand because somewhere, somebody genuinely repented; one group repented and cried out for mercy, God stays His hand. Nowhere in the Bible, it is written, “When the plague was sweeping, seventy thousand soldiers died, their families cried out to God.” It says, “David did.” Because of him. He identified with the sin. David did and God stayed His hand. So, when this stops, nobody can take the credit also because nobody knows whose cry God heard. So, Churches will put up their banner – “We were fasting for 7 days and on the 8th day, the virus stopped.” God says, “There were other people, even before the virus started, they already saw it and they have been fasting for the past two years.” He will say, “Shut your mouth. This credit doesn’t belong to anybody.” Or maybe, “I heard none of your prayers. I just stayed My hand because I’m a merciful God.” At the end of the day, when we all stand before God, nobody will boast. That’s why I keep saying, it’s not bad news; it’s the truth – these calamities will not stop. You know when these calamities will all stop? When truth steps down again into our world. On Mount Olives, it slips into two. Then, calamities will come because truth has come. Because nobody can deny anything. You are watching truth with your own eyes, face to face with truth. Then, all these will stop. One day, it will stop. That also, has been told. It will stop. But we are a set of people who are not moved by this like others.

Like yesterday, we saw Amos saying, “Prepare to meet your Maker.” We should be a prepared set of people. So, we are able to actually see all this with different eyes. Like I looked at it and I said, “People panicking? Yes. Christians panicking? I don’t understand.” Then, I realized – Oh, I understand. They don’t have a lifestyle of fasting. So, their first concern is pestilence, “Let me stock food.” Quarantine is for how long? Fourteen days? Twenty-one days? These are normal fastings mentioned in the Bible, right? If Daniel, to understand a revelation, he didn’t understand in Scripture, could fast for twenty-one days, can’t we fast for twenty-one days for a pandemic? We are worrying? Jesus, the Pure, absolute sinless, holy, Pure Son of God could fast for forty days when He had the power to make stone into bread. He didn’t. So, a forty-day fast is scary.

There’s a saying in English, when these things happen, the rubber meets the road. So, these things are not a test for the world; it’s a test for us. You realize who you are. I realize who I am. My wife was never attached to these things. I was telling my wife, “What fourteen days quarantine? I’ve been quarantined for eight years! I’ve been sitting here for the past eight years and when I went abroad, I saw nothing. I was on mission. Nothing, I saw. So, everywhere, my life, for the past eight to ten has only been quarantine. So, quarantine is not a scary word for me because we have to believe that we don’t belong to this world. Does it bother us – no IPL? How does it bother us? No NBA. How does it bother us? No movie theatres. How does it bother me? If I ever watch anything, it will be something which is black and white because I know the language is kosher and the theme is – good versus evil. And that, nobody watches. And whatever you do, the speed is not more than 360. Why? Because these are the old black and white movies in the theatres. How much can you speed it? You can’t speed it or increase its clarity more than that but I’m okay with it. That’s fine. You want to relax and watch one of those old ones. Do these things upset us? There is the pandemic and the effects of the pandemic. Stock market, does it upset you? I understand that probably better than all of you sitting here. I know the stock market very well. I was somebody who played in the stock market. I made my money too, many years back. I got Reliance at 10 and sold it at 21. And one, I saw going down; immediately, I sold it. I made my money. I made 10 lakhs out of the stock market. One day, God said, “Give it all away,” and I gave it all away, without keeping one pi. So, the stock market falling doesn’t bother me because even when we put the stock market, we know it belongs to Him. It doesn’t belong to you. You are just a steward. So, these things don’t scare you. The child who took all that is probably hearing it online. She started a ministry. Ten years ago, she said, “Daddy, I have a friend who doesn’t have insurance. Can you send \$50?” I said, “My child, do you know how much \$50 is in rupees?” I said, “Okay, honey. I will send it.” That \$50 never ended as \$50. It wiped me out but I love her. But I always tell her, “I love you, my child. I always will.” Every day, she will tell me, “I love you, Daddy.” I told her last night also, “You give me more comfort than all my five children.”

These things don't matter. We invest in people; we don't invest in the world. When our investment goes down in the stock market, we are not bothered. We are bothered when the people in whom we invested go down. That upsets me. That is what upsets me, the way people leave the Church. It doesn't upset me when people leave Church. It doesn't bother me. People need to leave and go and fulfil God's purpose but the way they leave upsets me, because I know from Scripture for them to be restored will take enormous humbling. There's no way they can be restored unless they come back. They simply cannot be restored because of the way they left. That's why whenever I left Churches, I was very careful how I left. Because I know I am not under this umbrella. I am under this shadow. That is above this umbrella. You need to be very, very careful about how you leave. These are real issues. So, we are not worried about the falling of the stock market, it shouldn't bother us. We are not worried about the panic of the people; we are worried about the death of people, dying without knowing God. That's why I love David. The verse I gave you yesterday. "When my enemies fell sick..." My gosh, what a man! "I mourned, I grieved like it was my brother or mother." An Old Covenant guy! Where do you find a guy like that? How can you find a guy like that? I don't know who that person is he is talking about. Sometimes, I think it is I the unwritten parts of his history, he heard King Saul was ill, and he couldn't eat; he was fasting. "Why are you not eating?" "No, I am not eating. I am praying today." "Who are you praying for?"

Psalm 35:13-14

¹³But as for me, when they were sick, My clothing was sackcloth; I humbled myself with fasting; And my prayer would return to my own heart.

They are not changing.

¹⁴I paced about as though he were my friend or brother; I bowed down heavily, as one who mourns for his mother.

I don't know who he is talking about. Maybe, he is talking about King Saul. What a man! Old Testament man. That's how you look at life. That's how we look at life. That's how you read *Psalm 91*. We only looked at four verses of *Psalm 91* today. The next time, we will look further. This situation has given me the autonomy to preach without looking at the clock; I have an audience here who is going nowhere, and I have an audience elsewhere, if they go somewhere, I wouldn't know either. I look at the sovereignty of God and say, "Okay, you know what? Let us look at real issues that matter in life." Have I found that safe place? Am I under the shadow of the Almighty? Am I in that secret place? How do I know? I know whether I'm in the secret place when I search my heart, and I look at all these things happening, and I look into my heart and see, how am I reacting? Is there fear? Is there panic? Is there grief over people who are dying? Is there excitement because His Coming is near? Is there a little hesitancy, "Lord, I know I haven't finished my race"? Are you aware of all these things, that you're looking at it with different eyes altogether? How are you looking at things? Because it's a pestilence for them; not for us. For us, it is shaking. Everything that can be shaken will be shaken, and in that shaking, if an earthquake comes, we will all shake, right? When God is shaking the whole thing, we are also shaking. In that shaking, we will look and say, "I am not shaken. Things around me are being shaken, but I am not shaken."

You have to overcome this fear, children. I'm truly telling you. This fear of hoarding can be broken only by the faith of giving. There is no other way. Unless you practice that consistently in your life, give, give, give—there's no fear; fear is broken. And this fear about food, it's broken only by fasting. Because eating and drinking is a bondage for man. What to eat, how much to eat, where to eat. All those 'where' have been shut down. Even with delivery. The instructions are very clear. If the Swiggy fellow comes, he's told to clean the outside of the package. Then, you have to clean the outside of the package. Then, people will be even more careful, "What if the virus is inside?" Take it and microwave it. Even if it's piping hot, still microwave it. Kill the virus. Then, what? Is there any place in this that the virus is hiding? You see? Nobody wants to eat now. The joy of eating is gone. God had told us earlier, "When you fast," "Not if you fast." When you fast. When you pray. When you have the habit of being in the secret place of praying, when pestilence comes, you have already heard, "Don't worry, I am in control." "Lord, what should I pray for?" He would say, "Pray for this nation, that nation. Pray for this Church. They're the ones going through it. Pray that they have even more courage." How do we pray for the Churches in China, our Church in China? "Thank You, Lord, they are courageous. They're not afraid." They are courageous. Some have died, some are alive, but they are courageous. They've gone into the middle of the plague, like Aaron and stood there, not afraid. "Oh Lord, thank You. Thank You, Lord, even if we have never seen them, we are a part of them." Awesome, right? One of our Pastors actually died of Corona Virus, abroad. Are we grieving? No. He finished his purpose. It affected his throat and he died. It's okay. It is well with my soul. We have casualties in the family. It doesn't matter. We are worried about the unsaved ones, "Lord, let them not die.

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They need to know You. The ones who know You, if they die, they are going home.” “I’ll see you one day.” All these psalms, all these words that we look to, are spoken by one man, an Old Covenant man. “I know he will not come back to me, but I know I will go to him.” What confidence! “David, what’s your current history, just recent past history?” “Oh, adultery, lying, murder.” “And you’re so confident?” “Yes, God said ‘I have removed your sins from Me’. I’m not going to go against His Word. If He said it’s fine, I’m not looking at my history. I’m looking at His Word. If He said, ‘it’s not there’, it’s not there.” The world can say whatever they want. If He said it’s not there, it is not. Then, I know where I am going.” Who will you believe? Whose report will you believe? Do you know when he says this? He says this within a few weeks, maybe days. He has the assurance, “I’m not under condemnation. He’s not coming back, I’m going to him.” I’m telling you, that one man, David – you can learn through his life. The more I study stuff he has written, the more I understand why God said, “This is a man after My own heart. He understood and I will reveal Myself to mankind through him.” That’s one of those shining witnesses in that cloud.

So, we began with that – the assurance Scriptures give, a cloud of witnesses. And we brought it together and we looked at it those four verses today.

So, dwell in that secret place when quarantine comes. I can’t see how the government can avoid it. How can they avoid it? They can’t right now until a vaccination comes and even to produce a vaccine for one billion people, it will take time – distribution, money, all that. So, it may come. It should come. And we have no issues with anything the government decides. I have no issues with it. Some pastors were getting upset about, “*Hebrews 9 says do not stop the gathering of people together.*” No, don’t put people on a guilt trip. You don’t do it. The government is not against our worship; the government will be against our worship in China or North Korea, but it’s not against the worship in India. And they’ve said it to everybody; they didn’t only tell it to us—they told the mosques, they told the Churches, they told the temples, “Shut down.” Small gathering, avoid social contact. That’s why we didn’t gather. So, don’t misinterpret Scripture and say, “The government is against my worship. I have to worship.” No, you’re not helping your congregation; you’re putting them in danger. You don’t do that. Instead if three or four of us gather, we have the system where we will maintain our social distance. Yet, we are not far from God. We may be far from each other, but yet, through the system we are close to each other. I don’t think I have ever got so many notifications on GTC WhatsApp – 100 already – in three hours. So, everybody is close. And emails are coming from around the world. So, they are watching too. So, we are not far. They only told us to maintain physical distance and that is there also in Scripture, and only we can be far away and yet, close. What does Paul say? “Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in the Spirit.” That’s what’s happening now is we are all together in the Spirit, and thank God for this technology, we can also see each other. Paul couldn’t see. He said, “I am with you in the Spirit.”

You know what? We have grief over people who are dying without knowing the Lord; not other deaths. Why should I cry when somebody’s going home? Now, if Raj here tells me, “Pastor, I’m going to Narsapur for Good Friday”, will I cry and say, “No, please don’t go home”? Will I say that? “No,” I tell him, every time he goes home, “Eat lots of shrimp and a lot of fish and come back.” I know he’s going to have a good time. So, if a believer dies, why should I grieve? Whether it is because of Corona or something else, they have gone home. “I will see you there one day.” But when unbelievers die, we grieve because, “Lord, I was one of them one day. I was an unbeliever one day. By Your grace, I’m saved. I wish, Lord.” So, our prayers are targeted towards those who are unbelievers, those who are dying. “Lord, let them it not happen. Let them somehow hear.” Maybe a nurse in the ICU, maybe a doctor in the ICU. Maybe, in the ICU, as they’re going into a coma, “You give them a dream.” Like the forwards I sent you – people seeing dreams of Jesus appearing and telling them. “Lord, I will not curtail Your hands. I just release them into Your hands. Somehow, Lord, in a dream, in a vision, in the coma, through a nurse, through a doctor. Maybe the ambulance guys. I don’t know how, Lord. Please intervene. That’s all I ask.” Nobody should die without hearing, at least, once. The choice is theirs, to receive or not. Because if in this situation, if they don’t receive, then I don’t understand in what situation they will receive. So, we pray that they hear. Amen?

So, we are not moved and when everything is being shaken, He is our Rock, He is our fortress, He is our refuge. Can He be shaken? That’s why He is called ‘the Rock’. In Hindi, you say ‘*chattan*’. In Malayalam, you say ‘*para*’. So, if you see a Malayalam ministry which is called Para Ministries, understand what it means; it means a Rock Ministries. He is our rock, unshakeable, immovable. When everything is being shaken, see that your feet are on Him, seated in Him. Let us pray.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we just come to You this morning, , this Sunday, Lord. The first time we have had service like this, Lord, but, Father, Your Word is true: You are here with us; You are with everyone who is watching, listening. We just want to say, Lord, we love

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You. We love You. We love You that we found mercy in Your eyes. We could have been one who died in the pandemic without knowing You, but we are inside. Now, there is no fear of death; there is no fear of condemnation. We know we are Yours. You are our refuge, You are our fortress, You are our buckler, You are our shield, and we, as Your people, the righteous will run into Your Name. We are safe in that Name, secure in that Name. I take authority in the Name of Jesus of Nazareth, against the stealer of God's children's destiny. This virus, by name, I call it out and I will tell you – pass over every house over which the Blood is. By faith, I apply the Blood of Jesus over every home, every household in GTC, and this angel of death has to pass over. You will not steal the destiny of children who still have to finish their race, fulfil their purpose. I speak to you. You may be a virus, there is a spirit behind you and I bind that spirit in the Name of Jesus of Nazareth. You will not touch God's people until they have reached their time. You will not touch them. Death has been overcome by my Jesus. It holds no fear for us. It has been defanged, the sting has been taken out. The scorpion of death, even if it moves, has no sting. It will not cause any fear. The serpent of death, even if he comes, he has no fangs. They are not afraid. For us, to live or die is gain, and the life that we live now, we live it by faith in the Son of God. Our life is hidden in Him. I pray, Father, through this Word, people will be encouraged to seek, to find, and to dwell in that secret place. If there is a quarantine, people will make use of this opportunity given by God, through various governments, to dwell in that place; that there would be a restoration in lives, horizontally and vertically, in lives; that this opportunity will not be wasted by God's people. One day, people will look back and say, "Yes, the enemy meant it for evil, but God meant it for good. When I look back, those three days, those seven days, those 14 days, those 21 days changed my life. I will never be the same again. I found Him and He found me." Thank You, Father. Stretch forth Your hand, Father, bless every one of Your children. Let the hand of God, the hand of power, the hand of might, the hand of deliverance, the hand of healing rest upon everyone. I speak healing into every body now. Be healed in Jesus' Name; be strengthened in Jesus' Name; be empowered in Jesus' Name. We look death in the eye and say, "I am not afraid, for my Saviour has overcome both fear and death." Thank You, Lord. Thank You. We, by faith, now, bless Your holy Name. We, too, proclaim – Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. 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.