

Shall we look to the Lord in prayer once again, even as we gather here this morning to spend few moments in His presence? Let us continue to have this attitude of worship and praise that our hearts will not wander:

'Prone to wander, Lord, we feel it Prone to leave the God we love Here's our heart, oh, take and seal it; Seal it for Thy courts above.'

*This morning, Father, we just thank You for this opportunity that You have given to us to come together every day this way. Father, real bad times all around the world, monumental proportions; a pandemic of monumental gigantic proportions beyond human capacity! Father, You are showing us how vulnerable we are. Truly, Lord, Your servant was absolutely right when he said, behold as for man, his days are as grass, as a flower of the field so he flourishes and the wind passes over it and it is gone and the place thereof remembers it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting to such as keep His covenant and to those who remember His commandments to do them. All flesh is as grass and all the glory of it as the flower of grass. The grass withers, the flower fades but he who does (Your commands) and the glory of God will abide forever. Father, this morning, I pray that every one of us, even as we meditate upon Your Word this morning, I pray Lord Jesus that we will seek not the glory that comes from man or comes from this world, but the glory that comes from You and You alone. Speak to our hearts even as we meditate upon Your Word. Prepare our hearts, O Lord. Let us not be discouraged; let us not be dismayed knowing Father that You are the same God yesterday, today and forever. You will never change. Lord, we put our trust in You. We want to hide ourselves in the covert of Your wings until this plague passes over us, O Lord. We believe, Father, that we all have a purpose. I pray, Father, that we will confess, we will not die but live and proclaim good works of the Lord through our lives and in our lives. I pray, Father, that to that end, You would equip us, anoint us this morning even as we meditate upon Your Word. For in Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.*

Unbelievable things are going on and people are going crazy, especially in India. We know that things are not going to go better. I was listening to news webcast in the morning; this doctor, who came on BBC said, at least 20% of India's population could be affected. We have beds for only 100,000. We are absolutely ill-equipped. We are so vulnerable as men. We think that we can do anything but God is teaching us all through this that we are absolutely nothing without Him. So this morning, we want to understand why these things happen.

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

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

Fierce times – it says in *Matthew 8:28*.

### **Matthew 8:28**

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

Fierce! That's the word! 'Fierce' times will come. Exceedingly fierce, demonic times will come. Demonic will be at the maximum. Demonic activity will be so much! Exceedingly fierce times! That's what it says. *Understand that in the last days, exceedingly fierce times or perilous times or times of incredible stress will come.* That is exactly what is happening all around the world. Times of stress in every sector imaginable! That's what we have been hearing all these last few days. Stress in every front! All human institutions coming to a standstill because they cannot handle anything like this. They haven't handled anything like this before. So, it says, *"Understand this, in the last days, fierce times will come or times of incredible difficulty or stressful times will come."*

We think why stressful times have come is because there is a pandemic or there is famine, there is economic chaos or whatever chaos going on? Is that the reason? Bible says something so unbelievably different. Bible has a different diagnosis as to why this problem has happened. One of the questions I keep asking people: why do people die? Some people say,

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people die because of old age, some people die because of sickness. I say, you are giving me the wrong answer. I never asked you how people die. I asked you- why people die? In *Luke 13*, Jesus says, “Do you think those people who died because of the tower of Siloam were worse sinners than you? I tell you truth, unless you all repent you will likewise perish.” The reason why we die is not because of any other thing but for sin in our lives. God is giving us an analysis as to why these times of stress happen. It is not because of coronavirus. That is the symptom of a deeper problem. Look at what it says in *2 Timothy 3*.

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

***But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: <sup>2</sup>For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,***

That word ‘lovers of themselves’ is very interesting. That is ‘lover of self’. The guy who loves self-autonomy. Autonomous beings! They don’t want to be dependent upon anybody. You ask any man. One of the things they will say- “I want to be autonomous. I want to have the ability to make my own decisions and chart my own course in life.” Liberty and pursuit of happiness! Lovers of autonomy! Self-autonomy! In other words, there are people who do not want to factor in God at all in their lives. That’s what it means.

It’s a very interesting word- ‘phileo autos’ in Greek. ‘Phileo’ means friendly kind of love. ‘Phileo autos’ means the one who loves his self or his autonomy so much, his freedom so much, his independence so much. I have become independent. I want to be independent. “I want to be like the Most High.” That’s exactly what Lucifer said. “You will be like God and you will know what is good and evil.” That is essentially the idea. Why do we have stressful times? It’s because primarily men have become loves of themselves or many people who want independence. They want to have something independent of God. In other words, they do not want to factor in God at all in their lives. That’s what it means. Could this be that we have wanted to live our own lives, we want to be the God of our own lives? Absolutely! Look at what it says in *Psalms 14*. I want you to look at very carefully.

### **Psalms 14:1a**

***The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.”***

The words ‘there is’, if you look in your Bible, it is in italics. What does it mean? It means it is not there in the original translation. Let us remove the words ‘there is’ and read it without it.

***...The fool has said in his heart, “no God.”***

It’s not that we don’t want to acknowledge Him. We acknowledge a higher being; we want to acknowledge spiritual being. Yesterday pastor was talking about being intimate without intimacy. There was one man of God who went to this bookstore in US; a huge, famous, general bookstore ‘Barnes & Noble’ (it is very famous bookstore in US). He was going through this bookstore and he looked at different sections of the bookstore. There was this section on ‘spirituality’ and there were so many modern authors who were saying- ‘how to connect with the higher being’, ‘how to connect with higher spiritual power’, ‘the new age philosophy’, ‘new age ideas’; so many modern authors from different faiths- new age, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and even Islam- so many people talking about how to have this connection with the higher power. That was the ‘spirituality’ section. Then he went to the ‘theology’ section and he found in the theology section, there were not many modern authors. There were the old authors, the puritans- Jonathan Edwards and Spurgeon and all. He looked for any modern authors and there were not many modern authors. Very few of them and when he took their books and just browsed them, he said, “there is no depth at all over here”.

So in the ‘theology’ section, he found not many modern authors but in the ‘spirituality’ section, he found so many modern authors from different backgrounds. When he came out of the bookstore, he had this thought in his mind. Do you know what he said? “Isn’t it interesting people want intimacy without responsibility?” People want it intimate but they do not want intimacy with God. I thought that is the order of the day; that is the spirit of the age. We want to have the pleasures that come with relationships but we don’t want to have responsibilities that come with the relationships. God is saying, “You made a covenant with Me.” We don’t want to factor in God. We want to have a God but a God who is ‘a God of our convenience’.

### **Psalms 14:1**

***The fool has said in his heart, “no God.” They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good.***

The moment you have taken away God from your life, you have become corrupt. *They have done abominable works, there is none who does good.* If you look at the entire chapter! This particular Psalm is repeated twice.

**Psalm 53:1**

***The fool has said in his heart, “no God.”***

Same thing! God says, “This is what I want to do.” It is not that you don’t believe in God; it is not that you are atheist per se. Actually, in fact, in these days, there are very few atheists. The number of people who are atheists are small percentage only. Lot of people believe in God. Especially in India, everybody believes in God. We have a God, but the point is- He is a God of our own convenience. We do not want God to interfere into our lives. It says, the reason why perilous times have come, the fierce demonic activity that is going on all around the world is simply because people love autonomy. If you look at this entire world, nobody has factored in God. What has happened to us? Very few churches are talking. Is this because we have forsaken God?

Do you remember that episode in *2 Kings*, this woman comes and tells the king, “Yesterday we had my son for dinner and she promised that we will have her son for dinner and today she has taken away her son and she has hid her son.” The king is tearing his robes and he says, “it is because of Elisha.” He never says, “it is my problem”. They have never factored in God. They are all people who are self-autonomous. They are autonomous people. They love autonomy. The reason when you see all these things, all this epidemic, one of the things that we need to ask ourselves, “Lord, am I really, really autonomous? Do I depend upon You?” We looked at that. *He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.* “Am I really dependent upon You?” Look at what it says in *John 15*.

**John 15:1-5**

***<sup>1</sup>“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup> Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> 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.***

Have you seen branch bearing fruit of itself? No!

***<sup>5</sup>“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.***

I can do absolutely nothing. Especially if you are a believer, God is going to tear out all your strong areas, what you thought were your strong points and ultimately, He will bring you to a point where you say, “Lord, without You, I can do nothing.” That is exactly what happened to Peter. Peter thought he was an excellent fisherman. He says, “Lord, I messed up. I am not worthy to be a disciple anymore. I go fishing.” All the others say, “We also go with you.” That night they caught nothing. If you are a believer and we are believers and if we haven’t factored in God in our lives, God says, “You can do nothing.” Even if you have accomplished something in your life, that is nothing. That is going to fail you in the day of your calamity.

That is exactly what He tells Jeremiah. “Where are the gods that you put your trust in? Let them deliver you, when the time of calamity has come. You have gone under every green tree and on every mountain, you have played harlot and now when the troubled times have come, you are coming to Me! Where are your gods? Where are all the lords you put your trust in?” Where is your trust in your job? Jobs are not there. I don’t know if jobs can really continue the way things are going on. People are being laid off left, right and center. They say, work from home and after that they will keep you permanently in home because there will be no jobs. It’s actually an incredible act of mercy from God that He has allowed this situation to show us all the other things that we have put our trust in are absolutely useless in the time of crisis; it will not deliver us and only He and He alone can deliver. This is just a parable. The parable is: He says, “I am sending you a physical calamity. If the physical calamity has come and you are not able to handle yourself, if a spiritual calamity comes, where do you have the resources to handle? What I am showing you is only a parable. I am showing you something.”

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I remember March 2011, when tsunami hit Japan. This is another tsunami. That is exactly what one of the doctors on BBC was saying: "This is a tsunami and it's not a physical tsunami; a tsunami that you can't see." At least when see a tsunami coming, what do you do? You run for your life. This doctor was saying, "this is another tsunami, which you can't see; please run for your life, go and hide yourself in your home, don't come out." Japan was hit by the tsunami; the entire homes were washed away, been uprooted from their lands and just been taken away like that. They were one of the top technology countries in the whole world. Top roboticists! In robotic technology, there is none like Japan. With all their technology, they couldn't help themselves. God was teaching us all a parable. All the things that you put your trust in, can it deliver you in the day of calamity? "You do not factor in God (Me) and in My mercy, I allow this to happen hoping that this parable will lead you to search for Me."

#### **Romans 1:21**

***<sup>21</sup> because, although they knew God...***

Do you see that? It is not that they do not know God. They say, "No God! We know God but we want 'no God'. We don't want Him in our lives."

#### **Romans 1:21-22**

***<sup>21</sup> because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup> Professing to be wise, they became fools,***

All conferences are cancelled. The robotics conferences that I used to go, nobody wants to come to those conferences anymore. The top conferences of the world, nobody wants to come. What has happened to your robotics? All the money that you pumped in to all this artificial intelligence! What has happened to you? What can you do? You cannot crack this DNA.

#### **Romans 1:23-24**

***<sup>23</sup> and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.***

***<sup>24</sup> Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonour their bodies among themselves,***

"(If) You do not factor in God, I am going to allow you to have your own way."

#### **Romans 1:25**

***<sup>25</sup> who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.***

What does God do?

#### **Romans 1:26**

***<sup>26</sup> For this reason God gave them up to vile passions...***

#### **Romans 1:28-29**

***<sup>28</sup> And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; <sup>29</sup> being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers,***

You will see the same list mentioned in 2 Timothy 3. Why? It's because people want to become autonomous beings. This is the reason. The lover of self! The people who say, "I want to be in-charge of my life." If you are in-charge, you are headed for big trouble. Let me give you a couple of examples from Scripture how do we as believers take this to heart. Very important that we never put ourselves in this position where God says, "I give you over to your idolatry." That's what it says in Ezekiel. If you come to a prophet with an idol in your heart, I, the Lord will answer you according to the idol in your heart. I would have deceived that prophet. That prophet could be a man of God, notwithstanding the fact, you will still be deceived because I deceived him. Look at couple of examples.

**1 Chronicles 21:1**

***Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel.***

Now let us compare Scripture with Scripture.

**2 Samuel 24:1**

***Again the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah."***

So, Satan withstood and provoked David to number. The anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel. Which is true? Both are true. I will tell you. God said, "I looked at Israel." I don't think that David is sinning over here. This is much, much later after Bathsheba episode. David is a man after God's own heart. He was a righteous king but God was not just looking at the head, He was looking at his people. He looked at the people and He said, "They have a righteous king but how long will you hide under the righteousness of a king? You should have your own righteousness. You fellows are not as righteous as your king." He said, "Okay, fine. What am I going to do? I am going to rouse against (you)." So, God was angry and He allowed Satan. That's the point here.

Let me give another example.

**Deuteronomy 1:21**

***<sup>21</sup> Look, the Lord your God has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as the Lord God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged.'***

This is Moses. He is telling the history of Israel, what had happened to that previous generation. All the generation came until that point in Kadesh Barnea, to that point, where they could see the promised land. All the people came and he said, "Go and possess the land."

**Deuteronomy 1:22-23**

***<sup>22</sup> "And every one of you came near to me and said, 'Let us send men before us, and let them search out the land for us, and bring back word to us of the way by which we should go up, and of the cities into which we shall come.'***

***<sup>23</sup> "The plan pleased me well; so I took twelve of your men, one man from each tribe.***

So, who came? All the men came and said, "Please send. Let us choose twelve men and let us go there."

**Numbers 13:1-2**

***And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a leader among them."***

Which happened first? Think about it. Out of the twelve people, who were the people of faith? Two! Ten were unbelievers. Did not God know that these people were going to bring back a bad report? Did He really want that to happen to His people? No! I don't know. The people came and said, "Let us send out." God said, "Okay. Fine. Go. You don't trust Me, right? Go. You don't want Me. You don't trust Me. You don't want to factor Me in your life." I am telling you something: one of the lessons you need to understand is, *the way of the unfaithful is hard*. It is hard life to live without God. I did not say that. Scripture itself says that.

**Proverbs 13:15**

***<sup>15</sup> Good understanding gains favour, But the way of the unfaithful is hard.***

My dear brothers and sisters, let me tell you. If you do not factor in God, it is hard life. It's tough! God is not there with you. Many people think that Joseph had a hard life. Let me tell you something. God was with Joseph. He was prospering. He had tough life because he had to deal with his flesh but he was comfortable; it was not really difficult for him because God was

with him. If God is there, it doesn't matter how little you have or how difficult the circumstances may be; if God is there on your side, it is not very hard. But on the other hand, you might have everything but not have God; it is hard life. *The way of the unfaithful is hard.* The question is: do we really factor in God in everything that we do? Let me give you another example.

**James 4:13**

**<sup>13</sup> Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit";**

Lot of people thought that they will do it. Let us go to China. Let us go to Vietnam. East is the place, where it is now booming a lot so let us go to all these far east places and make a profit for ourselves. Many are going to and fro. Knowledge has increased. Things have become more and more interconnected. Economies have become interconnected. You can literally sit at home and be a 'Youtuber' and make money. Where is 'YouTube'? It is somewhere in US and you can make money in India. That's how the things have changed.

**James 4:14**

**<sup>14</sup> whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow.**

You have not factored Me.

***For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.***

Have you seen vapour? If you take hot coffee and you see the fumes coming up? Vapour disappears like that.

**Psalms 90:1**

***Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.***

Look at what Moses is saying. "*Lord, You have been our habitation for all generations.* Israel had no identity unless and until we were inside of You. You have been our dwelling place. You have been our habitation." That's what *Psalms 91* says. '*Because you have made the Lord the Most High your habitation!*' Jude will say, *the angels who did not keep their first habitation.* "That was your habitation. That was the place where you were supposed to be successful and it was there in Me." Do you know what Moses says? "*Lord, You have been our habitation for all generations.*" That's exactly what, , you and I, as believers are! In *Ephesians*, it says, "*He has chosen us in Him even before the foundations of the earth were laid.*" He has chosen us in Christ. We were supposed to be found in Him. We were supposed to dwell in Christ. He was supposed to be our dwelling place even before the foundations of the world were laid. And that's exactly what Moses was confessing. He says,

**Psalm 90:1-12**

**<sup>1</sup> Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. <sup>2</sup> Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. <sup>3</sup> You turn man to destruction, And say, "Return, O children of men." <sup>4</sup> For a thousand years in Your sight Are like yesterday when it is past, And like a watch in the night. <sup>5</sup> You carry them away like a flood; They are like a sleep. In the morning they are like grass which grows up: <sup>6</sup> In the morning it flourishes and grows up; In the evening it is cut down and withers.**

He says, "How vulnerable we, as humans, are!" And look at the next verse.

**<sup>7</sup> For we have been consumed by Your anger, And by Your wrath we are terrified. <sup>8</sup> You have set our iniquities before You, Our secret sins in the light of Your countenance. <sup>9</sup> For all our days have passed away in Your wrath; We finish our years like a sigh.**

Everybody sigh! It's over. It's finished.

**<sup>10</sup> The days of our lives are seventy years; And if by reason of strength they are eighty years, Yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; For it is soon cut off, and we fly away. <sup>11</sup> Who knows the power of Your anger? For as the fear of You, so is Your wrath. <sup>12</sup> So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.**

Go back to *James 4:13-17*,

**James 4:13-17**

<sup>13</sup> ***Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit";*** <sup>14</sup> ***whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.*** <sup>15</sup> ***Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."***

Please factor in God in your lives. Have you chosen the will of God in your lives? Do you know the will of God? How will you know the will of God? The first will of God – your sanctification. That you should keep yourself from sexual immorality. That means you should have a life of absolute separation. This is the will of God – to give thanks in Christ Jesus always. And then, you will start proving what is the perfect, acceptable and the perfect will of God. That is the progressive thing. If the Lord wills, we shall be and do this. Lot and Abraham – what an amazing example! "You make the first choice," Abraham says to Lot. You know what Lot should have said? "Uncle, I don't have so much of wisdom. Can you make the choice for me?" What a different life it would have been! "First of all, I don't even want to go away from your presence." Isn't it amazing? There are only two righteous people and who is more righteous than the other? Abraham. And you want to leave the presence of the more righteous man and you think that you would be better. And where are you going? To a more godly place? More anointed place? Think about how people make choices in their lives. They leave a particular place. Nobody's stopping anybody from leaving any particular place. The question is: whenever you are moving from one place to another, are you going to a place which is more anointed, where you sense God's presence more? Think about that. So many people have made choices in all these years. They've come under teaching and they've made their choices. The question they need to ask themselves is: have they made their choice? Have they gone to a better place or have they gone down spiritually? If you are going to a better place, I will be the first person to take you in my car and drop you to that place. We are not going to keep you. We will be happy for you. But the problem is – people don't want to factor in God. They want autonomy. There is no autonomy. Without God, we can do. We are nothing. The way of the unrighteous – even though it feels like it's absolutely good for Lot, he was prospering left, right and centre and there was a warning in his life. The first warning was – when five kings came and they fought with Sodom in their own territory. I told you, right? It's like India going to Australia and beating them in their own backyard; or Australia coming to India and thrashing all our spinners. That's exactly what happened – one Australian team came and thrashed the daylights out of all of us and they won our test series and they went back home. That's exactly what happened to the kings of Sodom – the people from outside came and they beat Sodom in their own land. Why? A lot of people are never used to warfare. What is the iniquity of Sodom? Fullness of bread and abundance of idleness and they have not strengthened the hand of the needy. Where is war over their lives? Where can you handle stressful times when you have not been trained by God? Whereas you have 318 trained soldiers in the household of Abraham, trained by your own household because if you want to be in the Promised Land and if you want to continuously have your dwelling place in the Promised Land, it is warfare and you don't want that. And there was a warning. Abraham, the Hebrew came and rescued you. One man against five kings. Does not *Deuteronomy* say, "Unless the LORD was with them, it was impossible for one man to slay a thousand people"? That means, what? Is the LORD with you? No. Is God with Abraham? Yes. What should be your choice? Leave Sodom and go back with your uncle. But no. Go back to Sodom, continue your life there. Ultimately, everything get destroyed. You know why? Because you have not factored God in your life. You want autonomy. "If I be with Abraham, every day morning, he will say 'prayer'." If you come to GTC, every day, now, we are live streaming and now, nobody can stop you from preaching for more than two hours! Bah! Who can handle this teaching? Factor in God, my dear brothers and sisters. That is autonomy. Lovers of self. People who like your autonomy. Do you like your autonomy? My goodness. If you are a person who likes your autonomy, you are an autonomous robot. The foolish, the most idiotic thing is an autonomous robot. You know that, right? We create robots in our own image. Autonomous robots. Artificial intelligence. Cognitive science. Whatever. Autonomous beings. No, there is no autonomy for us apart from God. No autonomy. That is the reason why Paul tells these people in Greece, "You are "brilliant" philosophers." Dum-dums, in other words, he was thinking in his mind. In Him, we love and move and have our being. What are you talking about autonomous. Autonomy.

**Genesis 11:1-4**

<sup>1</sup> ***Now the whole earth had one language and one speech.*** <sup>2</sup> ***And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there.*** <sup>3</sup> ***Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar.*** <sup>4</sup> ***And they said, "Come, let us build***

***ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."***

And now, you know what people are doing? They wanted to become one. God says, "I will send one virus. I have scattered the whole fellows." Now, confusion everywhere. Nobody come to our country now, please. You know why? Without God, you want to make a name for yourself – one language, one speech.

**Genesis 12:1-3**

***<sup>1</sup> Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup> I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."***

One set of people who said, "We want to make a name for ourselves," and God said, "I will scatter you." You know what God does now? He separates one man out of his kindred and says, "I will make you a name." One people, they want to make a name for themselves; they want to build a city. And God says, "I want to make your name great. And I want to, first, build your family. I want to build your home."

**Genesis 24:1**

***<sup>1</sup> Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things.***

Every area of his life – finances, He blessed. Did he run after finances? Servants? No. Every area of his life, God blessed. You know why? Because there was only one thing that was the most important thing in his life – factoring God in his life, putting God into every decision that he made. Of course, he learnt from his mistakes too. Whenever he made a decision without God, God chastised him but there is one thing in Abraham, you can never, ever remove that from him – a man who always had an altar and who had a connection with God. He factored in God in every area of his life. The first reason why perilous times come is because people are lovers of self or lovers of autonomy.

Second – people are lovers of money. The original KJV uses the word 'covetousness'. Actually, it's 'Phileo' in Greek. Phileo for money. The guys have a friendly relationship with money. He considered it as a friend. Yes, what a friend we have in money. Lovers of money. Let me tell you something – it is not that you are unrighteous with money matters. You could be a righteous man, paying your taxes. You could be paying your taxes. You may be working hard to earn your living. I'm not saying that it is necessary that you are earning money in the wrong way. No. I'm not targeting that kind of an audience, hopefully. You pay your taxes. You earn your money the right way. You are a person who is absolutely straightforward when it comes to how much I owe and how much people owe me – both. Some people know how much people owe them but they forget completely how much they owe people but you are not that kind of a person. You are a person who is righteous in that sense, but there is one problem with you.

**Luke 16:8**

***<sup>8</sup> So the master commended the unjust steward...***

So, you know what the unjust steward said. To give you the story, this steward was unrighteous with money. The master said, "Let me do one thing – I heard that you are unrighteous. I want you to give an account." So, he called all the debtors of the master and he asked, "How much do you owe?" "Hundred." "Write 50. Take a receipt and write 50." "How much do you owe? How many bags of oil?" "Twenty-five bags of oil." "Write ten." And so on. So, he just changed the whole balance sheet. And the master came to know about it and he commended the unjust steward. Why did the unjust steward do this? He said, "To beg, I'm ashamed. To work hard, I can't. But if my master kicks me out, these fellows will accept," and he said, "Because you showed me favor, we will give you some kind of a job and we will treat you." Or maybe, "We will make you our CA because you are fantastic with the accounts." He calculated the whole thing and look at what the master says. The master said, "This unjust steward is fantastic! Brilliant fellow." He is commending him. He is saying, "The unjust steward,"

***...because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.***



### Preparing Spiritually - 3

He is taking the negative parable to teach us, the sons of light, a lesson. He is saying, "It is just not that you should be righteous with money matters but how much of your money have you invested into the Kingdom of God?"

That is the reason why Paul says to the,

#### **2 Corinthians 8:1-5**

***<sup>1</sup> Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: <sup>2</sup> that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty...***

Great affliction.

***...abounded in the riches of their liberality. <sup>3</sup> For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, <sup>4</sup> imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. <sup>5</sup> And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.***

You know what he is saying? These Macedonians, you think they had no financial issues in their lives? They had incredible financial issues. But you know what? They had learnt the lesson of Isaac. You know what the lesson of Isaac was? The lesson of Isaac was – in famine, you sow. That was just a parable. But how do we, in the Church, apply that parable because in famine, we give. We don't hoard. Why? Because we know that God is no man's debtor – first thing. Second, He says, "If you give to Me, you are actually giving a credit. I will pay you back in interest." People think that we are idiots when we give to God. "How can you give like that?" "You don't know re." You don't know the Mathematics that I have in my mind. I'm actually more smarter than you. It is not because I'm better than you, I'm more liberal than you that I have a noble heart than you; I have a calculative mind than you. I know that when I give to God, it is going to come back to me in a different way altogether. And you know what? I may not need money but I might need grace to overcome sin. Yes, I may need money too and God will come through. And what am I doing? I'm storing for myself riches in Heaven. What are the riches in Heaven? It is not moth. It is holes. I'm investing in the people of God, in the Kingdom of God. I'm interested in the Kingdom of God. Let's go back to *Luke 16*. Look at what it says,

#### **Luke 16:10-15**

***<sup>10</sup> He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.***

Now, what is the 'least' being referred to over here? Money. And He says,

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

Let's go on.

***<sup>14</sup> Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money...***

You know the Pharisee of Pharisees, Paul. If you want to know the epitome of a Pharisee, the highest form of a Pharisee, look at Paul. Righteous according to the law, blameless. That is a Pharisee. Even Luke's Gospel, even the tithe, he will tithe the mint and cumin and everything. That means he is very good with his accounts. He is absolutely righteous but the problem is this – you are a lover of money.

***...also heard all these things, and they derided Him. <sup>15</sup> And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.***

It's a very important thing for God.

**Hebrews 13:5-6**

***<sup>5</sup> Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." <sup>6</sup> So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"***

That means – I don't have to justify. I don't have to act before man. I don't have to pretend before man. And everything that God gives me, the world can call me foolish but I will invest into the Kingdom of God. You know why? When I do it; just like the unjust steward was invited into the people whom he helped, those people, when I go into the everlasting dwelling places, I will have a rich welcome. Look at what it says in *2 Peter 1:10-11*,

**2 Peter 1:10-11**

***<sup>10</sup> Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; <sup>11</sup> for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.***

Completely free from righteousness. And therefore, how do we, as believers, work? That's very important that we are not lovers of money; that we are not working for money. We are working so that we can be a blessing. Look at what it says in *Ephesians 4:28-29*.

**Ephesians 4:28-29**

***<sup>28</sup> Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good...***

Not what is evil. Don't own a liquor shop, in other words. Because I know believers who own liquor shops and they also do cottage meetings during Lent. It's really interesting. We had Lent season when we had one of the elders in our Church; I don't want to mention his name. He came to our place for cottage meeting and then, we were singing all those, "Andhra Christula Keerthanalu." We went crazy with all the Lental spirit in our minds and in our hearts, so to speak. That man was saying, "Your sons sing those songs so well. And my father asked, "Okay, brother. What do you do?" He said, "I'm into the liquor business." I said, "Oh, you can be into the liquor business and also be an elder!" "Oh, I do my liquor business very faithfully. I pay my excess duties and my customs and my taxes and spoil people's lives also." What is good,

***...that he may have something to give him who has need. <sup>29</sup> Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth...***

Stop there. You see that? The whole idea is to be a blessing; not be a lover of money. Therefore, why do we have perilous times? First thing – people love autonomy.

Second – people love money. They love money because they love autonomy. Simple. You understand that? They want to be autonomous beings and only one thing which can give autonomy in this world is money. "Mere paas gaadi hain, bank balance hain, sab kuch hain. Tere paas kya hein?" ("I have a car, a bank balance and everything. What do you have?") "Mere paas Yeshu hain." ("I have Jesus.") You see that? That's the first thing. The first two things that we look at.

The third thing is the Word. People are proud. The word 'proud' here in this particular place, it's a very interesting word. It actually means – empty people acting as if they have everything. That's what it means. Empty people acting as if they have everything. Let us put two translations. Look at what it says. Let us read it together.

**Proverbs 13:7 English Standard Version (ESV)**

***<sup>7</sup> One pretends to be rich, yet has nothing; another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth.***

Wow! What a proverb!

***<sup>7</sup> One pretends to be rich, yet has nothing; another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth.***

You know what God is actually saying? I will put these two together,

**Proverbs 13:7 King James Version (KJV)**

***<sup>7</sup> There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.***

Now, tell me – who is the one who made himself poor? On the other hand, there was one guy who made himself rich. You know what God says? “That is pretense.” That’s actually pretense. In fact, he comes to you and he says, “You have become poor because you have given so much away to the Kingdom of God. Your current situation is still a pretense. Do you know that? Rich man and Lazarus. Rich man is feeding himself sumptuously from his table and Lazarus is waiting as the garbage collector. The person who is going to collect all the garbage and throw it out. Think about this – Lazarus never begged though. I don’t think he begged. And the other thing – he didn’t even have anybody to comfort him. The dogs used to come and lick his wounds. He had a friend called Tommy. “Tommy, come here and lick this wound a little.” Just imagine that. But he had God. Think about it. You know what God was telling even Lazarus? “Lazarus, you think that this is your real thing? No, this is just a pretense. You might have become like this because you have given away everything for the Lord.” And nobody is coming. Possibly, like Job. Full boils all over your body and you have to use that scrapper to scrap all your wounds. Somebody would come and say, “Curse God and die.” But you say, “No.” It’s a pretense. You made yourself rich but you are pretending. You are nothing, actually. Look at what it says about this great man called Solomon. *Ecclesiastes 1:12-18*. This guy made himself something.

**Ecclesiastes 1:12-17**

***<sup>12</sup>I, the Preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup>And I set my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven; this burdensome task God has given to the sons of man, by which they may be exercised. <sup>14</sup>I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and indeed, all is vanity and grasping for the wind. <sup>15</sup>What is crooked cannot be made straight, And what is lacking cannot be numbered. <sup>16</sup>I communed with my heart, saying, “Look, I have attained greatness, and have gained more wisdom...***

“I have made myself rich!”

***...than all who were before me in Jerusalem. My heart has understood great wisdom and knowledge.” <sup>17</sup>And I set my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is grasping for the wind.***

It’s absolutely empty. You know why? One guy who makes himself poor yet has great wealth and great riches. On the other hand, there is another person who makes himself rich but has nothing. Question to all of us: do we have this desire, this lust? You know what Jeremiah tells Baruch? “Do you aspire to make great things for yourself? Please, no. Don’t seek after them. Sorry. Great things for yourself.” Remain a simple humble fellow. This should be your principle. *Proverbs 30*. I love this. One of those famous proverbs of Agur.

**Proverbs 30:7-9**

***<sup>7</sup>Two things I request of You (Deprive me not before I die): <sup>8</sup>Remove falsehood and lies far from me;***

First thing he says, “Break away all which is vanity from my life. Remove them.” And the only way you can remove falsehood from your life is by coming under teaching.

***...Give me neither poverty nor riches— Feed me with the food allotted to me;***

There is a specific food that is allotted to you. Even though there is a spread like Sister Apu is making for all of us. What a spread she made for all of us! There is a food which is allotted for you. So, yesterday, I had a fantastic meal and I said, “My stomach is full but my heart is not full.” So, there is a food which is allotted you. Don’t eat more than that. Okay, move on.

***<sup>9</sup>Lest I be full and deny You, And say, “Who is the Lord?” Or lest I be poor and steal, And profane the name of my God.***

Let this be our prayer. Empty if we try to make ourselves rich.

So many things we can look at. But I want to look at another thing. Let’s go to,

**2 Timothy 3:2**

**<sup>2</sup> For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,**

I just want to look at this one – blasphemers. Turn to *2 Peter 2:11-12*. So many things we looked at. I'm just touching on a few things.

**2 Peter 2:11-12**

**<sup>11</sup> whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.**

**<sup>12</sup> But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption**

That is what it means to be a blasphemer. You know what it means? I'll tell you what it means. You don't understand the demonic at all. You'll always be looking for natural solutions for your problems. You don't understand that there are spiritual implications to problems although there are many problems which are natural. You don't understand that there is an incredible demonic conspiracy behind everything. You don't factor in the spiritual. So many things we can say but if you look at this entire episode that Paul is talking about, he puts two things in the beginning and two things at last and in between there are all these other characteristics. Two things first, you're a lover of self and lover of money. How does it end?

**2 Timothy 3:3-4**

**<sup>3</sup> unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, <sup>4</sup> traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,**

First, they are lovers of self. Second, they are lovers of money. Third thing: they are lovers of pleasure. You see, that is the incredible depravity of the human heart that even calamities will not change you. I was listening to this man of God who was talking about Eli Wiesel. Eli Wiesel was one of the holocaust survivors who was invited to the state of the union address when President Trump or some other president was giving the state of the address. He was one of the holocaust survivors, a Jew from Poland. So, the Nazis were invading one city after another, one country after another, and they wanted to exterminate the Jews and wanted to send them to concentration camps. And there was this final stronghold of the Jews. They have destroyed all the Jews in all the other places and apparently where Eli Wiesel was from was the last. So, the Jews in that place said, "It's not going to happen to us. It happened to the Jews in Germany." It's like "It happened to the people in China. Corona virus came to the people in China. We are in a hot country. It'll not happen to us. It happened in Europe, because Europe had close relationships with China. It's not going to come to us." Jews are like Indians, perennial optimists. It's not going to come to us until Hitler was losing the war, but he had this one demonic agenda. He wanted to exterminate the Jews. And the last stronghold if you will be the Jewish stronghold in Poland. And they said, "It's not going to come to us, until the soldiers invaded Poland." And that day they took all the Jews, they came to Eli Wiesel's hometown. They captured all of them. And some of the people took away some of their clothing and gold and they dug up their backyards thinking and hoping that they'll come back to their homes and get the gold back from those places. They hid all those things hoping that they would come back. They didn't understand and realize that it was the last journey. And they were put in this train which was going to Auschwitz, packed with all kinds of people, children, women, youngsters, old people. All Jews packed and being sent on their last journey to Auschwitz. And Eli Wiesel was possibly a teenager those days. And there were human feces all around, stench and cold. Absolutely, it was one of the most horrifying and traumatic experiences for him as a child. And he says, "People were going to their deaths and teenagers and youngsters were fornicating right in public, because they wanted to get the last experience of pleasure before they die." It's stunning! Last experience of pleasure. You know that's exactly what Corona virus is doing now. What are people doing? Okay fine. I have all the supplies for one month. I may die, I don't know. I'll die watching Netflix and I'll not die seeking God. Netflix subscriptions have skyrocketed. Wow! Look at people! They are not going, it this not a parable for all of us? Why have perilous times come? Simply because God is saying, "You are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." Pleasure is your God. Entertainment is your God. That is the reason why I like the pulpit in our church. We have refused to entertain people. It's not that we were pleasure-killers. No. We were challenging you to find pleasure in God, because at His right hand are pleasures forevermore. Think about it! The kind of interchanges we have as brothers. What fun we have as brothers discussing about God! What edifying conversations we have! As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones in whom is all my delight. Don't we say that? You want to be with God's people. I was glad, very glad when they said, "Let us go to the house of God." Jerusalem-- that is where my heart is! That is the place where

protection is and that is the place that I truly enjoy God! Look at what it says in 2 *Corinthians* 8:1-2. I want to show you something very interesting.

**2 Corinthians 8:1-2**

**<sup>1</sup>Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: <sup>2</sup>that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality.**

They had joy in the time of affliction. What kind of pleasure was that? That is pleasure. That is joy. We sing that song: the joy that I have the world didn't give it to me. Really? Do you enjoy God? Pleasure madness, entertainment madness. Viler and viler. Look at the number of movies on Netflix, garbage from the pits of hell. They can just while away your time. You can be watching the last moment and die of an earthquake; twenty-five movies before I die. Bucket list they call it. Number of movies I should watch before I kick the bucket. Why? Lovers of pleasure that lovers of God. Why are these things happening? Simply because God is showing us. Have you seen the number of subscriptions for internet increasing? People watching movies on Prime Video and Netflix. Don't you see? Don't you see? This is exactly why I have sent you this pandemic to show you in your heart that your lovers of pleasure, that you want to die in the pandemic with Netflix in your ICU on the television there. I don't know why they put television in the ICU. Just before you die, watch this movie. "Look and live" God says. "Watch and die" the world says. Lovers of pleasures than lovers of God. This is a challenge for all of us as Christians that we should show the world, boy! Loving God is more pleasurable! What are you talking about your movie? Your movie which is going to make you feel empty by the end of the day. My God is also going to make me feel empty, but He will fill me and make space and fill me more. That is my God. Because He has set eternity in my heart. It brings us here! It's a challenge for all of us.

**Hebrews 11:24-27**

**<sup>24</sup>By faith Moses, when he became of age...**

I hope we are people who have come of age, my dear brothers and sisters. And I hope by the time this pandemic goes we are all people who have come of age. What is the meaning of come of age? Beta banda ban gaya (Child has become a man), in other words.

***...refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, (Why?)<sup>25</sup> choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God( You know why? He also had the Macedonian affliction, great affliction but tremendous joy.) than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,(you know what he said? Choosing affliction is fantastic. You don't know. You come and enjoy.)<sup>26</sup> esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures <sup>in</sup> Egypt; for he looked to the reward. <sup>27</sup> By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.***

Paul is saying, "I have become an ambassador in chains." I mean, he's looking at it in a completely different perspective. People are chained to me. Only two things can happen. That moment they can enter into eternity with God or they're going to hell. Extremely fertile man in terms of spiritual progeny. Onesimus was sent to prison. Bad for him or good for him, we don't know. Immediately, he becomes a believer. Simple. You are chained with Paul, boss, something is going to happen to you. He's getting excited! Boy! I'm going to take this fellow into eternity with me. I want to enjoy this guy with me, in eternity and all my life. That is pleasure! That is joy! Pleasure forevermore at His right hand. We are at His right hand. Don't be like Reuben who lost his right as firstborn. Why did he lose his rights as firstborn? There was a tremendous problem with Reuben. What was the problem? First thing: pleasure, lust of the world, lust of the eyes and the pride of life. What is the lust of the flesh? He slept with his father's concubine. Pleasure! Second: lust of the eyes. This place, this side of Jordan, what does it have? It has grass, good for my cattle. My ministries are called grass ministries. That's what one man of God said, "Gaddi (grass) ministries." It's very good for me. We don't want to come over to the other side. Please spare us. Fighting and war and this thing about promised land, no. No. No. We'll do one thing. We'll fight and we'll come back here. Our heart is here, not in the promised land. We will give our tithes and offerings, but leaves us alone please. Lust of the flesh, slept with his father's concubine. Second, lust of the eyes: he looked at all this land and those are the first people who get affected. You read the Chronicles, not of Narnia, but of the Kings of Israel. The first people to get attacked were the Reubenites, the Gadites and half the tribe of Manasseh. We don't want anything of the other side. We've had enough of this promised land. Our people will go, because you are causing a headache and if we don't go it'll be a sin and our sin will be found out. Okay. Okay. We'll go. We'll fight, but our heart is here. Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and what is the last one? Pride of life. What is pride of life? I'll tell you. Korah, Dathan and Abiram, they were from which tribe? Reuben. O, you think you are the only

person who is holy? I learned this from my ex-professor. The problem with Reuben is this: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life. And what happened? Enoch and Elijah were the only people who were taken up to heaven alive. These will be the only people who will be taken down to hell alive. The earth opened up and swallowed them. Taken down to hell alive. Lovers of pleasure than lovers of God. So what should we do therefore? What should be our attitude in order to prepare ourselves during this incredible time of crisis that the world is facing? What should be our attitude as a church. *2 Timothy 3* itself will give us the solution. This is fantastic!

### **2 Timothy 3:10-11**

***<sup>10</sup> But you have carefully followed my doctrine...***

Doctrine is also called teaching. What does Jerusalem mean? Teaching of peace. Have you seen my teaching? Paul is telling Timothy. Have you meditated how I taught you, from house to house, with tears and line upon line, have you read? In other words, he's telling, have you read my letter to the Romans? I hope you read it, the Galatians, the Thessalonians? I think the parchments are with you right? Please bring them when you come to visit me in the prison. I think all the copies are with you. You have taken from my library. Bring it back. You've carefully followed my teaching. That is the reason why we're coming here.

***...manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance,<sup>11</sup> persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me.***

Why are we coming here for teaching? Because we don't want to be like the rest of the world. We're spending time, notwithstanding the fact that we're very few in number. As a church, I don't know how many people are really interested. Think about it. I'm not boasting about our church. How many churches really think that teaching is the need of the hour? Exhortation is the need of the hour? You've carefully followed my teaching. *Romans 6:17* actually verse 17 is one of my favourite verses.

### **Romans 6:17**

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

That is exactly what pouring the oil and the wine means. What does it mean? Wine stands for antiseptic. All scripture is breathed of God and it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof (Reproof means, it burns. When you take antiseptic does it not burn? Absolutely burns. Thank God it burns. That is how healing comes into our lives.), for correction, for instruction in righteousness so that a man of God can be thoroughly equipped for every good work lacking nothing. That is the reason why we're being taught, because teaching has the power. You see, the living word of God has got the ability if you really believe and accept it in faith, it has got the ability to work in your life because you believe. It brings power of God into your life. That is the tremendous thing about the word of God. You come and sit under anointed teaching, it will transform your life without you even realizing and recognizing of the fact. It's an organic process that happens, just simply by coming out of teaching. And then, let's go back to,

### **2 Timothy 3:10**

***<sup>10</sup> But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance,***

After doctrine, it is manner of life. See, it's not manner of life first. It is doctrine first. Doctrine inspires life. As a body without spirit is dead, so is faith without works. That is the life which is encourage, which is exhorted, which is empowered by the doctrine. A doctrine inspires a life. Follow my doctrine, my manner of life and then purpose. Wow! People, do we have purpose? That's exactly what pastor was talking about. People, if we really think we have purpose, even if this epidemic comes the purpose of God will be established in our life. It'll be only for the advancement of God's purpose in our life. During this pandemic, we can shut ourselves in with God and we can renew our mind and we can recognize and know our purpose and so many people who do not know, believers don't know their purpose. They're still wandering in I don't know what. What is sin? Missing the mark. A lot of believers are not living unrighteous lives. They're possibly living righteous lives but there is no aim in their life. Their life is sin, because it is missing the mark, God's mark for them. There's no purpose. And then faith! That is the reason why we need to follow people of faith. And they are always a minority. Out of the six hundred thousand

men who were ready for battle who came out of Egypt, only one person had faith and two people had the faith to follow the guy who had faith. Faith is always a minority. For all of us we need to understand. Longsuffering, how do you learn longsuffering? By suffering long. That is the reason why long hours of teaching. Why? They're teaching us to suffer long. Long obedience in a single direction. That is the purpose in life, you know the direction in which you're supposed to go. You might be making a lot of mistakes along the path but that is focus. And that cannot be moved. You know what is happening? God is allowing situations to distract you, but He's also aligning you back into the path. I know it's painful, but you do not know the end of it. It's something else. It's the crown of righteousness waiting for us.

Next is steadfastness.

### **2 Thessalonians 3:5**

**<sup>5</sup> Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience (other translations will use the word steadfastness) of Christ.**

You know why longsuffering is important? Because character is being built. Tribulations works patience, patience perseverance, perseverance proven character, proven character hope and hope does not disappoint for the love of God is being shed abroad. What is the hope of glory? Christ in us, the hope of glory. The character of Christ. I like that old proverb my parents used to say, "If wealth is lost, nothing is lost. If health is lost, something is lost. If character is lost, everything is lost." And if the character of Christ is not formed in you, what is your hope? Let's go back. Then love and perseverance. Something about Paul, this guy if he had his mind on something you can't change him. It's done (ayipoyindi inka adi). Full of kasi. For people who don't understand that language, he's like bent upon it to achieve it. No matter what, he'll achieve it. He will persevere till he finds it. Most of the Jewish people are like that actually. Albert Einstein, you know what he said? The definition of a genius: 99% perspiration, 1% inspiration. That is genius. Otherwise an unrewarded genius is almost a proverb, for those who got it. Because a lot of people are very intelligent, but they're not geniuses. Why? Because they cannot focus on something for long periods of time. That is one of the things we teach in our school. Boy, sit in that place and work. *I know everything*. I know that you know everything. *I can grasp things very fast*. I know that too. You can also forget things very fast. In a way, because you don't have the perseverance. Then, you know what he says,

### **2 Timothy 3:11**

**<sup>11</sup> persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me.**

Yes, all those who desire to live godly lives in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. That is what we pursue. We understand what is happening in this world. We understand that it is a parable that is teaching all of us, a deeper truth, a deeper truth that we're all lovers of self, that we're all lovers of money because we like autonomy, that we're lovers of pleasure and not lovers of God. And in between, ingratitude, disobedient to parents is a result of all this, unthankful, why are people unthankful? Because they are lovers of self. They think people exist to serve them. All these things. Perilous times have come because God is showing something deeper in our hearts. What will we do today? Like God said, "I have lead you through the wilderness. I have suffered you to hunger to show you what is in your hearts." First thing that happens after they have is incredible victory in the Red Sea. After three days journey, there's no water. What is God exposing? Bitterness. He says, "Look at the bitterness in your heart. Unforgiving spirit is there." That is the reason for three days I allowed you to thirst. The physical suffering to show you a deeper, spiritual truth of your own self – bitterness. Second: He causes them to hunger. What did God say? And that place was called Massah and Meribah. You know what Massah and Meribah means? Argument and contention. I wanted to show you your argumentative spirit and your contentious attitude that you will never submit and therefore I caused you to hunger. A physical suffering to show you a deeper spiritual truth inside of your heart to show the reality of your heart. And God is allowing all this to show the reality of our heart whether we will spend time with God and say, "Lord, this time I want to really enjoy your presence. I want to really know what it is to have the pleasure of seeking You. I'm afflicting myself. I'm humbling myself with fasting and prayer to actually, really enjoy your presence." There is always a direct correlation between your stomach and revelation. If your stomach is full revelation is empty. Stomach is empty, revelation is full. It's amazing! What a tremendous inverse relation! Inverse proportionality. All mathematics, right? What equations we have! For forty years non-stop I've been eating, so it is good for me to sometimes fast. God says, "This is the time for you to fast and seek My face." Let the Lord impress the word upon your heart.

Pastor James:

Hallelujah! Thank you, pastor Vijay. And all those who are watching online, we will be back at 7:30 in the evening. We'll have the evening session. Honestly, I pray to God by the time this quarantine is over, the church will emerge really stronger, because actually only the church knows how to spend time. Others waste time. We redeem time. And God has called us to redeem time for the days are evil. The system has worked it out perfectly. God is over the system and He's allowed us to be quarantined. Stay in your homes. Spend time with God and fast. At least one meal a day, fast. It becomes a discipline. One of the good things of fasting as a lifestyle is your stomach actually shrinks. So, over a period of time you don't eat too much. And that's also a contribution to poverty in the world, what you don't eat others will get to eat. Let the church be known for this. I think if you have a stomach that can handle food in eternity, God will allow you to eat till it comes from your nostrils. He says, "Eat. You fasted during your life on earth. Now eat to your heart's content here." Nobody will be sick. Nobody will be obese. There will be no sickness there. Don't worry about pleasures. There are pleasures at His right hand forevermore. I don't know what it is. We don't even know what it is. So, make use of this time. GTC honestly, I'm looking forward to April. When we come through this phase we come out spiritually cleaner and spiritually stronger, spiritually well connected and spiritually more prepared for the next year of the church, because by the time the virus is over it will be May when it is contained. And June we begin our new year as a church. We would have truly risen and started building. As we close, once again we come back online by 7:30 and we will do it every day. We don't know how curfew will go on. But we are here and we will try to be with you online to encourage you and around the world whoever is watching the word, be prepared. And let me tell you if you are not part of GTC and you're not logging in and watching, you may find the word very difficult. Especially pastor Vijay's word because you wouldn't even know that these many scriptures are there in the Bible. People are not familiar with their bibles, I'm talking about Christians. Sadly, they are not familiar with the Bible. That's why I don't even let him (pastor Vijay) preach at the Pastors conference, because I know the pastors won't understand him honestly. I know they don't know their scripture. People do not know their God and one thing of God which you and I have is His word. And people are trying to know God outside of the word. His revelation of Himself is there in the word. That's not the full revelation. That will be in eternity. But what we need to know in this life is contained in the pages of the Bible and sadly we are a generation who do not know their word. Make use of time at home to read. I'm not saying that you should become a teacher of the word. But when we teach you at least the scripture should be familiar. Now God has put teachers in the body of Christ to teach, but everyone should be a student and few teachers. But students should know their textbook like if you go to school and you never read your textbook, whatever the subject is, when the teacher comes and teaches, you struggle to understand because you don't know your text. So, Christians should know their text that is the Bible. Know your text and when you know your text and when we as teachers come and teach. The difference between pastor Vijay and I is that I try to make it very, very simple, because unlike him when I as a teacher in the world began I began at school. He began with engineering graduates. So, God humbled him and gave him GTLC. That is kindergarten, because the kingdom of God is filled with everything from kindergarten to Ph.Ds. and we should be able to ultimately teach everybody. But when we come into the body of Christ and we teach at a time like this, you cannot give milk. Because milk will not sustain you through a pandemic. You need meat. So, make use of these ten days, twelve days, 2 months, to know your word. So that you will know your God better. Otherwise you'll get deceived by the revelation of a God who is outside the word which does not happen. One of the dangers of Pentecostalism is lives of people are not built on the word, but built on prophecies of man and experiences of man. People will come and talk about all kinds of experiences and prophecies, much of it is in the flesh. I don't deny Pentecostalism because I am one, but much of it is outside the word. And people get so confused and at a time like this what happens in huge big mainline milk Pentecostal churches is, they're not looking for the word, they're looking for a prophecy to come through. They're not sustained by the word. They are sustained by the prophecies of man. We are sustained by the word of God. A prophecy should confirm the word of God. So, as we close. let's pray once again.

### **Closing Prayer:**

*Father, we just come to You this afternoon, we thank You for this day. Thank You for giving us this place, this opportunity. Thank You that the video, the sound system, everything is working well today. Thank You. Thank You. Thank You, Lord. I surrender all those who are watching and all those who will watch and hear in the days to come, commit them all into Your hands, O Lord. I pray as we minister everyday it will cause a hunger that is different. Not a hunger for the world, but a hunger for the word, a hunger for the God of this word, a hunger for You, Lord. It will cause a hunger, true spiritual hunger in everybody's life and everybody's heart, so that we would open our mouths wide and that you would fill it up with good things, that You Yourself will satisfy our hunger. Because when You cause the people to hunger, they hungered for many things, but You only gave them manna. When they complained, You gave them meat. They died with meat in their mouth. Those who ate manna, scripture says, "There was none weak among them or ill among them or feeble among them." When angels fed Elijah,*



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*he walked for forty days. Two meals and forty days. This pandemic may last forty days, but we are fed on your word and we will walk. We will not walk down. We will walk up. We will not go down, but we will go up to meet our God and we will hear from Him. And when we leave from Him, we will leave with a renewed purpose. And Elijah departed from the presence of God from mount Horeb. He had purpose, clear for the next ten or twelve years and he raised up another leader and another generation would know God. And I pray Lord, when this is over the church would arise with renewed strength, renewed purpose, absolute clarity in their mind, 2020 vision, the purpose of God would define the lives of people that they would know what they're called to do. Each one would take their place, God appointed place in the body of Christ. Thank You. Thank You, Father. Be with us through this day. Through this day, Lord, we need You more than ever before. We confess that without You we are nothing and we cannot do anything but through Christ Jesus we can do all things. All things that You require us to do, we can do, Lord. So, we just thank You, we just praise You, we just worship You. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.*

#### **Benediction:**

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