

Father in heaven, we just thank You, Lord for this day. Thank You, Father, for Your goodness, for Your mercy, for Your kindness in our lives. We just worship You, Father. We give You glory. We give You honor. Father, even as the days go by, even as we are here in Your presence and we continue to meditate on Your Word, Father, I pray, Lord, that these days will not just be acquiring knowledge but Lord, that Your life, Father, will be made manifest in us, O Lord, even as we receive and accept Your Word by faith. For You said, O Lord, Your words are spirit and life, that Your Word is living. This morning, Father, I pray that You, O Lord, would speak to our hearts once again. Let faith arise. Empower us, exhort us, rebuke us, chastise us, Father; challenge us, equip us and strengthen us. For there is no other strength we have, Father, apart from feeding on Your Word. It is Your Word that makes us strong. Man shall not live by bread alone but by every living word that comes from the mouth of God. This morning, I pray, O Lord, Father, we will partake of life from Your throne. Therefore, speak to our hearts. Strengthen us and let faith arise. Father, fill us with Your Spirit even as we by faith listen to Your Word. We thank You. We praise You. For in Jesus' Name, Amen.

This morning, once again, we go back to the study of God's Word. So, we are here in the midst of a pandemic, outbreak, on a rampage across the nations and even in our own country. The news gets more and more grim as everyday progresses. So much of uncertainty, so many doubts, so many questions, so many false alarms, so much of fear! But we as God's people, God has spoken to us through His Word and He has told us that *He has not given us a spirit of fear but of power, of love and of self-control or sound mind*. So, this morning, we will not fear but it is only the Word of God, which strengthens us, empowers us and emboldens us. Therefore, we will go back to the Word of God because His Word says that *His Word is forever settled in heavens. He is the same God yesterday, today and forever*. Therefore, this morning, let us continue to be in that attitude.

We heard the message last night. The question is, we might have enjoyed it, we might have even understood it, but has it become a part of us? At least, we in our Church have heard parts of that message so many times. We say, "Yes, that is familiar to me!" It is very easy for us to say, "That is familiar to me. I understand that." But did we really make it a part of us? Has it become a pattern in our own lives? Isn't it interesting David says in *1 Chronicles 14* (he admonishes the Levites saying), "When we brought the Ark for the first time, we did not do it according to the Word; we didn't do it according to God's order"? It is very interesting, right? There is an order in the Kingdom of God. God is a God of order, not of confusion. There is absolutely no confusion with God. Very important for us to understand that God is a God of order! Therefore, every message that we hear and we continue to hear these coming days that God has given us in such awesome ways, let us just not hear, let us just not enjoy, let us not just appreciate, but let us ask God that let it become a part of me (us). Then of course, we are looking at so many patterns in the Old Testament. So, the Scripture that I want to look at first this morning is—

1 Corinthians 10:11-12

¹¹ Now all these things happened to them as examples,

This particular passage in *1 Corinthians 10* is talking about the children of Israel in the wilderness. It's talking about their wilderness journeys and Paul is summarizing the wilderness journeys in a spiritual order. Of course, we are not going into that order today, but there is a spiritual order.

¹¹ Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Now, it's very interesting that the children of Israel escaped the plagues in Egypt, at least, after the third plague, we know that (after the plague of the frogs, from the plague of flies until the plague of the firstborn), God makes a distinction between Israel and Egypt. The children of Israel enjoyed a particular protection. They are saved from the plagues of Egypt. They are saved by God from the plagues of Egypt and then He brings them to 'Marah' and He says, "*If you follow My precepts, none of the plagues that I have caused the Egyptians to be plagued with, I will cause them to come on you. For I am the God who heals you.*" That's what He tells them. But ironically, you will see that every time they rebel in the wilderness, God sends plague and destroys them. It's remarkable that God, who saved them from plagues in the land of Egypt, brings them into the

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wilderness and destroys them again with plagues. We are putting all these in context because this is the time we have to study on plagues in the Bible. Therefore, it says,

¹¹ Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Jude also will say, “God, having saved His people from Egypt, destroyed them in the wilderness.” Remarkable! *He is the same God – yesterday, today and forever.* God has saved us from sin. God has to save us from Himself, too. It’s very important for us to understand that. We don’t take any of these things lightly.

Do you know what the word ‘admonition’ means? It means ‘cautionary warning’. If you don’t follow this trajectory, there is trouble ahead of you. Be very careful! ‘Cautionary warning’ – that’s what it means. Admonition or exhortation- it essentially means cautionary warning or stern warning.

¹¹ Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. ¹² Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

So, we are all vulnerable. Whenever you read these passages in the Bible, you should not think that we are exempt from it, especially people who preach the Word and also people who listen to anointed Word. Every time you read the Word, listen to the Word and you get new revelation, you understand new truth and you are given a new truth, your responsibility only increases day by day. He who knew the master’s will and did not do it, he was beaten by more stripes and who did not know was beaten by less stripes. So, it is better and safer to know very less. It’s more dangerous to know a lot and not do it. So, the responsibility keeps on increasing. Therefore, we understood there is one attitude that we should always continue to remain in is what we call as ‘attitude of humility’. We understood that yesterday. *Therefore, God gives grace to the humble but He resists the proud.* He is against the proud but *He gives grace to the humble.* So, this morning, let us turn to another verse.

Titus 2:11 (NIV)

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. ¹² It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions,

What does the grace of God do? It teaches us. One of the things that we know that we have understood the grace of God and that we have appropriated the grace of God is what we call as we have a ‘teachable spirit’. We are teachable. We are malleable. We can be molded. Our thoughts and our imaginations can be aligned or can be molded. That’s very, very important thing that we have sensitivity towards spiritual things.

Titus 2:11-13 (NIV)

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. ¹² It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions,

It teaches us to say ‘no’ to certain things.

...and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

So, while we are waiting, what is the grace of God doing? *It is teaching us to say ‘no’ to ungodliness and worldly passions and it is also teaching us to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives.* That is what the grace of God is doing. Hopefully if we are teachable, it teaches us to say ‘no’. For us to say ‘no’, we need to know what is ungodly and what is worldly. Another thing, yesterday we looked at this also.

Hebrews 12:28

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.

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First thing is you need to 'serve God acceptably'. It is not just important to serve God. "Oh! I am just serving God!" That's exactly what David thought. "I am serving God! I am worshiping God!" 'Serving God' and 'worshiping God', we know they are used interchangeably in the Bible, at least in the Old Covenant. It comes from the same Hebrew word 'abad'. Serving God is not important; serving God 'acceptably' is important. That means according to the pattern that He has shown, we have to serve Him. That is acceptable. That is the reason why it says in Romans 12, *be transformed by the renewing of your mind, don't be conformed to the pattern of the world.*

There is a pattern in the world; that is a Philistine pattern! We looked at that last time that is to bring the ark on a cart. That is not God's order. The world may do it. Just because the people in the world have done it, it doesn't mean we should appropriate that. There is this particular order for God's children. God already punished the Philistines, right? Remember? God punished the Philistines because of placing the ark in their temple. Then what happens? The Philistines are plagued. They say, "We need to send back this ark to Israel. How do we do it?" So they put it in a cart and they sent it. They say, "If the cows do not look back and go straight into the Israel territory, then that means God has done it. God of Israel is angry with us and if it is going straight, that means He has forgiven us." What happens? It goes straight to Israel territory. But you know what, how the ark has to be carried has not been given to the Philistines! Do you understand? How the ark has been carried has been given to the Church, to Israel. So God does not punish them for taking the ark the way they actually took it. He doesn't say, "It is written in the law." They don't know the law. But when the Israelites do it, He kills close to 50,000 men. 50,000 men are dead because they are supposed to know and they do not know it. God says, "Sorry, you are My people. I am going to be more severe on you."

That is the reason why God is severe with His people. The more you know about God, the more tough He will judge us. Therefore, let us serve God acceptably and second, He says, with reverence or with modesty. In other words, like Pastor says, modesty means- don't attract attention to yourself. How do we serve God? Acceptably means according to pattern that He has shown and secondly, we serve God with modesty means we don't attract attention to ourselves. "See, how much I am doing for the Lord!" No! Modesty! Nobody even knew. For example, Jesus used to come, He used to heal the people and He would just disappear, nobody would know.

"Who healed you?"

"I don't know."

He comes to the pool at Bethesda, He heals that guy, nobody knows. He just disappears from there.

"Who healed you?"

"I don't know."

He would never ever attract attention to Himself. Amazing, isn't it? Modesty! That is the reason why it says, *there was no beauty in Him that we should desire Him*- it says in *Isaiah 53*. Very, very unassuming guy! It's very difficult to find people even in Christendom. They may be serving God acceptably, but do they serve with modesty?

1 Timothy 2:9

⁹in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing,

'Modest apparel'- that is what the word for reverence means. Don't attract attention to yourself. Like Pastor was saying, don't attract, don't distract and give God only the complete attention. Very important for us to understand! Therefore, 'acceptably'- there is a pattern God has given us. Second, with modesty - don't attract attention to yourself. Don't say, "I am doing it." No glory! Jesus refused to take glory.

John 7:17-18

¹⁷If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority. ¹⁸He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.

He is not seeking His glory; He is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him. By whom are we sent? We are sent by Jesus. Therefore, whose glory do we seek for? We seek for His glory. That is the reason why this modesty is important. What does modesty mean? You are not attracting attention to you meaning you always want to seek the glory of God. Like Pastor says, there is an order in the Church. 'Acceptably' means order and order brings glory to God. Why? For a man to prophesy and

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preach in the Church, he should have his head uncovered because his head is Christ so that when he preaches or prophecies, the glory belongs to Christ. That means he is under the headship of Christ. When woman preaches or prophecies, she has to have her head covered because her glory is man and man should not get the glory. Therefore, when she covers her head, she still brings glory to Christ because she is reflecting all the glory (attention) from herself to God. Therefore, order is not to bring attention to yourself, but attention to God.

If anyone wills to do His will, then he will know whether I speak the true or I speak the false. How do I know that my will is to do His will? When I do not seek my glory but I seek the glory of the One who has sent me. Therefore, this is something, which all of us need to ask and pray, “Lord, give me the grace that I will have the attitude” because drawing attention to ourselves is one of the very, very dangerous things. It is there now; of course, in this generation, everybody has a blog, everybody has an opinion and everybody wants to be liked or not liked (not liked- I don’t think anybody). How many likes do I have? How many views? These are all numbers. Like for example, Pastor was saying yesterday, ‘numbers’ is a big thing. We are all statistics people. My father used to say, “all stats lie.” There is an element of truth but most of it is speculation.

First thing, serve Him acceptably, second- serve Him reverently and third- serve Him with godly fear or what we call ‘circumspectly’. Serve Him acceptably, serve Him modestly and serve Him circumspectly. Meaning, don’t be too sure. Be very, very careful when you go into the presence of God. That is the reason why it says in *1 Timothy*, a guy who has been called to be an elder in the Church should not be a recent convert otherwise he will fall into snare of the devil. He will be puffed up with pride and he will fall into snare of the devil. Do you know why? It’s because he thinks he knows everything. There is no circumspection in his life. Circumspection means ‘very clear’. There is always an element of ‘don’t be too sure’ because this is an attitude we keep on practicing and unfortunately so many young people are so flippant with their mouth when they do worship. They speak anything that comes to their mind. Be very, very careful. So, three things – acceptably, reverently and circumspectly. Why?

Hebrews 12:29

²⁹ For our God is a consuming fire.

In order to serve God acceptably, reverently or modestly and circumspectly, what should we have? We should have ‘grace’. We should have an attitude of humility. We should have grace. That is the reason why *God gives grace to the humble but He resists the proud*.

So, this morning, we are understanding ways as to how we have grace so we can serve God acceptably, reverently and circumspectly.

Let’s turn to *Numbers 25* for our meditation.

Numbers 25:1

Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab.

Let me put this into perspective. Very recently, two things happened with the children of Israel. First thing, they fought a war with Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan. They asked God to give them victory and God gave them a tremendous victory. They tasted victory. Second thing, after they defeated Sihon and Og, they captured their territory and the Reubenites and Gadites and half the tribe of Manasseh are really enamoured by the land they saw. They had lot of flock, lot of things and they already made up their mind, “this is going to be our place”; they wanted to settle down there. Be very careful. Then to add to that, oblivious to them when they settled down in that place in Shittim, Balak sends for Balaam. Balak sends for Balaam and he says, “curse Israel for me.” Let’s look at *Numbers 22:5-7*.

Numbers 22:5-7

⁵ Then he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which is near the River in the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying: “Look, a people has come from Egypt. See, they cover the face of the earth, and are settling next to me! ⁶ Therefore please come at once, curse this people for me, for they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land,

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So the whole idea is – “I know that this war is not physical. This war is spiritual. Use your divinations. Curse this people for me. Perhaps I will be able to defeat them.”

...for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed.”⁷ So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the diviner’s fee in their hand, and they came to Balaam and spoke to him the words of Balak.

So the elders of Moab go and they bribe Balaam. That is the context in which this is happening. Now you know when Balaam comes and he is opening his mouth in different, different points of view. He goes to this part of the mountain to see if he can find anything in Israel or Jacob. “I cannot find any iniquity in Jacob. There cannot be any divination against the children of God.” The satan is trying his level best to use witchcraft and sorcery and all kinds of things to bring defeat into the children of Israel, but it’s not possible.

I remember I heard a preacher, long time back. There was a guide, who took him to ‘Golconda Fort’. How many of you have been to ‘Golconda Fort’? The fort is constructed in a way that is impregnable fort. It is supposed to be. Guide starts saying, “The walls are so thick. These are impregnable walls. The fort is so huge. In order to communicate, you have to clap. Then the people there will hear and you can warn of the enemy coming. Because your vantage point is so high, you always have an advantageous position to defeat the enemy. It is an impregnable wall. You can do all. Every plot, every plan or military strategy to bring this fort down will not come to pass.” So this is the tour guide, who is going crazy. Then one of the people (I think the pastor) said, “who is guarding?” “The sentries are guarding.”

“What if I bribe the sentry?”

What happens if you bribe the sentry? You remember the ‘Trojan horse’? Troy is impregnable. So what did they do? They used deception. What happens? They bring the Trojan horse and they break the defences from inside and then the curse of God comes. The plague comes! The enemy is trying his level best to do it. But do you know what he says? One strategy I can always try with God’s people is deception. Bribe!

Numbers 25:1

Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab.

What does it mean by ‘Israel remained there’?

Numbers 9:16-17

¹⁶ So it was always: the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night. ¹⁷ Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, after that the children of Israel would journey; and in the place where the cloud settled, there the children of Israel would pitch their tents.

So, whenever the cloud was removed, they would move and whenever the cloud remained, they would stay. Now here, what does it mean by ‘they remained’? The cloud stayed. God has allowed them to be here. Whenever you are at rest, particularly after a war that you have won, you have to be very careful because you are in a very, very fertile ground for deception. That is the reason why *‘take heed lest ye fall’*. *If you think you are standing, take heed lest you fall*. Don’t become proud. Don’t look at your former successes. Former successes only gives you history with God in terms of faith, that is, God’s work in your life to have good and strong relationship with Him. That does not mean that you are better in your flesh. No! You are vulnerable. That is the reason why Paul says- *forgetting my past, I press on toward the upward calling*. What does it mean? Past failures and past successes! It is easy to forget past failures. What about past successes? Are they easy to forget? No. Somehow you know they are there in the trophy compartment. So, you should be very carefully. So, God is allowing, that means the presence of God is there and God is saying, “Let me see I gave them victory. This fellow comes and tries to do all kinds of enchantments and they are obviously oblivious to it, but at least we know.” Because these things are written for us. So there is victory and the enemy is trying to use witchcraft against the Church, that’s not happening. And God says, “Now I’m going to test my people by staying there. Let’s see whether rest will take their minds off me or will they keep their focus on Me?” That’s exactly what God has given us. He’s remained. He’s literally covered us from all directions and He’s given us some kind of rest in other words. There is no pressure to go and do work and stuff for so many people. Work from home or

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take it easy for children. And now in this kind of a set up what will you do? Will you breach the wall or will you remain? So, if the enemy can't try to defeat you through witchcraft, he will defeat you with your own sin. The epistle of James,

James 1:13-16

¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

Where is the problem? Desire is the problem. And then, next verse?

¹⁵ Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. ¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

Don't break the hedge by yourself. God removing the hedge is one thing. You removing it by your own foolishness is another thing. So, let's go back now.

So, what the enemy could not do, we ourselves can do by our own sin for the enemy. We can achieve it for the enemy, by sin. That is the reason why sin is deceitful. 'Deceitfulness of sin', says the book of Hebrews. Lest you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. *Hebrews chapter 3*. You don't have to turn there. Sin is always crouching at the door. You know the meaning of crouching, right? I'm not there, that's what crouching means. The animal instinct. How does the lion hunt its prey? I'm not there. You can enjoy. You can come out. You can come away from your group, like you know the herd. They are waiting for that one particular animal which will stray from the herd. And the moment it strays from the herd, the protection is gone and it can pounce on it. So how does it make it stray from the herd? It hides in the bushes and slowly with its hunger, the animal goes away and away and away and it becomes prey. That's the reason why God tells Cain, "Sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is to have you, but you should master it." See, that is dangerous. See, what the enemy cannot do, you can do it for the enemy. Sometimes, it's so easy for the lions to catch prey. They just stay. This fellow comes and comes and slowly and they just stay there. They have the ability to stay still. And this animal comes in close proximity and within seconds the lion pounces out and catches and it's gone. Be sober and be vigilant. Your adversary, the devil. Sin is crouching at the door, be careful. Let's go back now.

Numbers 25:1

¹ Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. ² They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods.

How did this happen? They invited. It always begins with an invitation. So many people get trapped because of an invitation. Lot of people who did not know about movies, got trapped by the invitation from their friends. Nowadays sending invites is so easy. WhatsApp invite. Invitations are very easy these days. Those days the woman had to come, dress beautifully, put all kinds of makeup, and entice. Now invitations are so easy. Very important for us to understand. So, it starts with a, what? Invitation! And it seems very harmless. Harmless invitation. That is how sin looks like. Sin entices and then it destroys. But when it entices it says, "Ah! It's nothing. nothing is going to happen. Nothing! nothing! one puff, what will happen? One puff. You'll feel like a man." And after several puffs, you'll know like a dead man.

Numbers 25:2

² They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods.

You know how it happened? They bring an invitation to sacrifice and people begin to bow down. It brings with an invitation to something and it leads to bondage. Invitation looks harmless and now we're bound by it. We can't even come out of it. So many young people were invited by something, a party by their friends. "Arey! There's a party today." Most of the times it is success party. You should see success parties and because you had success you think you are justified in indulging in some sin. Isn't it true? Whenever you succeed in something, let me just enjoy myself. After all, I'm successful now. I deserve this. That is when you have to be very careful, because your success has justified your enticement to sin. Be very careful. I deserve it. It starts with an invitation and it ends with you bowing down to their idols and to their gods.

Numbers 25:3

³ *So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel.*

You remember last night? Last night pastor was saying: 2 Samuel 24:1, Let's put these two together.

2 Samuel 24:1

¹ *Again the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah."*

Now, what has happened? The anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel because they succumbed to an invitation and now they have bowed down to their gods. That is the reason why Paul tells in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 verse 18 onwards.

1 Corinthians 10:18-20

¹⁸ *Observe Israel after the flesh...*

He's alluding to this incident in the history of the flesh.

...Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? ¹⁹ What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? ²⁰ Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.

That's exactly what we were looking at yesterday also in the morning. What agreement has the temple of God with idols? And the next verse:

1 Corinthians 10:21-22

²¹ *You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. ²² Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?*

Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Do you think God is winking at it? James chapter 4: that's the reason why friendship with the world is enmity with God. That is invitation. Friendship means? Oh, it's only friendship. But you don't understand that friendship with the world is enmity with God. You cannot have anything with the world. We just go into the world, but we are not of the world. We go into the world so that we can bring people out of the world so that they can become a part of us. That's the reason why scripture says in James 4, you can turn there actually.

James 4:4-5

⁴ *Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵ Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?*

Don't try to provoke Him. The anger of the Lord was provoked against Israel. He says, "You are Mine, Israel and I'm jealous for you." It's like He has a relationship, a husband and a wife relationship. If the husband is trying to be friendly with another person even if the husband is not trying to be friendly, if the other person is trying to give attention to the husband, the wife gets really upset. And it's good. That is the reason why serve God acceptably, reverently or modestly, and circumspectly. Modestly means when you try to attract attention to yourself, be careful. That may not be your intention, but be careful. That is what walking circumspectly means, that you will never allow any other thing even by mistake to come in between your relationship with God and you. Just like the husband and a wife, guard that relationship. Be very sensitive about it. Who's that person? Why are you getting all these WhatsApp messages from that person? She's just my sister. Ah! Really? That is how it starts with a sister in the Lord. I know youth meetings. She's my sister. Very careful. So, let's go back to Numbers 25 now. Look at how it permeates now. The anger of the Lord was aroused. Let's look at what it says.

Numbers 25:4

⁴ *Then the Lord said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of the people and hang the offenders before the Lord, out in the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may turn away from Israel."*

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You see God, you don't play with sin. God is really serious about sin. That is the reason why it says in *1 Thessalonians 5:22*; I said circumspectly right? Look at what it says. It's a small verse, but very powerful.

1 Thessalonians 5:22

²² Abstain from every form of evil.

Abstain from every appearance, it says in other translations, appearance of evil. That is the reason why the lips of an adulteress are like honeycomb it says, but it is like wormwood and sharper than a two-edged sword. You know what wormwood is right? Sharper but it is like honey. It looks like honey, but it is evil.

I remember David Wilkerson, in one of his sermons, said, "You look at that girl there. You think she's very beautiful and she's attractive and she's also appears godly, but don't you know that behind that lovely handsome beautiful face is hiding a sinister face of the devil. Don't bow down to those idols." It starts with an invitation. Take all the leaders of the people and hang the offenders out in the sun. You know what hanging means? Cursed is the man who hangs on the tree. That means, you have invited the curse of God. What Balaam and Balak could not do, because of your sin you have brought upon yourself the curse of God. So that the fierce anger of the Lord may turn away from Israel. God is jealous. So what is He doing? Take the leadership and deal with the leadership. Therefore, the leaders have to be very careful. Who should be very careful? The leaders have to be very careful. But you see even as we go back to,

Numbers 25:5-6

⁵ So Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Every one of you kill his men who were joined to Baal of Peor."

God and do this. So how they do it is very interesting.

⁶ And indeed, one of the children of Israel came and presented to his brethren a Midianite woman in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel...

I mean, this is crazy. One of the brothers came and introduced this lady to one of his brothers. I mean, it's amazing!

...who were weeping at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

Romans 14:15-16

¹⁵ Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil;

Let me tell you what it means. Sometimes, in leadership, you may have, movies may not affect you. But some younger brother may be struggling with it. Jesus could be tempted. He was tempted in every point, but He did not sin.

Go to *John 17:17-19*. Look at what it says.

John 17:17-19.

¹⁷ Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

Who is Jesus? He is the author and the perfecter. He is the captain of our salvation. He is our leader. Look at how our leader behaves.

¹⁸ As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

That is the reason why Paul says in *1 Thessalonians 1*, he says, "You became followers of us and the followers of the Lord, because we were so set apart to God." Turn to *1 Thessalonians*.

1 Thessalonians 1:6-9

⁶ And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit ⁷ so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.

See how it starts. You became followers of us. You became followers of the Lord and,

⁸ For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. ⁹ For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God

You see what has happened? How did you become imitators of us? You turned from your idols and started serving the living God and you, he's telling us all of us as brothers in the Church who are the elder brothers, people when they look at you they should turn from their idols, whatever is causing them to stumble because an idol is something which causes you to stumble, they should look at you and turn from their idols. But you should not be the person who is introducing an idol to a weaker brother. You understood what I'm saying. This brother comes and presents this madam. Just in your conversation. In your conversation, I saw that movie. It could be a good movie, but in that movie, there could be some garbage and nowadays I'm becoming more and more conscious now. I don't want to talk about anything. I keep telling people, once you're a pastor. You're a pastor. The whole world will know you somewhere. They will find you somewhere or the other. I was in WonderLa in the swimming pool. It was amazing! I was at WonderLa in the pool with my daughters and I was playing with them and I went into the waters and I swam and I hit somebody. He got up and said, "Praise the Lord, pastor!" I said, "Who's that fellow!" Who's that fellow in swimming pool in WonderLa. "Pastor, you remember? You came to our Church in Warangal for our youth meeting." I said, "Yeah! Yeah!" O Lord! Think about it. Be very careful. I mean, I could imagine all other possible scenarios when this brother could have said, "Hello pastor!". At the box office in Imax, "Hi Pastor! Which movie?" Just imagine! You even unknowingly, may be that movie may be for your relaxation and that movie may not affect you, but like Jesus sanctified. You know what, Jesus said no to so many things for the sake of his disciples. He set himself apart for His disciples, because He was strong and they were weak. But He would not give a small occasion in his life for them to stumble and yet sinners would flock around Him and yet He would be the most holy man. What an amazing combination!

Matthew 18:5-9

⁵ Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me. ⁶ "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. ⁷ Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come...

It's not that temptations will not come, but you should not be the reason for the temptation to come.

...but woe to that man by whom the offense comes! ⁸ "If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you...

If your eye causes you to watch a movie, cut it out. Now you cannot cut out your eye, therefore cut off the internet basically. That's the idea.

It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. ⁹ And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.

I come from a movie background. Every time I go past Tivoli, my wife looks at me like that, because we take that path to so many places. And she says, "Okay Vijay. What's going on? Don't even look at the posters. First thing you'll get tempted. Second thing: I tell Abigail and Emmanuella not to look at the pastors that are stuck on the main road and if they see their father doing it, you'll become a cause for stumbling." Don't introduce! What did you do? Introduction hua bhai! Aise hi hota introduction! (Introduction happens that way.) How does one get introduced at the home? Dad is having whiskey. "Come, son! Have a small sip." Invitation! And that invitation will prove incredibly costly. How many of us were destroyed because of invitations? We know that, right? So, should we invite? No. *1 Corinthians 5:1-2*; what does it say?

1 Corinthians 5:1-2

¹*It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife!* ²*And you are* (What? Proud!) *puffed up*, (That's exactly what has happened. This fellow has introduced. Elders are mourning, but you are not,) *and have not rather mourned that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.*

What a tremendous responsibility! For we, as a Church, when we have a next generation coming up, they see two things: they see the seriousness in us as far as ministry is concerned. They also see the joy in us. They should not say, "Arey! Ministry and following Jesus is such a boring thing! Look at brother Vijay, always like this." "Why?" "He's serving God." "But he's very holy." Nonsense! If holiness is that, then I don't want to have anything to do with it. We had Deepak and his wife Devi, they came to me and they wanted to discuss about the Gospel. So, I was giving them the gospel and you know one thing he said, "Pastor! You're always laughing and joyous!" See, we have to be serious in ministry. We have to be serious in our work with God. It does not mean we have to be boring. We have to be interesting people. People should see the joy in our lives. The Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, non-stop; it is righteousness, peace and joy. And your joy should be evident, my dear brothers and sisters. So that you'll attract people to the God you serve. What kind of a God you serve that you always seem to have joy! And what happened? You have puffed and have not rather mourned that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. Don't you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump, he goes on to say. "Hand over this fellow to satan," he says, "that his flesh may be destroyed but his spirit may be saved." Thank God! If the Church were to exercise that kind of authority and seriousness against sin, how different we would have been! And because we have not dealt with sin with such a tremendous force, what we are inviting is a plague into our lives. This plague is just a parable. It's only a physical thing.

Let's go back to,

Numbers 25:6

⁶*And indeed, one of the children of Israel came and presented to his brethren a Midianite woman...*

Look at that guy. He has the audacity to sin in front, that means, I have seen this, the modern-day generation have no respect for godly people, especially spiritual leaders. That is the sin of Reuben, my dear brothers and sisters. Reuben had three problems. Lust of the flesh: he slept with his father's concubine. Lust of the eyes: this land is full of grass, we want to stay here. Pride of life: Korah, Dathan and Abiram, who were Dathan and Abiram? They were Reubenites. Think about it. Moses says, "Come to us." You know what they say? "We don't want to come." They summoned Dathan and Abiram. Dathan and Abiram said, "We don't want to come. Who are you to call us?" The spirit where you do not respect your spiritual authority. There is no reverence for spiritual authority. There's a flippancy. You have to serve God acceptably, modestly, circumspectly. In the sight of the congregation, blatancy of sin! And the problem is – we have a Moses and Moses is like, h doesn't know what to do.

...in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

And Moses is like, "What do I do with this guy?" But then, thank God for Phinehas. You know what the word 'Phinehas' means? Mouth of brass. What does 'mouth of brass' means? Brass is the sound of judgment. It's a symbol of judgment. A guy who lives constantly by judging his words that come out of his mouth. You, be very careful what comes out of your mouth. Because what comes out of your mouth, comes from, where? Your heart! That is the reason why it says in *James 3*, "If any man is able to bridle his tongue, he is able to judge his mouth," because we offend a lot of people with the words that we speak but this is Phinehas, who has a mouth of brass. Not the other Phinehas, thankfully, whom we talked about last night. A mouth of brass. That's the reason whenever I see Phinehas, in my school, I say, "Phinehas! Which Phinehas? Son of Eli or son of Eliazer? Which one?" Eliazer is, what? The picture of the Holy Spirit. Eliazer married a woman whose name is not mentioned. Her father's name is mentioned. She is called the daughter of Pethuel. What does 'Pethuel' mean? The one who is afflicted by God. Who is the one who is afflicted by God? Jesus! Picture of the Word of God. Eliazer is the picture of the Holy Spirit. And Phinehas, man who is born of the Word of God and of the Holy Spirit. And what does he have? A mouth which is the mouth of brass. If you read the Word with those kinds of microscopic eyes and you see each word and you see tremendous lessons that we can learn. And if you are born of the Word and born of the Holy Spirit, what are you supposed

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to have? A mouth of brass. Yes. It means – an attitude which is constantly judging sin in his heart. You know why? Because we want to worship God, serve God acceptably, modestly and circumspectly. So, what does he do?

Numbers 25:7-9

⁷Now when Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it...

First thing, he sees it. You know, whenever I read the word ‘see’, it’s very important how we see things. We need to have biblical vision. It says, Paul, when he was waiting in Athens for his disciples to come, remember? He saw that the city was holy, given to idolatry and his spirit was stirred. Peter says, on the other hand, “On the last days, people will have eyes full of adultery.” How do you see – with adulterous eyes or with the vision of God that stirs your spirit? It’s very important for us to understand. He saw. And after he saw, what does it say?

...he rose...

He took action. It’s very important. What accompanies the word ‘arose’?

...from among the congregation...

That means everybody in the congregation is sitting and they are mourning, “What to do with this?” They were emotional. Even Moses is not knowing what to do. And this fellow, he gets up. Question is: what do people around you; they could be brothers but they may not have the strength to stand up for truth. Notwithstanding that, will you still be able to stand up for truth? Daniel was in Babylon. So many Jewish people went with Daniel to Babylon. Everybody was served food from the king’s table but one arose.

...from among the congregation...

That is what God is saying. “I look for one man so that I can stay this plague from among a compromised Church or a Church which is, now, compromised.” A leader may not be compromised but he doesn’t know what to do now. Or maybe, he wants to do something but maybe this was Phinehas’ time. I remember. This is not a story. It’s possibly a true example because I heard it from another man of God. Now, there was this man of God in Hyderabad, very well known man of God. He was given the gift of deliverance. This guy, wherever he goes and he starts praying, demons will start manifesting and his presence would be sufficient for demons to just run away from that place. He had that gift. Lay hands and deliverance will take place. Very famous. And then, one day, one of his congregation member brought another brother who was really struggling with demonic oppression and he said, “Ayyagaru, please pray for this guy, my friend. He is really struggling with demonic oppression. Can you just pray for him and deliver him? Do something.” He said, “I don’t deliver. God delivers.” But he knew that he had the gift of deliverance. So, he was thinking, just by looking at him, maybe, the demon will start manifesting. But it didn’t manifest. So, he said, “Okay, fine. Let’s lay hands on this brother and let us pray.” He laid hands on that brother and he is praying and praying. Nothing is happening. Then, he says, “Oh, my goodness. Nothing is happening. Maybe this is a very tough, difficult demon.” Then, you know what happens? He calls all the members of his congregation and he says, “Hold your hands. Let’s just lay hands on this brother. You all hold your hands and pray for me so that God will deliver this brother.” So, everybody is holding hands, everybody is watching Pastor. They all know that Pastor has got the gift of deliverance and he is holding, laying his hands on this guy and he is praying and praying. Nothing is happening. That guy is just the same. The Pastor is so frustrated. He actually gets so frustrated that he says, “Lord, what is going on? I’m being embarrassed before my congregation.” And he goes back home and he fasts and prays. “Lord, what did I do? Is there sin in my life? I don’t know. To the best of my knowledge, I have not sinned against You. Lord, what is it?” He was fasting and fasting. At the end of the fast, God tells him, “There’s a small boy in your Church whom I have also gifted with the gift of deliverance. Call him and pray for him and this deliverance will take place.” The Pastor was shocked first and then, he is happy. Sometimes, we might be in the congregation and are faithful. Elders, God may not choose the elder to bring deliverance but God is possibly waiting for one guy. Here, in this case, Moses didn’t move. From among the congregation, one guy got up and he did something. What did he do?

...and took a javelin in his hand;

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This is what we call as – ruthless action towards sin. You don't pamper it. I like this next generation. This is the second generation. Phinehas is going to be, now, the priest. Eliazer is going to be the priest in the *Book of Joshua* and at the end of *Judges*, do you know who will be the priest? Phinehas will be the priest. The next generation. He is what we call as the 'desert baby', born in the desert. Possibly, not born in the desert but below the age of 20. Not judged in the desert for sure. Part of Eliazer. Eliazer's generation. Eliazer's next generation. So, maybe, he was born in the desert. So, this is a desert baby and he is absolutely ruthless about sin. So, what is he going to do? He's not going to be like Moses. "Aiyo, Father. Please forgive my sister for rebelling." I don't know. No. This guy is going to take action but this guy is going to take action in a fantastic way. What is he going to do? He's going to take a sphere, a javelin in his hand and what does he do? He goes after the man of Israel into his tent.

⁸ and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her body...

And what happens immediately? The plague stops.

...So the plague was stopped among the children of Israel.

Maybe, this is something which we all have to do. Take the javelin, whatever that javelin is, of course, our weapons are not carnal in the New Testament but mighty in God to the pulling down of strongholds. So, what should we do? We should kill the sin and the reason for the sin. Like Pastor was saying – lying could be a sin but fear could be the reason. Stealing could be a sin but covetousness could be the reason. Or covetousness could be the sin and fear could be the reason. What is the fear? "If I don't hoard up, what will happen to me in the future?" Deal with both lie and the reason for the lie.

...So the plague was stopped among the children of Israel. ⁹ And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand.

Not men; people. So, how did he do this? What did he do? What did Phinehas do? Whom did he kill?

Numbers 25:14

¹⁴ Now the name of the Israelite who was killed, who was killed with the Midianite woman, was Zimri the son of Salu, a leader of a father's house among the Simeonites. ¹⁵ And the name of the Midianite woman who was killed was Cozbi...

Whenever names are given, you should be very careful. He could have just said, "The person who is killed is one Israelite person and one Midianite lady." But names are given. So, when names are given, lessons are also given. So, Zimri was the person who was killed, of the tribe of Simeon and the name of the Midianite woman was Cozbi.

the daughter of Zur; he was head of the people of a father's house in Midian.

So, the leader of the father's house in Midian, her daughter, her name is Cozbi, lying with a man called Zimri, who was the son of Salu, of the tribe of Simeon. So many details are given but we look at three names. Whom did he kill? Zimri. Whom did he, again, kill? Cozbi. Turn to *Numbers 31:7-8*,

Numbers 31:7-8

⁷ And they warred against the Midianites, just as the Lord commanded Moses, and they killed all the males. ⁸ They killed the kings of Midian with the rest of those who were killed—Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian. Balaam the son of Beor they also killed with the sword.

Now, go back to *Numbers 25*. So, they killed Zimri. They killed Cozbi. Two people were killed. First person who was killed was Zimri. The second person who was killed was Cozbi. That is what is happening over here with the sphere. With the sphere, what is he doing? He is killing Zimri and he is killing Cozbi. Now, very interesting. What is the word 'Zimri' mean? My music. Not music; my music. Those days, "Aap ki parmayish." "Naa ishtam" "My wish, my music." That's what Pastor was saying – you take care of music, you take care of a generation. Music has got such a tremendous power on a generation, my dear brothers and sisters. It's really powerful. Songs, how do they move us, right? How songs move us! Especially when we sing songs which are really meaningful, "Alas, did my Saviour bleed and did my Sovereign die? Would He devote His sacred head

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for such a worm as I? Was it for crimes that I have done, Christ hung upon a tree? Amazing pity and grace unknown and love beyond degree. At the Cross, at the Cross, where I first saw the light and all the burdens of my heart were rolled away. It was there, by faith, I received my sight and now, I'm happy all the way." These are all powerful words. "And can it be, that I should gain, an interest of the Saviour's blood? Died He, for me, who caused this pain, and for me to whom the death pursued. Amazing grace, how can it be, that Thou my God shouldst die for me?" This music really moves us, right? It really penetrates. Music has got that power to penetrate, especially words put to music. That is the reason why whenever you see a Psalm, "*To be sung on a particular tone with a stringed instrument.*" Sometimes, stringed instruments, especially on a guitar. Both of these are stringed instruments, by the way. Guitar and the piano, am I right? Both are stringed instruments. They have, the piano, especially. They've got the richness and when you see someone playing on the piano and you play the guitar, you play this real anointed music, it's got the ability to penetrate into the spirits of the people. See, music is a fantastic gift. "Sing unto the Lord a new song." Write new songs. Also, sing old songs. One of the most powerful song which I like – "When I survey the wondrous Cross." What lyrics, boss! "When I survey the wondrous Cross on which the Prince of Glory died. My richest gain, I count but lost and pour contempt on all my pride. Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ, my Lord. All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to His Blood. See from His head, His hands, His feet. Sorrow and love flow mingled down. Did e'er such love and sorrow meet? Nor thorns compose so rich a crown. Were the whole realm of nature mine were an offering far too small; love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all." Kya bhaat hain! And if that particular is put to music? "To Thee, great God, of love I bow and prostrate in Thy sight adore. I have but still, I ask for more... ..if I cannot see Thy face and live, then let me see Thy face and die." Boy! You see that? Amazing. All those lyrics by John Wesley and all these people. "O for thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise. The glory of my God and King and the powers of His grace." You see, music, words, put to music, anointed music has got a tremendous power to influence, provided music is empowered by truth. Music should be empowered by truth. Music should not empower truth; truth should empower music. People just start a tune. Now, try to write the lyrics, they say. Those days, first the lyrics were written and then, the tune was given. Now, we will call Taman and what's his name? Devishree Prasad. "First, give me the tune. After that, we will write the lyrics." First comes the tune and then, comes the lyrics. It's a dangerous order. Zimri means – My Music. What is empowering your music? You know what Cozbi means? My Lie. Cozbi means 'my lie'. What is empowering my music? My lie. What is empowering my truth? A lie. Do you understand? So, what is Phinehas doing? He's not just looking at the music; he is taking a sphere and he is saying, "That music, ungodly music. It might sound good. It might sound nice. It might sound emotional. It might sound so many things but it is empowered by a lie and I'm going to slaughter both." Have we invited a plague into many Churches because music has taken over the Word? Sometimes, I feel the stage time for the worship leader is equal to the stage time for the Pastor who is preaching the Word. Half an hour worship, half an hour Word. Now, the stage time for the worship leader is greater than the stage time for the Word. 45 minutes music, 15 minutes word. "No, brothers. They don't have the attention span. Many will fall asleep. Baba, let them fall asleep and die. Resurrect them and continue preaching. So, what is Phinehas doing? He is taking a sphere and he is saying, "That music is coming from the pits of hell, it's an absolute lie and I'm going to destroy both the music and the lie." Where there is no reverence. There's so much of music and there are so many things of such beautiful tunes. Sometimes, when I choose certain songs in the Pastors' Conference, I try to go back to my old Andhra Christuva keerthanalu. But some Pastors say, "Ayyagaru, naku ardam kaadhu, ayyagaru. We don't understand those things. Kotha paata padandi. Sing new songs." So, that song, "Aaradhana Yesu neeke." That is the only refrain in the whole thing. One refrain, one stanza. If you see the Andhra Christuva keerthanalu, there are stanzas after stanzas that they have written. And for truth, sometimes, if I have to preach in Telugu, if I get the opportunity to preach in Telugu, I'm going to take that text from some of the old hymns that our fathers taught us. The lyrics, the words, the anointing, the message. What took second space was the tune. What took primary stage was the Word. Now, if you take the order away, what you get is deception and plagues. "Hold me close. Let Your love surround me." We become so emotional and everyone tries to hold close but they are never holding close to Jesus; they are clinging to Baal Peor. They have joined themselves to Baal Peor and they are thinking that they are joined to Yahweh. And what is empowering them is music. Empowered by what? Lies. So, what does he do? Do we have the eyes of Phinehas? In order to have the eyes of Phinehas, what should we have? The mouth of Phinehas. See, that is the reason why – *be slow to speak, quick to hear and slow to anger for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness that God demands.* Now, turn to *Psalm 106:28-31,*

Psalm 106:28-31

²⁸ They joined themselves also to Baal of Peor, And ate sacrifices made to the dead. ²⁹ Thus they provoked Him to anger with their deeds, And the plague broke out among them. ³⁰ Then Phinehas stood up and intervened...

How did he intervene? He intervened by taking a sphere and killing the music and the lie. That is how he intervened.

And the plague was stopped. ³¹ And that was accounted to him for righteousness To all generations forevermore.

What did I say? I said – in order to have the eyes of Phinehas, you should have the mouth of Phinehas. In order to have the mouth of Phinehas, you have to have the attitude of slow to speak, quick to hear, slow to get angry. *For the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness that God requires.* Now, here, was Phinehas angry? Yes. But did his wrath produce the righteousness of God? It says in,

³¹ And that was accounted to him for righteousness To all generations forevermore.

Do you understand, everybody? I like that. My music and my lie have to be destroyed. And for that, we need the mouth of Phinehas. And in order to have the mouth of Phinehas, we should have that attitude of Phinehas – *slow to speak, quick to hear and slow to get angry. Be angry but sin not.* Right? But whenever you get angry, let it be the anger of God.

Now, let's go to *Numbers 25:10-13*. Look at what it says,

Numbers 25:10-12

¹⁰ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ¹¹ "Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned back My wrath from the children of Israel...

So, like Pastor was saying – this plague is from God. But will God find a priesthood of Phinehas in this generation? Because we are all a royal priesthood.

...because he was zealous with My zeal among them, so that I did not consume the children of Israel in My zeal.

It is not important you for you to be zealous; you need to have the zeal of God.

¹² Therefore say, 'Behold, I give to him My covenant of peace;

Do we have the zeal of God? How do we have the zeal of God?

Isaiah 9:6-7

⁶ For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Standard text for Advent. Then, He says,

⁷ Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end...

Now, question is: are we all under the government of God? That means – are we under the headship of God? Are we people who belong to the Kingdom of God? Are we people who allow the Kingdom of God to grow in our lives? That's the question.

...Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

What did Phinehas have? The zeal of the Lord. That is the reason why Paul tells about his countrymen, Jews.

Romans 10:1-2

¹ Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. ² For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

They have the zeal for God but they don't have the zeal of God. That's the point. They have a zeal for God but they don't have the zeal of God. There's a lot of difference between the zeal of God. We mistake our zeal for a zeal of God. We mistake our

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zeal for God as a zeal of God. Lot of difference! Just because you are fervent and you are fired up in your preaching, it doesn't mean that you have zeal. A lot of people may be very... Paul was one guy who would speak in a monotone, they would say. His letters are very powerful but they said, "His speech was a little..." So, in other words, if he would come and speak, it would not be fired up, like the way I am. But he has got the zeal of God. And zeal for God – both. We mistake our zeal for God as the zeal of God. Not necessary. That's the reason why it says,

...they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

My dear brothers and sisters, what kind of a zeal do we have? *John 2*. You know this very well, right? So many Christians, they can't reconcile the God who brings joy into your life with the God who cleans the temple also. But He is the same God. If you were following Tim Keller's recent series on *John*, he talked about that. Look at what it says in *John 2:13-17*,

John 2:13-17

¹³ Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

It's very interesting. The Passover was there. So, Jesus went to Jerusalem to do what? To celebrate what? The Passover. Who is the Passover Lamb? He Himself. In His Name, a lot of things were going on – merchandise.

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

You need the zeal of God but you have a zeal for God, a zeal for His house the way Jesus had. Jesus just did not have the zeal of God; He also had the zeal for God. He did not just have the zeal for God. He had the zeal of God. Both. He was zealous over you with godly jealousy. That's what it says in *2 Corinthians 11*. We don't have to turn there. Do you know what Paul says? "I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy."

Is it sufficient to just kill your music and your lie? No. It is important that you kill something else too. It's Zur. That is a music which is empowered by lies but that lie is standing on something. Whose father was Cozby? Cozby's father was Zur. You know what 'Zur' means? Zur in Hebrew. We have a new Tennis Player, young guy. 19 year-old, Tsitsipas. This guy name's Zur. Zur means rock. So, think about this – three people. Phinehas killed two and the children of Israel killed the next fellow. You have to kill your music which is empowered by lies and this lie is standing on a rock. That fellow has to be dealt with. The rock which is empowering the lie, which is animating my music. What should I do? The rock which is empowering my lie which is animating my music.

Let's go to *Numbers 31:7* now.

Numbers 31:7-8

⁷ And they warred against the Midianites, just as the Lord commanded Moses, and they killed all the males. ⁸ They killed the kings of Midian with the rest of those who were killed—Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian. Balaam the son of Beor they also killed with the sword.

So, there is a lie. There is a rock which is empowering the lie and the rock is standing on something else. You see how deep sin is? You have to recognize there. You have to discern the music. You have to discern the lie which is empowering the music. You have to discern the lie on which the rock stands. You know what is the rock on which the lie stands? I will tell you the rock on which the lie stands. A lot of people will be successful in the world. What are they? Successful in the world. And they will also serve in the Church. Now, we are not saying that people should not be successful. I'm not saying that we should not be successful. Please don't misunderstand me. I'm not against that at all. I wish that God's people make a lot of money and give away to the work of God secretly. What did I say? Secretly. Give away to the work of God secretly. I wish that so that they can do a lot of things for the Kingdom of God. The problem is this – they have some kind of a success in the world and because they have success in the world, they think that they can give opinions about the Kingdom of God. You understand

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what I'm saying? I will give you a very simple example. For example, let's say, you want to marry somebody. A marriage alliance has come. Somebody brought in a marriage alliance. Very practical simple example. Sammy, Peter and Dr. Richard are the only bachelors. Others, we don't have any chance. We are done. Marriage alliance has come. Now, the person, background and everything; you prayed about it and you have peace in your heart about this person. "I have peace in my heart about this person." That's what you say. And then, you come to Pastor. Whom did you come to? Pastor. And, "Pastor, I got this proposal." And you pre-empt, "I have prayed and I have peace in my heart about it. What do you say?" What will Pastor say? "If you have prayed and if you have peace in your heart, what are you asking me for?" Now, it would have been different if you came and said, "Pastor, this proposal came. Can we pray?" No, you already got peace in your heart and you're asking Pastor to sanction it. Pastor will say, "Okay, give me some time." I'm just giving an atypical scenario. This doesn't happen in our Church but I'm just giving you a very atypical scenario. Not essentially a part of our Church. That's the reason why I call it 'atypical'. 'Typical' is outside. Atypical here in our Church. Pastor will ask, "Is he a believer?" "Yes, he's a believer." "Sold out for God?" "He got baptized." "I didn't ask that. Is he on fire for God?" "He is a member of..." "No, I'm asking you – is he or she on fire for God?" So, "I don't know but I have peace about it. Let me pray now." Pastor will come and say, "Child, but I don't know if I have peace about it. I don't know if it's from God. I think you have to wait. Just give it some time." Then, you are bent upon getting married. Then, what will you do? You will, probably, go to another person in the congregation who is possibly a CTO of Amazon, who also comes to Grace Tabernacle Church. I'm just giving you an example. It's an atypical scenario. And he comes and says, "Ya, maybe. That guy is a successful guy. He's got a good job. He's a believer. You can make him strong. Don't worry. You can pray for him. As long as he is a believer, it's okay." He is Christian in name only. Statistics are important for us. Achievement. Fair, handsome, 6 foot, horizontal and vertical statistics have been given. Fair and handsome Chowdhary boy. Six figure salary. And he looks very good and they say, "Boy, he's successful. What has happened?" This brother is also a member of the congregation. He is also successful. He is also Christian. Maybe, his discernment is better than Pastor's discernment." And what has happened? You go with a Zur. He might be a rock but he is a movable rock. I'm just giving you an example. Very important for us to realize this. I'm giving you an example of marriage because it is one of the normal things. In Lot's time, they were married and given in marriage. So, we are living in those days and we, too, most of the times, are pre-occupied with that. God says, "No." Just because there is some appearance of some sturdiness in his/her life, that doesn't mean that his opinion is God's opinion or his view point is God's view point. Now, think about it; Dr. Richard is a doctor and he says, "Pastor Vijay, I think you have to get diagnosed something." He is a doctor and he says, "You have to be tested for something," and I would reply, "I don't like it." So, I go to another uncle of mine who is a very world famous computer scientist and tell him, "Uncle, can you check my pulse?" "And what did the doctor say?" "He said I have to get my test done." "Dr. Richard he is always paranoid. For a small issue, he will make it a big thing. Just take this tablet." "Oh, he is a very successful computer scientist. I will take his opinion." Will you say that? There is an appearance that is like rock but you know what? He is a lie. All of you'll are silent! Good. Killed Zur, the five kings of Midian. You know what the word 'Midian' means? Strife. Wherever there is pride, there is strife. Your apparent success in the world does not qualify you to speak things about the Kingdom. Your apparent success can only be emanating lies but you have to have the humility to accept it but people are not humble these days. You don't have a greater discernment just because you are well settled in life, sorry. And it is not only sufficient to kill that; you should also kill the doctrine that empowers the rock. What is that doctrine? The doctrine of Balaam.

1 Timothy 4:1-2

¹ Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ² speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.

Doctrine is leading to lies in hypocrisy. Very important, *Revelation 2:12* onwards.

Revelation 2:12

¹² "And to the angel of the Church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:

What is a two-edged sword?

Hebrews 4:12-13

¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

It goes so deep.

Revelation 2:13-14

¹³ ***"I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is (Satan is the one who brings strife). And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. ¹⁴ But I have a few things against you (what is that?), because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam,***

There is a doctrine. That is why doctrine is so important, teaching is so important. Why are we teaching over and over? Because we want hopefully in these 21 days an established a Church which is built upon truth and not lies. And we will break and kill every lie and kill every doctrine which is empowering that lie and we will kill every lie which is empowered by that rock and also kill every music and influences which is emanating from those lies. Doctrine of Balaam.

...who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.

He is teaching. Teaching is important. Enthra important teaching (how important teaching is). What kind of a teaching? Teachings which can only bring in demons or teaching which will expel demons.

Mark 1:21-22

²¹ ***Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. ²² And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.***

And why did He have authority? Because His will was to do God's will.

John 7:17

¹⁷ ***If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.***

And because He always sought the Father's will, His teaching had authority.

Mark 1:23-28

²³ ***Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, ²⁴ saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"***

²⁵ ***But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!"***

He will never allow anybody, even a demon to give a testimony about Him. You are a lying spirit anyway, how come I know that your testimony about Me is true?

²⁶ ***And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him. ²⁷ Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? (What is the meaning of this? Manna.) What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him."***

What an amazing statement for all of us. A teaching which expels the lies and demons in your life. And there is a teaching which invites demons in your life. Which teaching are we following?

²⁸ ***And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee.***

So, it's important to do three things. Let's go to *Numbers 25*. Three attitudes, we need to have.

Numbers 25:16-17

¹⁶ ***Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ¹⁷ "Harass the Midianites, and attack them;***

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Two things. Harass the Midianites. What does Midian mean? Strife and Harass means Pride. So, don't allow strife and pride to come into your life, that's first thing. Second things He says, let's attack. In other words, attack pride in you. What should you do? I'll tell you how you attack pride in you. Come under authority.

1 Peter 5:5-7

⁵ Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders.

You know what you should ask God for? Spirit of submission. My brothers and sisters ask for it. But people will mistake you and if your submission is mistaken by a lot of people let them mistake. I mean, if they misunderstand you then they misunderstand you, don't worry. You err on the side of safety and safe place to be is a humble place. Humility is the best policy.

***...Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."*⁶ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,**

How do you do it?

⁷ casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

How do you humble yourself? By casting all your cares. I'll tell you what it means – "If I submit to this brother or this person or this Pastor, maybe, he will take advantage of me." "Brother, you will be taken advantage of." How much of advantage was Jesus taken of? Everything. Be taken advantage of. What's the big deal? Right? That's what it says. Paul says, "You are taking to another brother to court. Rather, suffer loss." "Sammy, you are the only fellow who is doing everything. Nobody helps you." Run for your life from those people. It's a privilege to serve God. Don't let anybody steal your crown. If it's somebody else's business, give it to them also. Don't take everything for yourself also, at the same time. You understand?

Numbers 25:18

¹⁸ for they harassed you with their schemes...

So, you vex and harass their schemes.

2 Corinthians 2:11

¹¹ lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Viles. Schemes. *Put on the whole armor of God so that you can withstand the schemes.* Schema, that's actually the word. Schema means schemes. Vex and harass the schemes of the devil. How do you do that? Don't give space to sentiment. I must suffer loss.

Matthew 16:21-26

²¹ From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. ²² Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"

And what should you say?

²³ But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

"I know your viles. You are taking me away from the path of suffering." What is a vile? What is a scheme? Anything which takes you away from the path of discipleship and suffering is a scheme. Anything which promises you comfort in this world is a scheme. Anything which draws you away into the cares, the riches and the deceitfulness of riches and the cares of this world and chokes the Word of God in your life, is a scheme of the devil; which takes away the zeal for God's house and God's

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Word and God's purposes in your life, is a scheme of the devil. What does God say? Harass and vex the schemes. How? By becoming a disciple.

²⁴ Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

And then, He says, "If you want to destroy the schemes of the devil," it says in the next verse,

²⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

That means you should love Jesus more than anything. That is how you desire. That is how you destroy and vex and harass the schemes of the devil in your life. The ruler of this world has come to me and he has found nothing inside of me because I know there is nothing for me to get deceived with now, from the devil. Schemes. How do you do that?

²⁶ For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?...

That means – put your eyes on eternal things. See if this decision that I'm taking is going to profit me in eternity and not in this life only. If anything promises you riches in this life, it is what we call as the scheme of the devil. Vex and harass those things. So, what do you do first? Harass, vex the schemes.

Next one. Go to *Numbers 31:1-2*. I like this. One last mission for Moses.

Numbers 31:1-2

¹ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ² "Take vengeance on the Midianites for the children of Israel. Afterward you shall be gathered to your people."

First, vex them; harass them; take vengeance on them.

Now, we will go to *2 Corinthians 10:4-6*.

2 Corinthians 10:4-6

⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

That's exactly what Phinehas is doing.

⁶ and being ready to punish all disobedience (or vengeance) when your (vengeance or your) obedience is fulfilled.

You know what? Go to your sin with your vengeance and attack it.

2 Corinthians 7:10-11

¹⁰ For godly sorrow produces repentance...

"If My people who are called by My name, will pray, seek My face and turn." What is turning? Repentance.

...leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. ¹¹ For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

That is vengeance. You know what vengeance is? It means – you deal with iniquity in your life? What is your iniquity, Zachaias? "Lord, half my goods, I give to the poor." Wow! "And if I have taken anything wrongly from anybody, I would restore four

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times.” “By the end of it, what if your bank balance is zero?” “No problem, God. I am ready to pay the price because I want to deal with my sin with vengeance.” And what should I take vengeance on? Strife. Take vengeance on the Midianites. What does ‘Midian’ mean? Strife. Take vengeance on pride, my dear brothers and sisters. My goodness. What is pride? “Lord, give me a submissive spirit.” And submission and servility are two different things. A lot of people are like this – servile. They walk like this. They think that their posture is going to fool God and fool them also. They are fooled by their posture. You should be upright and blameless. Thala ethukoni thirigala nuvvu. Thalla dinchikoni kaadhu. You should walk with your head held high. You know why? Because your conscience is clear with God and man. But you have a humble heart because the presence of God is in your heart. And why do you have the presence of God? *To this person, I look. I, the Lord who dwells in eternity and the high and lofty place, also dwell with man who has got a humble and a contrite spirit.* Are we ready? And if we do these four things, what will happen? You will not only stay the plague or kick the plague out but you will also guard yourself so that the plague will never come back to you again. Pride is a leading cause for deception. You know what? Satan is so proud and therefore, he is so deceived. He is so deceived that he deceives others and he himself is getting continuously deceived. He is so deceived that one day, he can defeat God. That’s what he thinks. That is the reason why in the last days, evil people will become worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. Just because they are deceiving others, they think, “I am okay. I am deceiving others.” You fellow, you are getting deceived, you fool. You don’t understand that.

So, how many here want to be a Phinehas? And how many, who are listening online, want to be a Phinehas? One man, when he saw, he was in the midst of a compromised congregation but he said he had the zeal of God. And God says, “I’m going to make an everlasting covenant with you.” The act that He took. It was called, “It was credited to him for righteousness.” Abraham believed in God and it was credited to him as righteousness. Phinehas killed sin and it was credited to him as righteousness. And one man who has got the tenacity and the brave one – he is willing to be that one person. He has got the zeal for God and he has got the zeal of God. We can be that one Church, my dear brothers and sisters, who has the zeal for God and we have the zeal of God. And we can be a set of people who can stand in the midst of compromised Christendom and a compromised leadership, maybe. We can take a stand and stay the plague. Will we be that part of the Phinehas generation, a priesthood after Phinehas? A mouth of brass and a heart of gold. Let’s pray.

Let’s take a few minutes to ask God to burn His Word into the deep most parts of our inner man.

Closing Prayer:

Father, have mercy upon us, Lord, when we have only zeal for God and we don’t have the zeal of God. Our zeal is all emotional but not backed up by truth. Have mercy. Father, we pray that by the end of these days of seeking Your face, You will find in this Church, not just one; beginning with me, Lord; a bunch of people who will have the zeal of God and who will be willing to take a stand in the midst of a compromised and a perverse generation and even a perverse and a compromised Christendom; not to be afraid to take a sphere; and not be ruthless with the sin in their lives. They will confront and judge themselves severely. Their hearts will be broken for their sin and for the sin of the Church so that, Lord, You can stay the plague. May You find a set of people here in this Church and even among those who are listening to us. We thank You, Lord. We praise You. We give You glory. For in Jesus’ Name we pray, Amen.