

Look Unto Him And Be Saved!

Pastor Vijay Eathakota
www.gracetabernaclehyd.org

Father, speak to us this morning from Your Word; Father, that we will just not be hearers of Your Word but doers. But, Lord, let Your love go forth with power and unction. Father, animate me. Whatever is my shortcoming, O Lord, You perfect it and everything else, O Lord Father, which is not of You, O Father, let it fall to the ground; and what is in line with Your Word and with Your Spirit, let it go forth with fire and unction and authority. Let it change our lives from deep down inside and transform us a little more into Your likeness. To that end, I pray that You would bless and anoint us even during the speaking and the hearing of this Word. For in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

So, once again, I just want to thank God and we will go back to the Word.

Last night, we looked at how to be born again. We will continue in that theme this morning, probably. Just for the understanding of today's Word, we will just start at a place in *John 3* and we will look at a few verses. Not the entire chapter. A few verses and we will put today's message in context.

John 3:1-5

¹ There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ² This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

Jesus goes straight to the point. He doesn't even accept his salutation. Jesus knows how to be cryptic and how to be terse; and how to be economical with His words. He has got the tongue of the instructed. He knows exactly what to say to those who are weary. He knows exactly what to do, what to speak and what to say.

³ Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

And every time Jesus mentions something spiritual, most often, even the disciples, they understand it in earthly terms or worldly terms or fleshly terms. So, Nicodemus was not any different. He says,

⁴ Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

We looked at that last night.

⁵ Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

So, Jesus lays the truth, absolutely, to Nicodemus and He is expecting him to understand these things. And Nicodemus is perplexed with all of his study of the Word and of the Scriptures; of the law, going to law school. Now, the law school but all these days, he studied the law but he is not able to understand the Spirit of the law. And Jesus says,

³ Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

And then, Jesus says this,

John 3:9-10

⁹ Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"

Look Unto Him And Be Saved!

He is not able to understand these things. He is still perplexed.

¹⁰ *Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?”*

John 3:14-17

¹⁴ *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,* ¹⁵ *that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.* ¹⁶ *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.* ¹⁷ *For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*

When I was growing up, I found the Gideon’s Bible. For the first time, there was one verse – *John 3:16* written in so many languages. I was, possibly, about in grade 4 or grade 5. That was the first time I saw the Gideon’s Bible, *John 3:16*, the famous *3:16 – for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.* And the very interesting thing is that this verse starts with a very interesting word – ‘for’.

¹⁶ *For God so loved the world...*

What is this ‘for’? It is something which is supporting a few verses. Of course, let us look at,

¹⁴ *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,*

This is amazing. This is teaching Nicodemus the law. He doesn’t understand the Spirit behind the law. He is going into the Scriptures and He is sampling one incident in the life of the Israelites, who have been brought out of Egypt and who are on the way to the Promised Land and He is going to that particular context and is saying,

¹⁴ *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,* ¹⁵ *that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.*

And this is what He told Nicodemus and I’m not sure if Nicodemus really understood this or not. This is the entire Bible, the entire Old Testament. One man of God, when I was growing, I used to listen to his teachings a lot. It’s Chuck Missler. It’s when I was a new believer and I was studying the Bible for myself, he made a statement. He says, “The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed. And the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.” What you have in the Old Testament is the concealing of the Son of God. He is concealed in the Old Testament and when you come to the New Testament, it’s a revelation of the Person of the Son of God. So, I’ll show you this verse. *1 Peter 1:10* onwards,

1 Peter 1:10-12

¹⁰ *Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you,* ¹¹ *searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.* ¹² *To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.*

You know, when you look at that phrase ‘the angels desire to look into’,

... *things which angels desire to look into.*

What picture comes into your mind?

... *things which angels desire to look into.*

It is talking about the Scriptures which is, of course, talking about the law and the prophets. Let’s say, particularly, the law. Because in this context, *John 3*, Jesus is sampling one incident in the first few Books of Moses, which we call as Torah and the law. So, tell me – what are the particular things which angels desire to look into? What does it specify or signify? Do you know

Look Unto Him And Be Saved!

what it signifies? I'll tell you what it signifies. Do you know how the Ark of the Covenant was made? The Ark of the Covenant was made of acacia wood. It has some particular dimensions. The Ark of the Covenant was made of acacia wood, overlaid with gold and you have these things. And on top of the Ark of the Covenant was the Mercy Seat. And now, what do you do? You put the first five Books of Moses into the law, the tablets of the law into the Ark of the Covenant; you put manna, a pot of manna and you put Aaron's rod which budded. And you see, the Ark of the Covenant is completely made of gold. It is seamlessly made of gold by Betsalel and what is covering the Ark? The mercy seat – two cherubim, looking into the law. The angels were trying to understand. It's a picture of two things. Now, if you look at the incident in *Isaiah 6*, the cherubim were surrounding the throne of God. They can't see. Now, when they were desiring to see, they can't see. Therefore, in *Ephesians 3*, it says, "The wisdom of God is being made manifest to the angels through the Church." So, what is the Church? The Church, it says in *1 Timothy 3*; it's the Church of the Living God, the pillar and the bulwark of truth. Even as we understand the Scriptures and reveal the Son of God, the cherubim are looking into us, literally, the blood-bought saints of the Living God and the understanding what the Old Testament actually signifies. It's amazing. So, there's a beautiful picture of the cherubim looking. I think it's Hannah, in her prayer, she says, "The God who is between the cherubim," she appears to the Lord which is between the cherubim. So, the Old Testament, therefore, is the revelation, if you read it slowly and carefully and having the background of the New Testament in your mind; and you start learning the Scriptures, you will see every page of the Bible. In fact, when I read the *Book of Proverbs*, for example, I see the Bible there. Literally. Turn to *Proverbs 30:1-2*, for example,

Proverbs 30:1-2

¹ The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, his utterance. This man declared to Ithiel—to Ithiel and Ucal:

Those were possibly his children.

² Surely I am more stupid than any man...

He is stupid because he is a guy in the Old Testament. He is understanding something. He is saying,

...And do not have the understanding of a man.

And then, he goes on to say,

Proverbs 30:3-4

³ I neither learned wisdom Nor have knowledge of the Holy One.

Why is he saying that he does not have the knowledge of the Holy One? Because,

⁴ Who has ascended into heaven, or descended?...

Why am I saying this? Just pause here. Go to *John 3:13*, the episode of Nicodemus,

John 3:13

¹³ No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.

Now, go back.

Proverbs 30:4

⁴ Who has ascended into heaven, or descended?...

Agur, he is having this vision but he is not able to understand who this Person is. And then, he says,

...Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment?...

He is talking about creation.

...Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son's name, If you know?

"Can you tell me, please? I am not able to understand. I am not having the understand as to know the knowledge of the Holy One."

³ I neither learned wisdom Nor have knowledge of the Holy One.

Because who is this Person? Who has ascended into heaven or who has descended? Who is this Person? And Jesus is going right back into the Old Testament and He is challenging Nicodemus. "Nicodemus, *Proverbs 30:4*. Who is that Person?" "Nicodemus, *Numbers 31*. Who is that 'bronze serpent'?" Nicodemus is stunned because he has studied and studied the Holy Scriptures. He is scratching his head and then, "I knew all this but is this supposed to signify You?" That's what he tells in *John 5*. He says, "You think in your Scriptures, you have eternal life but they signify talking about Me." You know the Scriptures but you are completely blinded to the Person who is right in front of you. John Piper says, "You are blind as a bat." You cannot even see the person right in front of you, the Scriptures being fulfilled in your life and you are not able to see. Why am I saying that? We all have to study Scripture that way. For example – all the people who are even watching, look at what it says in *1 Corinthians 15:3-4*,

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

And you will say, "How was He buried according to the Scriptures?" That means – right from the beginning, every part of the Bible was talking about His death, His burial and His resurrection. For example, *Genesis 22* talks about Abraham. God said, "Offer Isaac, your only son whom you love." And Abraham was the type of God the Father; Isaac, of course, the type of Christ. So, Abraham takes a how many days' journey? A three days' journey. On the first day, Abraham slaughters the son in his heart. On the third day, he receives his son, figuratively, resurrected back. Isaac, the entire process from on top of the Mountain Moriah, where exactly the point where the coordinates, the vectors of space and time where Jesus Himself was crucified.

Exodus 12; you don't have to turn there, it's talking about the Passover. He is our Passover Lamb that was slain. That is the reason why John the Baptist will say, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." And *Numbers 21* will say, "If you look at the bronze serpent..." "If I be lifted up, just as Moses lifted up the bronze serpent in the wilderness, and whoever believes in Me will be saved." In *Deuteronomy*, "Cursed is every man who hangs on a tree." *Galatians* will talk about that point. So, the Scriptures completely talk about Him all the way.

So, we need an understanding of Scriptures. Look at *Luke 24:25-27*. This is on the Road to Emmaus.

Luke 24:25-27

²⁵ Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" ²⁷ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

The best Bible of planet earth. Every other Bible study will take the second place. Who else can explain the Scriptures better than Jesus? Nobody else. I wish I was there in that Bible study. But we have the Spirit now. Hallelujah. *John 16* will say, "When the Spirit of truth comes, He will lead you to all truth. He will take you of what is Mine and He will give it to you." The same Spirit of God, of the same Person of Jesus Christ who walked with the disciples on the Road to Emmaus, He is also with us. He says, "I am going away now but I will come back to you." How? "I will send My Spirit and He will be with you and He will be in you." Both. Kya bhaat hain! And then, what is He going to do? When we study the Scriptures, when we study it for ourselves and we look at that, there's a revelation from every part of the Scriptures – the revelation of the Son of God. In every part of the Scriptures.

Luke 24:32

Look Unto Him And Be Saved!

³² And they said to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?”

He was opening the Scriptures and their hearts were burning. But that’s only stage one. Your hearts are burning. He opens the Scriptures and He is saying, “This is it.” And then, that’s only stage 1.

Luke 24:44-45

⁴⁴ Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.”⁴⁵ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

Beautiful, isn’t it? First, their hearts start burning. The Scriptures get opened. There’s an unlocking that is going on but now, what happens? They start understanding and it becomes a part of them. And what is it? Every part of the Bible is signifying and pointing out to the Messiah. Any law, for that matter. See, for example, yesterday, Pastor was talking about the Jew and the Greek. In fact, if you read *Romans 1* and *2*, the first part of *Romans*, from *verses 18* onwards to the end of the *Book of Romans chapter 1*, it talks about a guy who is given over to sin, a guy who is living an absolute licentious life. Chapter 2 and 3 talks about two kinds of people. Chapter 2, first part talks about a person (a part of it, at least) who has got the law of God written in his heart to a certain level. And chapter 2, the later part and till verse 19 of chapter 3 talks about the person who is being given the law. The man of the world, the man of the conscience and the man with the law – three kinds of people there, at least, in that division. The man of the world means the guy who is living; the man of the flesh, you can say. The man who is absolutely living according to his fleshly desires and he doesn’t care. And chapter 2, part 1 is talking about a man’s conscience. He says, “They testify of the law of God written in their hearts; their conscience bearing witness and their conflicting thoughts either accuse them or excuse them. On that day, when God, according to my Gospel, will judge them by the Man Jesus Christ.” So, they will be judged. For example – they might be thinking some simple thing. You never underestimate some of the people who were searching. Like Pastor was mentioning about it. Some people in our own country were searching. And they are searching for how to live a righteous life. They are people of conscience. And then, of course, the latter part of *Romans 2* talks about the Person who is being given the law, the Jew. And he is also blinded. And in chapter 3, he says, “Everybody is under sin – the man of the flesh, the man of the conscience and the man who is being given the law.” All of them are under sin. *Romans 3* will say that. So, there is only one way that you can be set free from the bondage of sin, from the penalty of sin; from the bondage and the power of sin. That is through Jesus Christ only. That is exactly what Jesus was telling Nicodemus in this particular context. He tells Nicodemus, “Nicodemus, just like Moses lifted up the bronze serpent, the Son of Man should be lifted up so that whoever believes in Him will have everlasting life.”

So, let us go to that place in *Numbers 21* and see how we can unpack this entire episode for ourselves and see what Jesus meant by looking at the Son of God. How do we become partakers of this eternal life? I think it was David Pawson (I’ve mentioned it some time back) who said (we are in Lent Season by the way)... David Pawson was invited to one of a Church gatherings. They had a series of meetings. They said, “Can you please speak on Lent and can you give us the topic for the titles?” He said, “Okay, fine. I’m going to have five sessions, five topics.” “Can you give the titles for the topics?” He said, “Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.” They said, “No, we want to know the title.” He said, “Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.” You know *Genesis 22* – the Cross. *Exodus 12* – Passover Lamb, Cross. Then, *Numbers 21* – Cross. *Deuteronomy* – *cursed is every man who hangs on a tree* – Cross. *Leviticus 16* – the atonement. The high priest has to take it. On one day, he has to go into the Most Holy Place and offer a sacrifice for himself first and for the entire nation. And it says in *Hebrews*, “*Jesus is our eternal High Priest who didn’t go to the temple made with hands with the blood of bulls or goats. He took His own Blood into the Most Holy Place in Heaven.*” So, essentially, what you see in the Tabernacle was the shadow, was the picture of what you have in Heaven and you will see that actually in *Revelation 5 and 6*. You see that He takes His own Blood and He offers once and for all His Blood. And therefore, you know what happens? Our conscience is absolutely purged from dead works by the Blood of Jesus. We have a clear conscience. We can have a clear conscience with God and man. So, the entire Bible is talking about Jesus. So, we will just look at this particular episode in *Numbers 21:4*,

Numbers 21:4-9

⁴ Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. ⁵ And the people spoke against God and against Moses: “Why have you

Look Unto Him And Be Saved!

brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread.”⁶ So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.

Who died? People of Israel died.

⁷Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸Then the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.”⁹ So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

This is the episode we are going to study today. I don't know how many of you studied this before but let us do it once again.

⁴Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way.

It's beautiful. What happened to the soul of the people? Very discouraged. So, the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. Now, why did it become very discouraged? Now, whenever such verses come, I just stop for a minute. I just look at words again. First of all, I want to look at one word. What is that word? Discouraged. Just one word. You know what the word 'discouraged' means? It comes from the Hebrew word 'kathar', which means reaping. One of the things you need to understand is that in the universe, there is one law. It is called the inexorable law of sowing and reaping. They have come to a point in life where they are reaping what they have sowed. They were brought out of Egypt. One day, 400 years of slavery finished in one day. That's the reason why in *Isaiah 66*, it says, "Did you ever hear a nation being birthed in a day? Out of Egypt, I have called My Son." They were brought out of Egypt and through the wilderness, step after step, there were only two things the children of Israel were famous for.

By the way, in *Acts 7*, they are called the 'Ecclesia' in the wilderness. Who are they? They are the Church of God, the separated ones. They were supposed to be the separated ones but what has happened? Complaining, murmuring. And doing the same thing over and over again and never learning their lessons. And now, what has happened? They have come to a point where they became not just discouraged but very discouraged. It's, kind of, like a double superlative. Discouragement itself is superlative; very discouraged is extremely superlative. Moses was the meekest man. You know how it is rendered in the Hebrew? Moses was meek meek. Meaning? He was the meekest of all the meek. Double superlative. "Verily, verily, I say unto you." "Verily, I say unto you," means you have to pay attention. "Verily, verily, I say unto you," means – double superlative. What is His Name? "Holy, holy, holy." Triple superlative. That is the ultimate. Double superlative. Very discouraged on the way. What is happening here? What is happening here in the lives of the people of the children of Israel in the wilderness? It's like – the roosters have come home. They are finally reaping what they have sowed. There is a law. It's a very scary law and a painful law. But if you are wise, you can use it wisely. But who is wise? Only a believer. From your childhood, from your infancy, you have known the Scriptures which is able to make you wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Scriptures have the capacity to make you wise and if you have a transformed mind, you can use this law to your benefit. But this is an inescapable law. That means – something which you can never, ever circumvent. It's like gravity. You cannot live without gravity. You have to use gravity wisely. Right? You use gravity, right? Without a pump, if you want to send water downstairs, what do you do? Create a potential difference. We do all those experiments and I show my children – I create a potential difference. I create vacuum in the pump and I put it like that. They are like, "Oh, what is going on?" Potential difference. Energy is neither created nor destroyed. I'm using gravity there.

I remember the first time when I saw how to use gravity wisely. My uncle had a car. It was a Maruti 800. The first Maruti 800. He used to always have a spare 5 litre petrol tank in his trunk. We were going on the highway and the fuel got over. He said, "Don't worry. I have a bottle of 5 litres fuel. It will go for another... Those days, Maruti 800 used to give 80 km per litre. So, we were good for another 50 kilometers. So, I asked, "How are you going to do it?" He said, "No problem." He took a pipe; he put that thing there and sucked it in. I was in Grade 5 or something. He was using gravity. You can use gravity; you can abuse gravity but gravity is always there. There's a law. What is it called? It is called the law of sowing and reaping. So, let me show you a few verses about the law from the Bible.

Look Unto Him And Be Saved!

Proverbs 22:8

⁸ He who sows iniquity will reap sorrow...

It is what we call 'the creation law'. Every tree after its kind and seed after its kind. You see how evolution tries to mess up the whole creation account? What is evolution trying to say? You don't reap what you sow. You can somehow sow a monkey and reap a human in effect. How can that happen? You sow a monkey, you reap a monkey. You sow apple, you will reap apples. Every tree after its kind. There is a seed which you have to sow and that seed looks very small. That's what He says – if you have faith as tiny as a mustard seed, look at how big it becomes. It becomes so huge. So, if you sow iniquity, what will you reap? Sorrow.

...And the rod of his anger will fail.

Hosea 10:13

¹³ You have plowed wickedness; You have reaped iniquity. You have eaten the fruit of lies, Because you trusted in your own way, In the multitude of your mighty men.

Whenever you trust in your own way, you are sowing a seed. Therefore, *trust in the Lord with all of your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths. Fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh and marrow to your bones.* So, if you look at the entire episode of whatever is going on in this world, it's a parable. You have sowed something and you are reaping a harvest. Another thing is that – you will always reap more than sow. You will never sow one thing and just get one thing back. Look at what it says in *2 Corinthians 9:6*. Of course, it's talking about in a positive context but there's a law.

2 Corinthians 9:6

⁶ But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

That means if you sow much of something, you will reap a lot of it. And in fact, most of the times, you will reap more than what you sowed. Exponentially high. One grain of, let's say, wheat will give rise to how much? At least, 200-300 grain? You will say, "One small sin, Vijay." One small mistake. But the law is – you will always reap more than you sow, good or bad. Sometimes, you will be reaping what somebody else had sowed. Others will reap what you have sown. Jesus makes a very powerful statement. *John 4*; He says, "Others have laboured. You have entered into their labour." That means you are reaping what other people have sown. For example, if your parents are wise, they might have saved up a lot of money; they've used their common sense and laid up something and when they do wise investments and make money, they give it to their children as an inheritance. It's wise. So, they have sowed wisely. Children reap the harvest. But sometimes, parents mess up; children reap the harvest. It's a very dangerous law if you don't use it wisely.

So, what has happened to the children of Israel? They have come to a point where they have become very discouraged. Let's turn to another thing. *Galatians 6:7-8*. We've looked at it very well so many times in different contexts.

Galatians 6:7-8

⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸ For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption...

Everything according to its kind.

...but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

That is the reason why *Hosea 10:12* will say,

Hosea 10:12

¹² Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy...

Look Unto Him And Be Saved!

That means – if you sow a little bit of righteousness, you will reap a lot of mercy. *My righteous shall live by faith.* That means, if you have a little bit of faith; if you have a little bit of knowledge of who the Son of God is. Like yesterday, Pastor was saying, “All that they had was – they appealed to just a small tinge of the mercy of God.” One character of God. And they said, “Lord, we want to sow in righteousness.” How? “By faith.” “Do you have faith?” They said, “Yes.” “What is the faith that you have?” “In the character that You are a merciful God.” If you sow in righteousness, what will you reap? Mercy. What an amazing promise and a law! Question, therefore: are you discouraged? It’s a question to all of us. Are you very discouraged? And you know what the actual other rendering for the word ‘discouraged’ is? Shortened. “I feel shortened.” It means – “I feel as if my strength has gone from my life.” Shorten means – shortening of your life essentially. Shortened. Strength is gone. We know that, right? *Psalm 91:14-16.*

Psalm 91:14-16

¹⁴ ***“Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him...***

So, what is he sowing? Love.

...I will set him on high, because he has known My name.

What is he sowing? Knowledge about Him.

¹⁵ ***He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.*** ¹⁶ ***With long life I will satisfy him, And show him My salvation.”***

Why? Simply because he made a choice to dwell in the secret place. And you reap a harvest. Long life. But here, he says, “We are so discouraged. We feel as if our life is shortened.” That’s what, maybe, in *Psalm 90*, if you turn there, look at what it says. Maybe, Moses identified with his people and this is what he confesses.

Psalm 90:7-10

⁷ ***For we have been consumed by Your anger...***

So, whenever we are consumed by something, what happens to it? It becomes shortened. For example, if you have a big bar of chocolate and consume part of it, it will become shortened. It will never increase. Have you ever seen chocolate increasing like that? No. So, he says,

⁷ ***For we have been consumed by Your anger...***

“That’s exactly the reason why we’ve feel shortened.” Why? Because something has been consumed out of our lives.

...And by Your wrath we are terrified. (Why?) ⁸ ***You have set our iniquities before You, Our secret sins in the light of Your countenance.***

He is telling all of us, “Beware of all those things. You think that nobody is watching you but God is.” What you sow in secret also, you will reap. When you sow in secret, in prayer, the Lord will reward you openly. When you sin in secret, everything will be brought to light openly.

⁹ ***For all our days have passed away in Your wrath; We finish our years like a sigh.*** ¹⁰ ***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.***

You know what? That’s exactly what the children of Israel are experiencing. “Lord, we feel like our lives are shortened. We are so discouraged.” Depressed. Is it possible, therefore, that we might be depressed and discouraged because we have sown something in our lives and we don’t like the harvest?

Look Unto Him And Be Saved!

Just take a survey of your harvest. I'm checking my own life. What I'm reaping in 40+ is what I sowed till 39 years old. And what I will reap when I'm 50 years old is what I have sown in the next decade of my life. You cannot escape it. And that's exactly what Jesus is telling Nicodemus. "There is a law, everything after its kind." That which is born of flesh is flesh. That which is born of Spirit is Spirit. And we know very well – flesh and blood do not inherit the Kingdom of God. And you will not be able to see the Kingdom of God because you are flesh. You could be better flesh than others but you're flesh. If one guy murdered 10 people and the other guy murdered 2, both of you are murderers. You are a hardened murderer and that fellow is a slightly less hardened murderer. I don't know. Nobody will say, "He is a worse murderer than him." No. It doesn't matter. Sometimes, even if you murder one person... I remember that story in Macbeth. The guy murders him and she looks at her hand; she has this vision of blood. "Blood on my hands! Blood on my hands! Blood on my hands!" Because the conscience is just troubling her like anything. She is reaping what she has sown. Blood on her hands! Think about it. He was telling Nicodemus, "Nicodemus, you cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is of the flesh is flesh. That is which is of the Spirit is Spirit." And therefore, what should I do? You should change the seed. Like Pastor keeps saying, "Change the seed." Because everything after its kind. And start changing the seed and start sowing more of that good seed in your life.

So, it's very important as to what we sow. And it's also important where we sow. For example, turn to *Isaiah 55:9-11*. This is what we sow. "Be very careful as to what you hear," it says in *Luke 8:18*.

Luke 8:18

¹⁸ Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him."

Mark 4:24

²⁴ Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear..."

Very important what you sow. Of course, here, in this context, He is talking about the seed being the Word of God. So, be very careful what you hear and how you hear. You understand? What you hear and how you hear. What you eat and how you eat. Isn't it important? I tell this example. Whatever you eat becomes you. Right? You eat egg. Have you ever seen an egg? You've eaten an egg and after a while, it becomes you. egg disappears and it becomes you. You eat palak; you don't become palak. You eat palak and it becomes you. What an amazing miracle! You eat meat. You don't become whatever you are eating; you become you. It just becomes a part of you. Whatever you eat becomes you. Isn't it interesting that after they have sacrificed the Passover Lamb and applied the Blood in the doorpost of their house, what are they supposed to do next? Eat the, what? Eat the lamb so that the Lamb becomes you. That is the reason why Jesus says in *John 6*, "Unless you eat My flesh and drink My Blood, you will not have eternal life, that is Me. Because that is meat indeed." Have you not seen that they had to eat the Passover Lamb roasted and they were not even supposed to keep it for the next day? And they had to eat it with what herbs? Bitter herbs. And eat it in haste. You have to eat. "Unless and until you eat Me, you cannot have any part of Me. Because when you eat Me, you become Me." That's what Jesus was saying. "You want to become a Lamb? You have to eat Me. Otherwise, you will be a goat all your life."

So, that is just a little bit of digression but let's come back. So, it's therefore very important what you should sow.

Isaiah 55:9-11

⁹ "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. ¹⁰ "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, ¹¹ So shall My word..."

Ultimately, the water, of course, is compared to the Word. And ultimately, the water comes and gives forth the Word again, which becomes seed. Very important what you eat.

Turn to *2 Timothy 4:1-3*,

2 Timothy 4:1-3

¹ I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: ² Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season..."

This is coming to life for me. I just think about what to speak the next day and within the next 24 hours, I should be ready for the next one. I've never been challenged like this before in my entire life. But it's amazing.

...Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

That means – you don't just give a little bit of hearing. You put a little bit of palak, put little bit of pulses, put little bit of carbs and put a little bit of everything and nicely, mix it and give. Sometimes, you don't like bitter herbs, right? So, what should you do? Eat it any way, like my mother used to say. Yesterday, I was telling, "Compulsory question." What is the compulsory question? Thottakura (amaranth leaves). You have to eat it. Everything was in examination language only in those days in my home. "This is compulsory question, Vijay. You cannot escape it." In other words, you will not get the next question until you eat this. You might like the next question. You might like dal and sambar but you are not getting sambar unless you eat palak. So, what do I do? Gulp it down. Next time, she said, "Chew it nicely and eat it." Why? "Unless and until you chew it nicely and eat it, it will not become a part of you." Do you know that? You see? So, he is saying,

³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

Who will declare them. What you hear is very important, therefore. What you sow is very important. Question is: what have we been sowing? I hope we are sowing all this – convincing. Everybody likes convincing but some people don't like it. Rebuke, exhort. Actually, convince, rebuke, exhort – everything has negative connotation only. Convince means – I am not convinced. That means – I have to die to myself and I have to agree to the Word of God. That's what convincing means? "I agree." Rebuke means – two sticks. Exhort means – "Come on! Do it, man! Don't become lazy!" That is exhortation. Exhortation means he is telling Timothy, "Timothy, treat elder men as fathers; elder women as mothers; younger men as brothers; and younger women as sisters with purity." Just not purity but with all purity." And Timothy is saying, "Why did Paul say I should treat sisters with all purity? Does he not know my life?" "No, I know your life but I'm still exhorting you. Continue in that path." It's like somebody comes and says, "Vijay, you have to work hard." I'm already working hard. "Don't relax," in other words. Don't ever relax. That is exhortation. Already working hard. "Why are you telling me to work hard?" "I know but don't relax." Just because you've got some kind of a commendation here and there, just don't relax. Become better not worse. That is exhortation. Like for example, "You got 95? You did well but you can do better." "I already did well." "Okay, fine. I agree." God is like that. He is a Father. He wants to challenge us and take us to a different level. We know because He wants to give us His best. And therefore, what does He do? He exhorts. What does He do? He exhorts and He is telling Timothy, "With all longsuffering and with all teaching." This is so important.

Pray for us as Pastors and teachers of the Word of God. You know what we need? Turn to *Colossians 1:27*,

Colossians 1:27-29

²⁷ To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

We have to tell you the mystery, right? So, what do we do?

²⁸ Him we preach, (how do we preach Him?) warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom...

The preaching has two points, he says – there is a warning part; and there is a teaching part. How do we get this warning part and this teaching part? How do we do it? In what wisdom? In all wisdom.

...that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

So, like Pastor was saying – there is power which is available; there is intention which is available but what is He looking for? He is looking for people who are going to work that out in their lives. "All I need you to do is work. I will provide you the power. I will provide you the wisdom, the idea." That is the reason why availability is important; not ability. What is important?

Look Unto Him And Be Saved!

Availability is important, not ability. Diligence is important; not intelligence. Who provides intelligence? God. Because your intelligence is useless. Let us face it. For every intelligent person in the Church, there are 100s of more intelligent people than you in the world. Do you agree? You are not the cat's whiskers. I can boast about my whatever but I know people who are hundred times better than me, more successful. So, intelligence is not a big deal. What is important is diligence, which talks about the attitude. Every man should work with his own hands so that he will have something to give. That attitude, He is looking for. That's all He is looking for. He is only looking for diligence. He is looking for availability, not ability. That's just besides the point.

So, it's important what you sow.

Second – it's important where you sow. So, let's go to *Jeremiah 4:3*,

Jeremiah 4:3-4

³ For thus says the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem: "Break up your fallow ground, And do not sow among thorns.

He is not saying what you should sow;

... "Break up your fallow ground, And do not sow among thorns.

What are the thorns? We know – the cares of this world, deceitfulness of riches. Something else, we are forgetting. That is the reason why we should read the Parable of the Sower in all 3 Gospels – cares of this world, deceitfulness of riches and desire for other things choke the Word. Those are thorns. Cares of the world; meaning – you are worried. Deceitfulness of riches means – you are successful. Third is – desire for other things, things of the world. Desire. Desires are good but when you delight yourself in the Lord, He will give you the desires of your heart because your desires will be to desire God. That's the reason why John Piper has a famous website. What is it called? "Desiring God." I like that statement – "God is most glorified in you when we are most satisfied in Him." I like that thesis statement.

So, what do you have? You have the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and you have desires for other things. Therefore,

... "Break up your fallow ground, And do not sow among thorns.

How does he signify thorns over here? Look at what it says.

⁴ Circumcise yourselves...

He says in *Deuteronomy 30*, "I will circumcise your heart." It also says that you should circumcise your own heart. Both are important. See, it is a partnership. Christianity is a partnership with God. He will never do it, circumventing our free will. That is the reason why if our will is to do His will, then we will know what is true whether I speak of my own authority or out of the authority which comes from God. But I do not seek my own glory but of the glory of Him who sent me. It's very important. It's very interesting, right? *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

Philippians 2:12-13

¹² Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation...

It's beautiful. It's like – circumcise for yourselves your own heart,

...with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

For example, he says, "If your will is to do His will," but then, you say, "Lord, somehow, my will is not to do Your will. It is, sometimes, only to do my will." You know what He says? "Just be available. I will change that also. I will slowly bend your will. How will I do it? By transforming your mind." *Do not be conformed to the patterns of this world but be transformed to the*

renewing of your mind. As I said, it's not the removal of your mind. R. C. Sproul said that. It's not the removal of your mind but it's the renewal of your mind. *This is so that you can prove that which is good, acceptable and perfect will of God.* In Telugu, it's very interesting. Let's go there later on. It's beautiful. Acceptable and *it is God who works in you to both will and to do for His pleasure.* That is the reason why, ultimately, our whole attitude is to give Him pleasure. And what does Hebrews say? *Without faith, it is impossible to give Him pleasure.* What is faith? It is obedience to little things and the big things. Actually, little things only. Big things, we don't have the strength. If we keep on doing the little things, God will take care of the big things. Or maybe, one day, He will give us the ability to do big things. Or, we will be doing big things and we don't know that we are doing big things. It will be so seamless. For example, a guy who is solving some problems so easily. He is able to break up a complex problem into pieces and he is able to solve it. How? Because it's become a part of it. He is so involved in it. I see that when I give the question paper to my students. Some students, they sit in the examination hall and they are dreaming. And I know that fellow is gone. Because I set tough question papers. It's tough only. So, they will be really tensed, sometimes. But I give them sufficient homework. I teach them very well. So, when I teach well, I also ask well to see if you have understood well. So, I test them very well. Some people just solve the problem. I had a student who was a Computer Science Olympiad programmer. And the way he used to solve the problem, big problem, one page problem. Some people just give it up. This guy, he just looked at it, seamlessly, he is doing it. You know why? Little things. I used to see in his life, in his workbooks. He used to keep on doing it consistently. If you keep on doing little things consistently, the big things become easy because you are already used to patterns in your life. Troubleshooting becomes easier, right, Sammy? We have Sammy here, who troubleshoots like that. Because he is used to doing those little things and then, when the big problem comes, he is able to do it seamlessly. Other people have to crack their heads for 24 hours and 48 hours and they will still not get it. He will get it in 5 minutes. Why? Simply because he has been, over a period of time, doing faithfully, the same things over and over again. That is just free of cost, by the way.

So, there is an exorable law of sowing and reaping. So, what has happened to these people? They have become discouraged. Discouraged is the opposite of courage. They are very fearful. They are depressed. They feel as if their strength is gone. Let's go back to *Numbers 4*. And what do they do? *"They become very discouraged on the way."* So, question I want to ask all of us here and people who are watching us online (and those who will watch us): what are you reaping today? Are you reaping disorder? See, disorder in your finances. No order in your home. Disorder in the way you spend your time. You don't know where the money comes and where the money goes. *Siri Vida vache vachenu; siri vida poye poyenu.* Siri means money. How does 'siri' come? It is as if coconuts are falling on you. That is how it comes – full money. *Siri vida poye poyenu.* So, you get a lot of money but gone. Within few days, it is gone. It's as if you have made money and you have kept it in a basket made of holes. Haggai says, "What is wrong with you? What is going on? Disorder in your finances." And by the end of the day, you are depressed. You know why? Because you were not rich towards God. "When My house was lying in ruins, you were building your own house." Disorder in your finances. Do you feel disorder in your finances? You feel always in a straight. You are never able to make ends meet. Is there disorder in our lives? See, disciplines are very important. Spiritual disciplines are very important. For example, I'm sure I heard this from Sundar Krishnan. He says something very interesting. He says, "When we discipline our children and we say 'clean up your room' and 'let things be in order', 'if you keep things in order, if you clean up the room, I'm going to give you a chocolate'." Why do they do it? Because they want to get the chocolate. The chocolate is, kind of, the blessing. But over a period of time, they understand that, "Making my room neat and disciplining my life is itself a blessing." Some people never have a time. They study till the last minute in the exam. I mean, there is one thing to study because you are revising over and over again. That's what I used to do. 72 hours, no sleep, till I get 100. That's because I'm revising over and over again. Some people are learning till the last minute. And it is an anomaly across the globe, not just in India. In Canada, also. One Egyptian, a brilliant Egyptian. He hired me as his tutor two days before the exam. And we will pay through this nose to pass. But of course, I want to make money. So, what do I do? 48 hours without sleep. No problem. Let us go. And I'm teaching him, the Egyptian student. I'm teaching him. One subject, second subject, and slowly, all the other students are watching me. They are also studying in the library. It's in a library room, discussion room. Very gently and we have to teach very quietly. Not a problem. All the other students are watching me. They are also struggling with the course. And slowly, they come up to me, "Sir, in 24 hours, we have an exam. Can you teach us also?" What are you doing? Till the last minute. And then, of course, I'm going to laugh all the way to the bank at your expense. You have to pay me ultimately. You already paid the university a hefty amount of fees. Now, you are paying me also. Disorder is a pattern in your life. Are you reaping it? Why have you come to this point in your life? What are you reaping, my dear brothers and sisters? What are you reaping? Feel shortened. Nothing is sufficient in your life. Is it possible that you are living your own life and not God's life?

Look Unto Him And Be Saved!

So, what do the people do? They are discouraged and,

Numbers 21:5

⁵And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?..."

This is the age-old problem right from Adam. It comes out in different formats. What do you do? You never take responsibility for your mess. Do you understand? The problem is – Adam, what happened? "Madam." "Adam?" "Madam. The madam You gave." This is what we call as '90-degree angle', orthogonal projections. They live in an orthogonal world, tangential hyperspace. They never take responsibility. "I'm not the problem here. The madam You gave me." This 'me' is hidden. Can you see it? No. Whom can you see? Only you can see the madam and 'You'. And what does madam say? "The serpent You made. Why did You make that fellow to look so beautiful?" Age-old problem. Right from the beginning. I think more than Adam eating, it was basically not confessing or agreeing to the fact that he messed up. It's amazing. That's how it is. We are all like that. "I wish I was born in a better family." "I wish my father was not like this." "I wish my husband is not like this." That is the reason why *Deuteronomy 8*, it says, "I brought you out of Egypt, not because you were good. I got you out of Egypt, not because you are best of all people. I got you out of Egypt, not because you were more stronger than the others. Notwithstanding all these, I got you out of Egypt. I led you to the wilderness. I caused you to hunger, fed you with manna to show what was in your heart. To humble you, to prove you, to see what was in your heart, to see how what a murmuring generation you are, that you would never take responsibility for your action. You would never, ever say that 'I was the one who messed it up'. I am the reason for my mess." I'll tell you why. Because we always want to feel good. It's very traumatic for us, sometimes, to accept the fact that we messed up in our lives. But you know something? Healing starts there. Age-old problem. People speak against who? First, God. "You were the One who did it all. Why did You create me?" That's the common question: if there were so much of suffering in the world, why did God...? Nobody will say, "Brother, how much of suffering have you caused in this world?" Nobody will say that. Who is the problem? God, who created this world, is the problem. They spoke against God and against Moses. See, this is the problem with our generation. There is absolute no reverence for authority. "You are the problem."

... "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread."

God-given bread. You loathe it? No wonder you are discouraged. No wonder your life feels shortened. We need to ask ourselves, my dear brothers and sisters. Really, honestly. Really, do we take personal responsibility? Naa jeevithaniki nenu bajyatha vesthunana (I'm taking responsibility for my life). Whatever mess I am in is because of me. I am the reason. Prime mover is me. And then, you know what? Deliverance starts. Complaining against God and complaining against Moses. It's what we call as 'murmuring spirit'. And it's very silent. It's called gongoosemo. I told you so many times – gongoosemo. It just vibrates through the entire camp. One fellow starts murmuring, everybody starts murmuring. How contagious it is! More contagious than corona! It's called 'murmur' and it spreads through contact with the murmuring person. Have you ever seen one murmuring person encouraging somebody? When he starts murmuring, that fellow, even if he is an encouraging person, he will also start murmuring. Murmur. It keeps going on! Murmuring! Do we have the murmuring spirit? There are so many reasons why we can murmur. I'll tell you how we murmur. *Matthew 20:7*. You know these people who are being hired by this guy, right? So, early morning, a few people are hired. After a few hours, another bunch of guys are hired. After a few hours, another bunch of guys are hired. And in the last hour also, a few guys are hired. And everybody agrees for how much? One denarii. Everybody has agreed. Look at what it says,

Matthew 20:7-15

⁷They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.'

He didn't say, "I will give you one denarii."

...whatever is right you will receive.' ⁸ ***"So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first.'*** ⁹ ***And when those came who were hired about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius.*** ¹⁰ ***But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and***

they likewise received each a denarius.¹¹ And when they had received it, they complained (murmured) against the landowner,¹² saying, 'These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.'¹³ But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?'¹⁴ Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you.¹⁵ Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?'

"...to somebody?" Are you evil? "Are you murmuring because I am good to somebody. Are you murmuring because I have blessed someone else's ministry? Because I have blessed somebody else's marriage? Are you murmuring because I have blessed somebody else's child? Are you murmuring because I have blessed somebody else's spouse? Are you murmuring because I have blessed another? And you think that I have circumvented you? Are you murmuring? Are you not counting your own blessings?" And you know why we murmur? Because we always compare. Comparison is a horrible sin. Compare. Murmuring. Are you murmuring. Complaints! Who is the problem? Moses is the problem. God is the problem.

Luke 5:30. Look at this, how it works out!

Luke 5:30

³⁰ And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, "Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

Whenever Jesus does something for those tax collectors and sinners, or for the people whom they despised, that's what happens, right? You give reservation; all the forward caste people start murmuring. Will you take responsibility? I'm not for or against reservation. I don't care about reservation. I'm not talking about that. I'm just looking at the attitudes of people. In fact, I don't want reservation. I don't care, first of all. Because once I'm in Christ, I don't have a caste. Christ and caste don't go together. So, we have these marriage bureaus, Chaudhary Christian, what Chaudhary Christian? Reddy Christian. Chaudhary Christian. Brahmin Christian. Christian. Do you see this? It's especially in Andhra. Tall, dark, handsome Chaudhary Christian. "Looking for a fair Chaudhary Christian girl." "How did you get a seat in Engineering? Reservation, is it?" "What's it for you?" You are complaining because somebody else got a seat. Why are you not saying, "I should have worked harder; I should have got a first rank"? No, you will not do that. You murmur and complain. "Oh, his father makes a lot of money and he also has reservation." What's wrong with you? Just forget it, man. Just look at your own life. I've seen that in a lot of believers, unfortunately. I was also like that. Later on, God had to rebuke me through this particularly – "Are you murmuring because I have given somebody else? Shut your mouth. Do you see how blessed you are?" Comparing. And you start. And ultimately, we become – Nenu saitam, sri sri. We become communist and we got against the establishment. Who is the establishment? Moses and God.

John 6:41

⁴¹ The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven."

See, the point is – they are not able to accept the Word? Who started complaining? The Jews started complaining, "You should eat this bread." "No, no, no. How can we eat the words which come out a Carpenter's mouth? He should have, at least, graduated from our seminary. Then, we would have taught about it."

John 6:61

⁶¹ When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this (eating His flesh and drinking His Blood), He said to them, "Does this offend you?"

Are you offended because of something? That hour that God has spoken into your life, are you offended? Whenever you are offended, you will start murmuring. Whom do you murmur against? God. Classic example – Madam Ruth 1:20-21,

Ruth 1:20-21

²⁰ But she said to them, "Do not call me Naomi..."

Naomi means, what? Pleasant. "Hi Pleasant." "No, I'm not pleasant. Call me bitter." Why? "Because." No, she didn't say, "God."

...call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.

“He is the Almighty, right? He could have worked out everything in my life but He chose.” But she will never talk about her own disobedience. “Why did you ever leave the Promised Land? Was it not the Promised Land? Why did you leave the Promised Land? Because you had bread somewhere and you came back because you heard that there was bread here. That means you are always moved by bread. You didn't come because you love Me; you love bread. And you are complaining about Me. Where am I in the picture? Did you ever ask Me?” Like Pastor was saying – there was a famine. The famine is not the problem. The famine of the hearing of the Word of the Lord is the problem. Are you all understanding?

²¹ I went out full, and the Lord has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the Lord has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?”

You know what the word is? “The LORD worked against me.” That’s what it means. “He was unrighteous with me.” Problem is – do we murmur? Do we have a murmuring spirit? That’s the one of the reasons why I always practice to just look at my own life. What’s happening in my life. I don’t even want to hear about anything else, seriously. Because I don’t want to know the bad, the good, the evil or the ugly of anybody because there is sufficient garbage in my own life. And notwithstanding the garbage, God has still been very kind and faithful and merciful to me. I am not comparing with anybody. I don’t want to compare myself with anybody. Comparison leads to competition. Dangerous. Competition in the Church. How can two brothers compete? Oh, my goodness! Jealousy and competition in the Church. You just be the best that you can be. I’m not saying that we should be exhorted and encouraged and be challenged by people’s lives. That is not what I’m talking about. God is sovereign and He has given me better than what I deserve, right? What I deserve. See, when you are convinced as to what you deserve, you will always be happy about what you have and you will never complain. What complaints do we have as a Church? Any complaint as a Church? Are we not the most blessed people of planet earth as of now? No complaints only. Like Pastor was praying in the morning, “We have been eating and feasting and we have been also, eating and feasting of the Word and the food. And full of electricity. Live telecast.” Kya bhaat hain! In the comfort of your home, you can just listen to the Word of God. Has God not been good to us? Do we have any reasons to murmur and complain? I don’t think so. The bottom line is – we don’t want to take responsibility because that is traumatic. Because then, we have to say, “I’m not good.” And if I’m not good, we have to confess that, “There is nothing good in me.” But we will not be like Apostle Paul, who is the most brilliant fellow on planet earth. If Apostle Paul was living during Albert Einstein’s time, I’m sure he would have given him a run for his money. Every computer scientist would have become a fool when compared to Apostle Paul. Look at his letters! You would have had the Holy of Holies experience only, if you were next to Apostle Paul. “Woe to me. I am undone,” if you look at his life. You know what he says? “I know that there is nothing good in my flesh. O wretched man that I am, who can deliver me from this body of death?” My dear brothers and sisters, let us always examine our hearts and say, “Lord, I am responsible for my mess. Not my children. Not my wife. Not my parents. Not my Pastor. Not my boss. Not my co-workers.” “One Pastor betrayed me. That’s the reason why I’m in this mess.” What are you talking about that Pastor? Which Pastor? Who Pastor? I always look at the worst-case scenario. Who was David’s Pastor? Anybody can tell me? Who was he under? Samuel did not mentor him, by the way. Who was David’s Pastor? Saul. What did he ask him to do? “You want to marry my daughter? Get hundred Philistine foreskins.” He wanted to please him and he went and brought 200. Did any of your Pastor ask you to do that? This fellow goes and does it. Complain. You know why? You don’t want to take responsibility for your own actions. You know why? It’s too traumatic for you to look at your own life. But God says, “When I come,” that’s why *John 3* says, “I did not come. The Son of Man did not come to the world to condemn the world but that world through Him might be saved.” “You are thinking that accepting your situation is traumatic. Look at the trauma that I went through for you on the Cross.” We will come to that later on.

So, what does the Lord do? *Numbers 21:6*.

Numbers 21:6

⁶ So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.

Now, fiery serpents are only an external thing of what is already internal. What is internal? Murmuring. The word ‘sent’, of course, comes from the Hebrew word ‘shalak’, which means – to be let loose. To let loose something, what should be its previous situation? It should have been tied. “I let loose my dog.” What does it mean? The dog was tied. Or the dog was

Look Unto Him And Be Saved!

restrained. The dog always wanted to pounce on you but I restrained. Every time you go there, you say, "Please tie the dog up." "Restrain that fellow." Restraining order. Muzzle that fellow. In other words, if you release him, finished. You know what God is saying? "Already, the enemy is looking at you. I am restraining him." What am I doing? "I am restraining him. I'm just going to remove my restraining influences. What will happen?" Problems start coming into the life. Restrained. He just took off His restraining influence and what has happened? Fiery serpents came. 'Fiery' means temperature increased. It like the fever increased. It's like Corona. The fever started increasing. Many people died. Because God took away His restraining influence from your life. That's exactly what happened to Saul. God took away His hand. The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul and then, an evil spirit, from the Lord, started tormenting him. Restraining influence is gone and the man of lawlessness will be revealed very soon. They are all tied now and He actually has tied a lot of those demons under the Euphrates river and one day, He is going to let them loose also. It says in the *Book of Revelation*. Those fellows will also come out now – frogs and everything. All unclean spirits will come and the whole world will be full of sin because God removes His restraining hand over their lives. See, what happens? When you are let loose to do your own thing, there is already iniquity inside of you. "*I was birthed in sin and shaped in iniquity.*" Sufficient poison is there already to kill you. The fiery serpents are only an external thing to prove what is already internal. *Romans 3:10-18*. This is a full study. We did it in our Romans Bible Study.

Romans 3:10-18

¹⁰ As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; ¹¹ There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. ¹² They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."

And how does he come to that conclusion?

¹³ "Their throat is an open tomb..."

It's a grave. Noru ipputhe kampu koduthadi anumaata (if you open your mouth, it stinks), basically. It stinks because there is decay. The moment you open the mouth, there is decay that is coming out. Bad breath. God says, "Don't open your mouth. It's bad breath. Kampu (stink)."

...With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps is under their lips";

Kya bhaat hain! Full of poison already!

¹⁴ "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." ¹⁵ "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ¹⁶ Destruction and misery are in their ways; ¹⁷ And the way of peace they have not known." ¹⁸ "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

It's a sin. That is what Pastor was talking about yesterday.

1 Corinthians 15:56

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.

Why are you dying? Because of the fiery serpents of God. That is, essentially, what is already there inside of you. Restraining influences have been taken away. And what has happened? They are all dying. Thank God, they saw people die and they learnt a lesson. Many people don't learn their lessons.

Luke 13:1-5

¹ There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ² And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things?"

O, so many people have died because of Corona Virus. Do you think you, Christians, are worse sinners than others?

³ I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.

What is the key? Repent. It's a parable. It's happening right in front of your eyes.

⁴Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem?⁵ I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.

And then, the disciple comes and asks, “Lord, are there few who will be saved?” He says, “Strive to enter through the narrow gate because many will try to seek to it.” You know what the word ‘strive’ means? It comes from the word ‘agonize’. Strive for mastery. Who strives for mastery according to the Bible? An athlete and a boxer. Because He says, “I don’t box as one beating the air.” That means – every punch has to land with a knockout blow. Muhammad Ali, right? Fly like a butterfly, sting like a bee. It’s landing. When it lands, it lands. And it finishes him. That fellow is gone. It’s like, “Bye, bye, baby!” He’s gone. Strive. In other words, He says, “Unless and until you come to a point and you say ‘Lord, there is nothing good in me unless I repent’.”

So, what happens to these guys?

Numbers 21:7

⁷Therefore the people came to Moses...

First, you should see the person whom you can see. And then, you should go to the person whom you cannot see. “I will confess my sins to God.” No, first, you go to Moses. Which is easier to do? Confessing the sins to God or to man? Easier to God. That is the reason why He told David, “Okay, your confession is fine but do one thing – write a Psalm and let the whole world know. And in the introduction of the psalter, for your song, it will be written – ‘the song of David when Nathan, the prophet, came to him and confronted him about the incident of Bathsheba’. And the whole world will know. Confess.” Do you all understand? That means – what is justification by faith alone apart from the works of the law? You are saying, “Lord, I die to my reputation with men.” If I go to him and ask him for forgiveness, he will look down upon me. I don’t want to make myself cheap. I can ask forgiveness from God. ‘Okay, God. I did these mistakes’.” God says, “You have to go to the person, first, whom you have offended. You come to the altar and you try to bring your gift to Me and then, you remember, what? That your brother has something against you. Leave your gift first. Go and get reconciled to your brother.” That’s the reason why relationships are not easy. Maintaining healthy relationships are not easy and then, you will know that you cannot have many relationships. Because if you have many relationships, you would have offended a lot of people and you would have to ask forgiveness from this person, from that person. Have few. Offend those few and then, make your life simple. Just joking. I always get scared to have many friends because what if I mess up this fellow? Then, I have to go and say, “Brother, forgive me. I did this.” I’m a human. It’s definitely possible in some way or the other, for the many years I’ve known Raj, I would have offended him. Poor fellow. I have messed up his marriage already. His wedding ceremony with the translation. I should have said, “You find another fellow.” But I went in my zeal and I messed it up. So, for the rest of my life, I have to remember that. I have to keep on asking forgiveness. The point is this – relationships are not easy. “First, you go to Moses. Don’t come to Me. Go to Moses. It’s difficult, right? That’s what desperation means. These are killing me. “What do you want? Do you want to die on the serpent or do you want to go to Moses? What do you want? Come on! Tell Me.” “Okay, Lord. We will go to Moses!” But at least, that was a physical problem. They could run to Moses. But what about us? Sin is so deceitfulness. We think everything is okay when everything is not okay. Go to Moses first.

And what should you say?

...and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us.”...

I don’t know what serpent is biting you, my dear brothers and sisters, of those who are watching. What is the serpent that is biting you and killing you and taking your life and you are not even aware of it? Unforgiveness and bitterness in your heart. Offense. One thing you will not do – you will not humble yourself and go to Moses. Whoever that Moses may be in your life. Moses could be your wife. Sometimes, it could be your son. It could be your daughter. It could be your children, small children. I don’t know how many times I told ‘sorry’ to my children. “What will they think about me? Daddy’s weak.” No! I will not put something in their lives which is not true about Daddy. Daddy is as bad as a sinner as you are. He also needs the mercy of God and the grace of God to live. What is it that is stopping you? What is that fiery serpent which is killing you and you are not even aware of it? Remember in *Matthew 18*? This fellow doesn’t forgive the servant. And what does God say? “Release him

Look Unto Him And Be Saved!

to the tormentors.” What is tormenting you and what is killing you? If it is tormenting you only on earth, there is still time. There is hope for you. Don’t take that torment into eternity.

Matthew 3:5-6

⁵ Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him ⁶ and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.

Like Pastor was saying about books. So many books are written about you. So much of database. Now, we know, in this book. I’m reading a lot of books in digital format only. God has got Terrabytes of data there. Servers are full. He doesn’t have to have these books like this. We think of books as this in our minds. No. One click in the button. You yourselves, with your computers and your brains, you are able to handle Big Data. What do you say, Sammy? YouTube is able to handle big, big data. God has got no problem. He has got Terabytes. I don’t know what bytes. Hexa, penta, Terra, Giga, Mega, Peta, Zeta. There are so many bytes. Think about it all your life. All that database is there. Do you want to delete that database? I’m speaking your language. One algorithm is there is to delete, to hack into your server. You can’t hack in. There’s only one way to hack into the server. You know who can hack in? Jesus can hack in, if you confess. Only those sins which you have confessed, will be blotted out. Specifics. “Yes, Lord, I sinned against you.” “What are the sins?”

...confessing their sins.

“Yes, Lord, I sinned against you.” What is that sin? “Tell Me, specifically.” That is repentance. Repentance involves two things. Confession. The fruit of repentance has two things – confession and restitution. Confession means – you confess to God. Restitution means – if you have to go and ask for forgiveness from somebody, you have to ask forgiveness from somebody. If you have to forgive somebody, you have to forgive that person. If you have to return something to somebody, you have to return something to somebody. That’s what he says, “Half my goods, I give to the poor and if I have taken, I return it fourfold.” “We have sinned against the Lord, against Moses.” Let’s go back to *Numbers*. This is repentance. Repentance involves confession and a lot of things.

Numbers 21:8

⁸ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent,

Are you experiencing a curse because of sin? “I am a just God. I have to punish sin. What am I supposed to do? I have to punish. I am both just and merciful.”

Exodus 34:6-

⁶ And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, ⁷ keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.”

God is a merciful God. God is a just God. God just not forgives sin. That means – whatever serpent is biting you, that serpent has to be judged. That poison has to be taken by somebody so that God can extend mercy towards us. Like we heard, there is no free lunch. Drinks on the house. What does that mean? The owner is paying but you are enjoying. Somebody has paid. “Your fee has been waived.” That means they’ve got funding. Somebody gave taxes.

Let’s go back now.

Numbers 21:8

⁸ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole...

That’s exactly what Nicodemus tells Jesus, “Just as the Moses raised up the bronze serpent on the pole, so that everyone who looks at Him might be saved and be given life and live. That was a parable about Me, Nicodemus. Your sin which is there inside of you. Your sin which is killing you. The serpents which you don’t see, I have to take it upon Myself so that you might live.” That’s the Gospel. That’s the Cross. That’s the message of the Cross which is foolishness to those who are perishing. To

Look Unto Him And Be Saved!

the Jews, it's a stumbling block. To the Greeks, it is foolishness but unto us who are being saved, Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God.

Colossians 2:13-23

¹³ And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, ¹⁴ having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, (how?) having nailed it to the cross. ¹⁵ Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. ¹⁶ So let no one judge you...

He nailed to the Cross. What happened to Him? 2 *Corinthians* 5:21. We know it very well by this time.

2 Corinthians 5:21

²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

He did not sin. He did not know sin. He was tempted in all areas. He never sinned; yet, He became sin. Boy! You know, we will never be able to comprehend that. All eternity, we will be speaking about the riches of His grace. "O, for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise; the glories of the Lord and King."

'Tis mys'try all the immortal died. Who can explain His strange design? In vain, the firstborn seraph cries and tries to explain the Love Divine. 'Tis mercy all, let earth adore. Let angel minds inquire no more. Amazing Love, how can it be, that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me? He left His Father's throne above; so free, so infinite, His love. Grace, emptied Himself of all, but love. And bled for Adam's helpless race. Tis mercy all, immense and free. For, O, my God, it found out me! Amazing love, how can it be that, Thou, My God, shouldst die for me? Long, my imprisoned spirit lay, fast bound in sin and nature's night. Thine eye diffuse the quickening ray. I woke the dungeon, filled with light. My chains fell off, my heart was free. I rose, went forth and followed Thee. Amazing Love, how can it be that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me? No condemnation, now, I dread. Jesus and all in Him is mine. Alive in Him, my living head and clothed in righteousness divine. Bold, I approach the eternal throne and claim the crown of Christ, my own. Amazing love, how can it be that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

This is truth, my dear brothers and sisters. This is the Gospel. *In vain, the firstborn seraph tries.* The angels desire to look into it. That's what he says, the songwriter, John Wesley; he says, "In vain, the firstborn seraph tries." To sound the depths of love divine. *Tis mercy all, let love adore, Let angel minds inquire no more.*" Please, don't even try. Learn it from the Church. Learn it from these redeemed people. Learn it from these blood-bought saints who have overcome satan by the Blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their testimony.

John 12:32-33. Why am I saying all these?

John 12:32-33

³² And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." ³³ This He said, signifying by what death He would die.

How can an immortal God, a sinless God die? It is not 'how can He die?'; it is – why did He die? He died because of my sin and He is righteous. He became the serpent, the fiery serpent. He took our sin upon Himself and He drank it. Now, we have this, "Chesinanu prema ksheerasagara madhuram." Ksheerasagamini madhurincha tharuvaatha emi vachidhanta? You know, when they did the madhanam of the ksheerasagamam, the milk, what came? Poison came. And because poison came, they wanted amrutam (eternal life), poison came. So, what did Shiva do? He drank the poison and he put it in his throat. That's the reason why it is called 'neelakanta'. You know who is the original neelakanta – my Jesus. He just didn't drink the poison and keep it in his throat. He died. It's a mystery. He died for my sin so that I can have amrutam, eternal life.

Can we explain this God, my dear brothers and sisters? What a God He is! What an amazing God! What do we have as a problem? He says, "I'll take away your poison but can you just please accept that you are a sinner? Can you just please confess? How long will you keep on saying 'I'm not responsible?' I'm ready to take that poison upon Myself. I'm ready."

Let's go back to *Numbers*,

Numbers 21:8

⁸Then the Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live."

The second death is more important. We can be bitten by the Corona virus but that's not as dangerous as the danger of sin. That's just a parable. That's what Pastor was talking about yesterday – be scared and fear the One, who, after killing your body, has got the power to put you in hell – that's the second death. The Gospel is to save you from the second death. First death is okay. Everybody will die whether by corona or not by corona.

Numbers 21:9

⁹So Moses made a bronze serpent...

What does 'bronze' stand for? Judgment. Sin was judged on the Cross.

...and put it on a pole...

And what do they have to do? Nothing. Just look. Not by works. Nothing in my hands, I bring. Simply to Thy Cross, I cling. Naked, come to Thee for dress. Helpless, look to Thee for grace but I give grace to the humble." Humble yourself, confess your sins, repent of it. "Foul I, to Thy fountain fly. Wash me, Saviour, or I die."

Peter, what a challenge for us, to lead worship in Telugu and in English and in other languages; to find those songs which can inspire music, which talk about the Cross. The Cross, the Cross. "At the Cross, at the Cross, where I first saw the light. All the burdens of my heart rolled away. It was there, by faith, I receive my sight."

So, this afternoon, He became a sin for you so that you can become the righteousness of God.

Galatians 3:13-14

¹³Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), ¹⁴that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

His curse for our blessing. He was cursed for our blessing.

2 Corinthians 8:9

⁹For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

In what? In forgiveness. Generous in forgiveness. Generous in money. See, that's all mercy. You are showing mercy. You know why? Because you extended mercy. Rich is not how much you have; rich is how much you give away. We heard it so many times.

Isaiah 61:1-3

¹"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, Because the Lord has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; ²To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord...

Of course, Jesus didn't talk about it. We know that, right? Why? Because He took that Day of vengeance upon Himself so that we could escape the ultimate day which is coming – the Day of the Lord. And then, it says,

...And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn,

Are you mourning for your sin this morning?

³*To console those who mourn in Zion...*

Are you in Zion, in the Church of God and you are saying, “Lord, I have messed up so much.” Confess. You know what He is going to give you? He is going to exchange sin and give you righteousness. He can exchange curse and He is going to give you blessing. He is going to exchange poverty and He is going to give you richness. He is going to exchange ashes and He is going to give you beauty. He is going to exchange mourning and give you oil of joy. He is going to exchange the spirit of heaviness and give you a garment of praise that you may called, what?

...That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.”

You know why? Because His righteousness is upheld upon the Cross and His mercy is upheld and mercy has triumphed over judgment and you know what? Who gets the glory? God gets the glory. Nothing. We only become the recipients of His blessings and His goodness. Shall we accept His goodness this morning? Shall we all stand? Let’s pray.

Closing Prayer:

O Lord, You are a good God and Your mercy endures forever. No wonder, Your Word says that Your mercy endures forever. Unless and unless we have enduring mercy, we could never cancel out enduring judgment. Father, we want to live under that shadow of Your mercy and continuously experience Your mercy and grant us the grace to extend mercy. And this morning, I pray, Father, for all of us who messed up; everybody, starting with me – we all messed up. We want to take responsibility for our actions and grant us the grace and the humility to make right things with man and things with God so that we can have a clear conscience with God and we can have a clear conscience with man. Grant us grace to that end, we pray. Bless all of us and let Your Word continue to burn in our hearts and grant us Your Spirit so that we can have the understanding of Your Word as well. We thank You. We praise You. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.