

How Strong Are Your Convictions?

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Father, we just thank You, Lord. We praise You. Father, for Your goodness in our lives, we just want to thank You. You are an awesome God. This morning, Father, even as we now meditate upon Your Word, speak to our hearts. We need You, Lord. We need You to speak to us. We need You, Father to open our minds and our understanding. We need You, Lord, to anoint us, to grant us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation that we will know You, Lord, that we will follow hard after You -just not only know You but follow You hard- and Lord, that we will love You with all of our heart and accomplish, O Lord, the purpose for which You have brought us out of darkness into Your light. Therefore, never allow us to forget, O Lord, the reason why You purchased us; that we have been redeemed not with perishable things like gold and silver but by the imperishable, the precious blood of the lamb, a lamb without spot and without blemish. Therefore, I pray this morning, Father, that Lord, You, once again, sanctify us and set us apart a little more that You will challenge us, O Lord, to go and search the Scriptures for ourselves; that we just not be hearers, that we just not be satisfied hearing the voice of man but, Lord, that we would be encouraged and exhorted to go to Your Word and to start becoming students of the Word of God, understand things for our own selves and walk with You, O Lord. To that end, I pray this morning that You bless even the hearing and speaking and anoint us all- the speaking of the Word as well as the hearing of the Word- here and all around the world. We thank You, Lord, for this time. For in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

The first word that I want to us to look this morning is found in the Gospel according to *Matthew 13:52*.

Matthew 13:52

⁵² Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old."

I love that word. What an amazing promise! "He said!" This is after, of course, expounding the Parable of the Sower, the Parable of the wheat and tares, the Parable of the leaven, the Parable of the dragnet and so many things that Jesus speaks to the disciples about the Parables of the Kingdom of God. Finally, He signs off with this fantastic verse, which is a promise and a challenge to all of us, who are here and all of us, who are listening online. It says, "Every scribe!" First of all, we all have to be scribes. A scribe is a one who goes to class like Ezra, who was a perfect scribe.

Ezra 7:8-10

⁸ And Ezra came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king.

Ezra was a scribe.

⁹ On the first day of the first month he began his journey from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him. ¹⁰ For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.

This is what Ezra as a scribe was. He sought, he prepared his heart and I believe, I hope all of us here are encouraged and challenged to prepare our hearts.

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.

⁴ Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, And take away the foreskins of your hearts,

Prepare your heart. Don't sow the seed or let the seed not fall on ground, which is hard, shallow or even among thorns, where the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and desires for other things are choking the Word of God but prepare for yourselves that your heart be set apart, prepared not only to teach others but to do the Word of God first. That's what a scribe does. A scribe is a one who is preparing his heart. Therefore, I want to ask all of us this morning- are we prepared in our hearts to seek Word of God?

Matthew 13:52

⁵² Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old."

Every scribe, what is he first? He has to become instructed. He has to become a disciple. There are several scribes who take notes, they are forever learning but never coming to the knowledge of truth. That's what I call 'laughing buddhas'. They become like fattened calves. They become like Jeshurun in the spiritual knowledge but they haven't become disciples. So, every scribe has to become a disciple of the Kingdom, right? Then what does He do? Every scribe who has become a disciple of the Kingdom, he is like a steward finally. There are scribes, there are disciples and there are stewards of people, who are faithful. What does a steward do? He exactly knows what things of old and what things of the new have to be brought out. This morning, I will bring out something, which I have learned (in fact I believe this is one of the first studies that I actually shared when I was called to preach from the pulpit; one of the first, not the first teaching), which I taught when I was called to share from the pulpit. So, I am bringing back things I learned so many years; it's been there deposited in my heart. This morning, I want to share from that.

1 Corinthians 10:1-5

Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, ²all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. ⁵But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

We know that *without faith it is impossible to please God*. The whole idea of teaching the word of God is (*faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God*) that we increase in our faith, that we will be ready for the challenges ahead, have faith in the person of Jesus Christ, that we would know Him in a deeper way, in a more complete sense; not just knowing little bit of who God is in terms of His character, but have a more thorough understanding who He is and therefore, we can approach Him with that kind of knowledge of who He is.

Jude 1:5

⁵ But I want to remind you, though you once knew this,

We all know this but we are doing reminder classes. Not remedial classes, but reminder classes! For some of you, it is remedial classes also, I don't know but it's a reminder class!

⁵ But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

Therefore, He was not pleased with most of them and He also destroyed them. Because He was not pleased with them, He also destroyed them because they did not believe. They didn't have faith and *without faith, it is impossible to please God*. Therefore, God is saying, these are all examples. So, these were all bad examples. So, He says, "Don't follow the bad examples." *With most of them God was not well pleased*. That means with a few of them at least, He was well pleased. So, who are those few? At least only three- Moses, Joshua and Caleb! So, this morning, we will look at these three people in the Bible, who had a fantastic attitude and who become overcomers. They did believe and therefore, they became overcomers. So, they had faith.

In the Bible, you have negative examples of people who did not believe and positive examples of people who did believe. It's very important for us to understand negative examples of people who did not believe- all the negative examples of people who had unbelief. Yesterday like we heard in the morning, unbelief is a terrible sin. 'You do not believe!' What does it say? *He will convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. Of sin, because they did not believe in Me*. That is the reason why, 'why is the world convicted of sin?' is not because they are doing horrible things. The world is convicted of sin because they do not believe in Me (Jesus). Unbelief is a root cause of all sin. Pride and unbelief are huge sins. Both are spiritual sins. Therefore, we have to be cleansed of every filthiness of the spirit and of the flesh. I believe so. Unbelief is one thing. You

How Strong Are Your Convictions?

don't believe in the finished work of Jesus on the cross. Therefore, there are negative examples of people who did not believe and positive examples of people who believed or people who had faith.

Hebrews 11:1-2 (ESV)

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

We know that. Yesterday, we heard that. It says, "Faith has strong convictions." Because faith has strong convictions, they have an assurance of the things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. *Romans* will say, "Who hopes for things he sees? If we hope for things we do not see, we wait for it with patience." Hope is always associated with things that you do not see. Therefore faith has convictions because we have assurance of hope.

² For by it the people of old received their commendation.

They were commended because of their strong convictions. Now the question therefore is- do we have strong convictions?

Turn to *John 8:9*. This is when Jesus is telling them, "He who is without sin, cast the first stone." Look at what it says.

John 8:9

⁹ Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last.

You see they had convictions. Their conscience had convictions. They were convicted in their conscience. That is the reason why it says, *conscience either excuses you or accuses you*. They were accused by their conscience because their conscience had strong convictions. Today this morning, what convictions do we have? Do we have convictions? It's a question! Look at one guy who had strong convictions in *2 Samuel 11:6*. This is of course, Uriah the Hittite. This is after David commits adultery with Bathsheba. Now he wants to deceive his close friend.

2 Samuel 11:6-11

⁶ Then David sent to Joab, saying, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent Uriah to David. ⁷ When Uriah had come to him, David asked how Joab was doing, and how the people were doing, and how the war prospered. ⁸ And David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah departed from the king's house, and a gift of food from the king followed him.

This is what we call 'bribing'. This is how David wanted to bribe Uriah and deceive him into going to his house. He left his house but look at what it says.

⁹ But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. ¹⁰ So when they told David, saying, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "Did you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?" ¹¹ And Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are dwelling in tents, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open fields. Shall I then go to my house to eat and drink, and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing."

Look at this. "Eating and drinking is not a bad thing. Lying with my wife is not a bad thing but at this moment, I cannot go there." He had strong convictions. He had a sense of duty. That is the reason why it says in Gospel according to *Luke*, when you did all these things, are you looking for commendation from your master? No! You should say, "We are unprofitable servants. We did what we were supposed to do." We have strong convictions. We cannot be bought. Nothing can change our convictions. Question: do we have strong convictions like Uriah? Ark of the Lord is there in tent and people are fighting, should we?

Hebrews 13:1-3

Let brotherly love continue. ² Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels. ³ Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also.

How Strong Are Your Convictions?

This the conviction that he had. People are fighting the war. They are in the front line of the battlefield. I may not be going through the kind of persecutions that they are going through but I am joined with them. I have convictions. I am not separate from them. I cannot indulge in the flesh. I cannot go and enjoy myself. I cannot think about eating and drinking and enjoying my life. No! I cannot just think about my family. There is a war going on! There is a war for people's souls, which is going on. How can I just go home and sleep? A conviction! It's very important for us all. Maybe that is the reason why we need to take up a fast, not because we can't eat. There are so many people in the frontline in the battlefield who are fasting and praying and they are absolutely in the line of attack there and because of them, so many things are restrained in our lives. The reason why so many things have happened in our lives, where we enjoy protection and are restrained from the wrath of God and wrath of devil is because there are some people right out there interceding for us.

That's exactly what happens to Amos. Amos sees this incredible plague coming, right? He sees locusts coming. They are about to devour Israel. This hasn't happened yet. Amos looks at the locusts coming and he pleads with God, he says, "Lord, why are you sending this judgment? People of Israel are not prepared." Do you know what God says? "Okay. Fine. Let the locusts not come." There was one man, Amos, who could stand between the gap and intercede for these people. Did Israel have any clue as to what was going on in the front line? No! Absolutely no clue! Amos was the only person who could see the judgments of God and Judah and Israel were absolutely asleep. That is the reason why it says, *"This is the iniquity of your sister Sodom-pride, fullness of bread, abundance of idleness and they did not prepare the hand of the needy."*

You see, we need these convictions. There are so many people, who are spiritually going into outer darkness. So many people, believers in the body of Christ, who do not have the strength; weak people, who don't have the spiritual strength. What do we do? We fight and say, "Lord, I am available here. I have strong convictions. I am not going to let down my guard. I am going to fast and pray and seek You in the Word. I am going to seek You in prayer. I am going to seek You listening to the messages. I am going to seek You. Lord, show me anointed godly men, who would strengthen me so that I can be a part in this battle." Turn with me to *Genesis 14*.

Genesis 14:12-14

¹² They also took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed. ¹³ Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, for he dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner; and they were allies with Abram. ¹⁴ Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

Do you see that? Every scribe has to be instructed in the Kingdom of heaven and he has to become a steward who will fight the battles. Amazing! This is what he is talking about. Three hundred and eighteen trained people in his own house! They were 'men'. 318 trained servants! They were spiritually men. They were not women.

1 Corinthians 14:20

²⁰ Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.

Other translation KJV will use the word 'man'. Be man.

Ephesians 4:11-14

¹¹ And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

What is he talking about? He is saying, we should no longer be immature children. We should be a set of people upon whom God can give responsibility. That's the whole idea. So let us have strong convictions. It's amazing how the man of God who fought the battles of Israel can now just slacken off. It can happen to anybody. That's the whole point. If the opportunity arises and if God were to take away His hand from our lives, we are all prone to wander.

How Strong Are Your Convictions?

'Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it; Prone to leave the God I love'

We are all prone! For example, look at what it says in *1 Corinthians 9:24-27*, which is essentially precursor to *1 Corinthians 10*.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

²⁴Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. ²⁵And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. ²⁶Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight...

How does he fight? This is basically a boxer!

...not as one who beats the air. ²⁷But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

He is scared. He says, "I don't want to lose my sensitivity to the Spirit." I don't want to lose my sensitivity to the strength of my convictions. I want to guard it with all of my heart. Have strong convictions, this morning. Therefore, *Hebrews 11* will say, *faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen, for by that our people of old received commendation*. A commendation from whom? From God! It pleased God. Faith has always got to do with God.

We will look at a bunch of guys this morning or maybe two people – Joshua and Caleb; maybe not Caleb, but mostly Joshua, a person who was in the wilderness, who was a positive example. The others were all negative examples. The reason why I want to use this particular person is that when you have a lot of people who are contrary to God, it's very difficult to stand alone. Let's say, you have a class of 70 people and out of 70, 69 people say, "We should go on a strike against the management." You have the conviction that you should not go against God's authority. Remember when Paul says, "*I always have striven to have clear conscience with God and man*"? Suddenly one fellow comes and slaps him on his face and he looks at him and he says, "You whitewashed tomb!" Things come out of his mouth. Suddenly, he says, "How come you are speaking to a high priest like that?" He says, "My brothers, I am sorry. I didn't know he was a high priest. For it is written, *thou shall not lift up your voice against the judge of your people*." The high priest is in a position of a judge. I don't know whether he has got real strong convictions.

1 Samuel 24:5-7

⁵Now it happened afterward that David's heart troubled him because he had cut Saul's robe.

All his men, what did they say? "Let us strike Saul down."

⁶And he said to his men, "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord."

Think about it. This guy lost his anointing. It says, the Spirit of God departed from Saul and an evil spirit from God is upon him now. A few times, he prophesies after that but the time he prophesies, he prophesies naked. He has lost his touch. He has lost the anointing of God over his life. He is gone. But David is not going to put his hand upon that fellow. Remember, the high priest tears his robe? When does the high priest tear his robe? "Are you the Son of the blessed one? Answer me." He says, "yes and you shall see the Son of Man coming from the heavens (He is quoting from Daniel 7) and sitting at the right hand of the Father." Immediately, what does the high priest do? He tears his robes. He is never supposed to tear his garments. It says in *Leviticus*, they are never supposed to tear their garments. But the moment, he tears his garments, now the authority shifts from Aaronic priesthood and falls on Jesus, the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek. But notwithstanding the fact, Paul will still say, "I should not have spoken ill against ruler of God's people." Remarkable, isn't it? That is strong conviction, my dear brothers and sisters. I cannot reiterate it over and over again.

⁷So David restrained his servants with these words, and did not allow them to rise against Saul.

How Strong Are Your Convictions?

You see, this is a remarkable thing for all of us. You could be the one guy in the entire class, who will become ‘the proverbial sore thumb. You will say, “No. My convictions don’t allow me to go against the management. My conviction don’t allow me to speak against my manager. My convictions don’t allow me to speak against authority. My convictions don’t allow me to compromise on time. My convictions don’t allow me to sit in the cafeteria beyond what I am allowed to sit in. I want to be there.” That is the reason why it says, *those who steal should steal no more but they should learn to work with their own hands in order that they may have something to give*. We don’t steal money maybe but we steal time. Do we? It’s a question!

We have to be absolutely dedicated. When you do certain things with all of your heart, when you love what you are doing, you will always be disciplined in it. I call it ‘the expulsive power of a competing affection’ (Thomas Chalmers). What is an expulsive power of a competing affection? If you love something, if you want to get up in the morning to watch a tournament, you are very disciplined. “Tomorrow we have to go for a trip. Children, be ready by 7 o’clock.” They are up by 5.30. They can’t even see with the light. Why? The joy! It’s an expulsive power of a competing affection. The question is- are you doing something that you love? Or are you really dedicated to your work? Do you enjoy it? Lot of people don’t enjoy work. You don’t have to enjoy what you are doing but you should enjoy the process. So many times, I didn’t enjoy so many things I did in my life but I did go though it because the process will help you. Think about it. What has got an engineer to do with Bible? The most unlikely! Unbelievable it is! But there was a process, which I went through. That is helping and I enjoyed that process and now I enjoy this process also.

So, you can be the restraining influence. Strong convictions! So let us look at Joshua and Caleb this morning. Joshua and Caleb were people who entered into the promised land along with the next generation. About that generation, God has something remarkable to say. That generation, which was faithful to Him through the wilderness and entered into the promised land. Something beautiful God had to say about them. Do you know where it is? It is found in the book of *Jeremiah* chapter 2. Something beautiful! Not about the generation, which murmured. We are not looking at the bad examples today. We are looking at the good examples. We want to get the attitude that they had so that we will ask ourselves this morning, “Lord, do we have that kind of attitude?”

Jeremiah 2:1-3

Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ²“Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord: “I remember you,

What do I remember about you?

The kindness of your youth,

When we were young lovers,

The love of your betrothal,

That means, “You were not married to Me, but you were just engaged to Me.” Do you know when people get engaged? They just can’t put the phone down. They are in perpetual communication mode- talking, talking, talking! Why? It’s because they are absolutely in love.

...I remember you, The kindness of your youth...

The word ‘kindness’ comes from the Hebrew word, ‘chesed’, which means steadfast love or loving kindness or covenantal love. ‘Chesed’ of your youth!

The love of your betrothal

“You were engaged to Me.” It’s like Joseph was engaged to Mary. Whenever people get engaged, they sit together and they will make plans: How do we make our home? What do we buy? What we don’t buy? We will plan ahead. When should we buy our car? When should we have our first child? etc. Planning! So many things don’t happen according to our plans but

How Strong Are Your Convictions?

notwithstanding the fact, we still plan. We sit together and we say, "This is what we need to do. Five years down the line, you become this in your company and I become this in my company and together, we will buy one apartment. You pay the EMI for the apartment and I will pay the EMI for the car. We will send our children to Oakridge or whatever." We have all plans. That is exactly what God is saying, "Remember the kind of love that we had? We used to communicate. We used to make plans." The betrothal!

Look at what it says. I remember your kindness. That is the first thing. This is describing Joshua also. Joshua and Caleb are included here. We are going to look at Joshua and Caleb but we are looking at the character that they had. 'The kindness of their youth'- that means they had this covenantal love for God. They said, "Lord, I made a covenant with You." What is covenant? 'In riches or in poverty, in sickness or in health!' In all positions, whatever state I am in, I have made a covenant with You. First- the covenant of your youth. Second- the love of your betrothal- the kind of love, that passion that you had for Me. That passionate love, the first love! Lot of young people, first love they can never forget. That's what He is talking about. That is God's language, you plagiarized, you fellows! He says, "I remember your first love. You lost it." He told the Ephesian Church. The first love- when you first fell in love with Me, the kind of desire that You had for the Word of God, the way that you used to go for every meeting. That's exactly what Joshua was. Joshua was a man, who had this passionate love for God and for His people. First, I remember your covenantal love, second, I remember love of your betrothal meaning you were set apart and third,

...When you went after Me in the wilderness...

Where? In wilderness!

...You followed after Me.

Matthew 8:18-22

¹⁸ And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side.

The moment He sees great multitude, Jesus gets worried. Whenever He sees great multitude, He wants to conduct an entrance exam and eliminate a lot of people. Unfortunately, like Pastor was saying, a lot people are in the outer court. Out of the people who are in the outer court, one set of people have the boldness to come through the brazen altar, offering themselves as a living sacrifice, have the heart to cleanse themselves at the laver and to come into the holy place. So there is a bunch of guys who are allowed in the holy place but out of that bunch of guys, only few people like Moses and possibly like David, who were allowed into the Most Holy place, where God, who sits between the cherubim on the mercy seat speaks. "So do you want to hear My voice? You need to follow Me." Therefore, God conducts an entrance exam. First entrance exam—

¹⁹ Then a certain scribe came...

Many are scribes, few are disciples, as I said. Many are scribes, that is outer court. Few are disciples, that is holy place. Out of the few disciples, few are stewards, who are in the most holy place, who are hearing from God. Many are children, few are young men and few are fathers out of those young men. Many are called, few are chosen and few remain faithful. Lot of people read, a few people hear and fewer of those who hear, obey. That is how it is. Christianity is divided into three parts, always. The called, the chosen and the faithful! Many are called, few are chosen and out of those few, few will remain faithful. Lot of scribes, few disciples and few stewards or people upon whom God can entrust responsibility and authority. Here we have a certain scribe.

¹⁹ Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go."

Entrance exam! Then, Jesus immediately says,

²⁰ And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

How Strong Are Your Convictions?

I learned this from a man of God. Do you know what he says? Jesus looked at him and said, "*Foxes have holes.*" "*Go and tell that fox*", that means I know a lot of foxes inside of you and there are lot of holes in your heart. Nicely these foxes have gone and stayed and made their place in those holes. What do the 'birds of the air' stand for? *The birds of the air came and stole the Word of God.* That's Satan! Satan also is there inside your heart. Foxes have holes, birds of the air have nests in your heart, but the Son of Man is not there. That is your state. Lot of foxes in your heart, lot of birds of the air in your heart, where can you find the place for the Word of God in your heart? It's a question.

Then another guy, look at what it says.

²¹ Then another of His disciples said to Him,

First one was scribe. You see, how the order is? First scribe came and he was eliminated, finished. "You stay in the outer court." A disciple came. We want to make a second step. "Okay, Lord, I don't want to just be a scribe, I want to become a disciple now." So he says, "But Lord, let me go and settle my family." That is what it means.

"Lord, let me first go and bury my father."

"*Let me first!*" - it's not that you should not take care of your parents. What is your first priority? "Am I first or parents first? Am I first or wife first? Am I first or children first? Am I first or job first? Who is first?" *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.* "If I am not first in your place, I am not going to take any other position. I am first. *I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt,* thou shall have no other 'firsts' other than Me." That's what it means. So when I get up in the morning, first I look at Your face, Lord. *Early in the morning, I seek You.* First!

²² But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

That is exactly what it means. *You followed Me.* How did you follow Me? *You went after Me.* This fellow is after that girl! What did he see? He just followed hard after the girl and he got married. That's exactly what Jesus is saying. "You followed Me and where did you follow Me? You followed Me in the wilderness." He explains the wilderness.

Jeremiah 2:2b

...You followed after Me. In a land not sown.

You don't sow what you don't have and you don't have a crop. "What is Your bank balance, Jesus?" Zero! "You went to a place where nothing was there." In other words, Joshua, Caleb and the first generation had the heart of Habakkuk. Even though, I do not see the fig tree blossom, even though I do not see the fruit on the tree, even though I do not see any benefit for me to follow Jesus, I don't see anything coming out of His heart and He is not giving me anything but I haven't followed Him because of His hands but I followed 'Him'.

'I seek the giver not the gift My heart's desire is to lift You high above all earthly kings; To bring you pleasure Lord'

One of the better songs in the modern generation. That is the reason why all songwriters and song singers and worship leaders, I would really encourage you to search for songs, which lift up Jesus and not your feelings or even your intellect or your ideas about who He is but who He 'in fact' is in the Spirit. *For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, he is a Jew who is one inwardly. Circumcision is of the heart, not of the flesh; of the Spirit, not of the letter, whose praise is not from man, but from God.* The definition of a Jew is completely different- not outward, but inward, not of the letter, but of the Spirit, whose praise is not from man but from God. Three things! That is a Jew. He wants praise from God. He wants to please God. All the '3's in the Bible! I showed you three things. Called, chosen and faithful! Many who read, few who hear, few who obey! Many scribes, few disciples and few stewards! Many outward, few inward! Many of the letter, few of the Spirit! Many whose praise is from man, few whose praise is from God! Where do you stand?

Jeremiah 2:2

...You followed after Me. In a land not sown.

How Strong Are Your Convictions?

Do you know why? I don't care because I know who You are. That is the reason why *faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of the things not seen*. "I don't see any benefit here on the earth in following You, but I have a conviction of the unseen. You are not a God of this earth, You are the God of heaven. If I follow hard after You, I am going to lose nothing because I know who You are." That kind of love you had. What do you have? The kindness of your youth, the love of your betrothal that you went after Me to marry Me. How many people pursue girls and how many girls pursue men? Do you think that boy or that girl is going to satisfy you? They are going to break your heart. The ultimate breaking of heart is you don't break God's heart. If you put your trust in any other person or a thing or any institution or any career or any education or anything, which is apart from God, it is going to break your heart ultimately. It's not going to satisfy you. That's an idol! We are going to reiterate this over and over and over again until we break every idol. We sing that song, right?

'We bow our hearts We bend our knees Oh, Spirit come make us humble We turn our eyes From evil things Oh, Lord we cast down our idols'

It's just not enough to cast down our idols. Do you know what we should do? We should do what Moses did. He took that idol and he grounded it into powder and make them drink it. That is what we need to do. Ultimately, that idol has to disappear. Every vestige of that idol has to be conquered by the love of God, by the Word of God and by the Spirit of God. Then he says,

Jeremiah 2:3

³ Israel was holiness to the Lord...

So, these were the people who were following hard after the Lord. Their hearts were totally dedicated to the Lord. Not only so, they were also set apart for God.

2 Timothy 2:20-21

²⁰ But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. ²¹ Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter,

Cleanse yourself from every filthiness of soul and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. What is 'perfecting holiness'? Holiness means to set apart. Make your holiness complete. Make your process of being set apart for God complete. That's what they did in the sanctuary. First they would come and sprinkle the anointing oil and put blood. The moment it is sprinkled and blood is put, it says, this has become set apart for God, it has become holy for the Lord and everything, which touches it will also become 'holy'. *Leviticus*, you should read with those spiritual eyes. If you read it with carnal eyes, you will say, "What is going on over here?" Every vestige has to be set apart.

²¹ Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

'Sanctified', from which we get the word 'sanctuary', holy place. So there are two places in the tabernacle. There is an outer court and if we want to go into the holy place, what are we supposed to do first? Go through the altar, that means *offer your body as a living sacrifice*. Second, wash at the laver. What does it mean? Cleanse your mind by the Word of God. Be sanctified in the spirit of your mind or *be transformed in your mind so that you can prove that, which is good, acceptable and perfect will of God*. How do you sanctify your mind? By the Word of God! There is a cleansing, which takes place before you even go into the holy place so that you can kneel before the Lord. That is how it happens. Do you want to become a sanctified vessel? You have to become a sanctuary for God.

Joshua was not part of the people.

Exodus 24:12

¹² Then the Lord said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there;

Remember Art Katz? Come up and be there. That's it! Don't do anything there. Just be there. What should people do like Joshua does?

...and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them.”

Think about it. *“Come up there and I will give you the tablets of stone.”* He didn’t say, come up and take the tablets of stone, which I wrote. No! *“Come up, be there and I will give.”* Three things we need to do. Always three! What should we do? First we have to go up. That means we have to go against the crowd, against all the things pulling our flesh like laziness, like sleeping more, like eating more, watching stuff more. We have to come up means we have to go upward against gravity. *For the law of Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, those who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.* That means they have the ability to go up. First of all, they have the ability not only just to go up, they have the ability to sit there. That is what we call as ‘meditation’.

First part is reading. For reading, you have to get up and you have to have a time frame. Like we always encourage two kinds of reading. First, read through and read deep. You will not die if you don’t understand; just read through first. That is we call as ‘cleansing’. How do you cleanse? It’s like putting a dirty vessel under a tap. How much of the water will stay in the vessel? Zero! But what happens? It’s cleansed. That is what we call ‘coming up’. Get up in the morning, take your Bible and start reading. *“But I don’t feel.”* Read anyway. *“But I don’t understand.”* Read anyway. That is what we call as ‘come up’; in other translations, ‘get up’. Get up in the morning on Sundays. Now of course, every day is a Sunday. Get up in the morning on Sunday and reach the Church on time. What is that? Come up! Get up in the morning and on time reach Church. What a struggle it was for me for first few years in GTC! On top of that, I was made the worship leader. So you can imagine the tension. Pastor used to look at me, *“Vijay, you are ten minutes late. The presence of God is already here.”* Thank God for patiently he does. Come up, reach on time and then ‘be there’ means sit attentively and listen to the sermon. Then God will say, *“I will give”*. That is revelation. You don’t come up, you are never there and you want revelation. Can it come?

2 Timothy 2:7 (ESV)

⁷Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

Think over. That is what we call as ‘being there’. Think- *“what is this Lord? What is this?”* Constrain God into your life and then the Lord will open up your mind to the Scriptures. That is the point where you ‘be there’ until your flesh has been broken to get revelation. Do you understand what I am talking about? Come up, be there and then I will give you. So who is allowed? Only Moses. Where is Joshua? Alongside him!

Exodus 24:12-13

¹²Then the Lord said to Moses, “Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them.”

Do you see how the whole process is? First He says, ‘come up’, ‘be there’, ‘I will give’ and then ‘which I have written’; don’t add anything of yours there. Cursed is the man who adds or subtracts. Then you teach. Don’t add; don’t subtract. Don’t water down. Don’t put water into the milk or put something adulterous into it. Then, what happens?

¹³So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up to the mountain of God.

He didn’t take along his assistant. He arose with his assistant and both of them went on the top of the mountain. This is what we call as ‘being separated’ from the crowd. Moses went and his assistant also was there. It may not be the fact or it may not be possible; of course, it was not the case that Joshua also went to the position that Moses reached but he was not a part of the crowd for sure. He was not the part of the crowd, which was worshipping idols. He was not the part of the crowd which was eating and drinking. He was armed with the methodology of thinking. (*1 Peter 4:3*)- Sufficient time you have spent in drunkenness and orgies etc. so that you will live the rest of the time for the will of God, not for flesh.

So, he was not a part of the crowd. What kind of crowd? Worldly crowd! Fleshly crowd! Crowd which is only interested in pleasure. Crowd, which when the moment restraining influence goes off from their lives, the true nature comes out. As I said yesterday, the possible title of yesterday’s message. The moment the restraining influences have gone, the real fellows have come out. *“I am not going to be a part of the crowd.”* Said Joshua. *“I may not be at Moses’ level, but I am not going to be a part of the crowd. I will separate myself.”*

How Strong Are Your Convictions?

This is what in effect spiritually, Timothy was doing.

2 Timothy 2:22 (ESV)

²² So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

What is this? What is happening over here? “I am going to separate myself from the worldly crowd. I am going to pursue righteousness.” How many people are righteous in your camp? “Only one fellow! But I will go after him.” There could be so many people in the class. The constant exhortation that your elders and your parents often give is: when you go to the class, make friends with the topper. Am I right? Don’t go and sit with the worst gang. ‘Sons of Belial!’ ‘Worthless fellows’, in other words! Don’t sit in the last bench. Go to the first bench and sit there. These are all postures. These are all worldly things. Don’t become friends with those people who are not interested in studies. Go to the topper, who is very selfish.

Chinese are always like that. I used to have competition with Chinese students in university. They were so hard working. I used to go and sit with them, to see what they were doing. Everybody used to get 100 in every assignment. We Indians were struggling over there. I said, how come these guys? They have a union. All old question papers, old assignments, old answer sheets, solution manuals, everything was available with them. They by heart the whole thing and come. All the questions are there. They get 100 per cent and we Indians are struggling. Unbelievable! I said, “I am going to do something. I am going to get those assignments out.” I made friends with them, talked to them, be kind to them and slowly took all their assignments and I also got 100 in next exam. Why? Simple! Associate yourself with people, who are pursuing righteousness, faith, love, peace along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. I want to associate with people who are going somewhere spiritually. They are pursuing righteousness. They are pursuing faith. They are pursuing love. They are pursuing peace. They are calling upon the Lord. *I would that men would raise up holy hands and pray all the times, calling upon the name of the Lord, without any strife or any violence.*

2 Timothy 2:23-26 (ESV)

²³ Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels.

Wherever you see quarrels, arguments or controversies, run for your life, it’s not worth it.

²⁴ And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, ²⁵ correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth

Ultimately, God has to grant us repentance, right?

²⁶ and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

So this is what we do- separate from those people; separate from the crowd. So a man, who is separate from the crowd, he should not only separate from the fleshly, but he should also separate from the nominal. So, in the class, you’ll have the toppers, the average and you’ll have the below-average. Where do you fit the average? If we are average, then that’s more than enough. We just find the average position. How are you doing, somebody asked him. My hands are in water, my legs are in fire, on an average I’m doing fine. It’s not going to work. Either you should be hot or cold, not average. So, there’ll be lot of people who are fleshly and a lot of people who are nominal. It’s easy to discern the fleshly and not very easy to discern the nominal. Did you understand? There will be nominal people all around the world. All they have is the form of godliness. They don’t have power. They don’t have authority. There’s no conviction of sin. There’s no power over sin. There’s no power over the powers of darkness and absolutely defeated in their personal lives, all because they’re nominal. God says about that Church, “You do not know that you are wretched, you are blind and you’re naked. I advise that you buy from me. You need to pay a price. It’s not going to come easy.” You think that you have everything, but you are nominal. You should not just separate from the fleshly, but also from the nominal and be with people who are on fire for God and not with people who don’t challenge you at all. How do I know this about Joshua?

How Strong Are Your Convictions?

Exodus 33:7-9; I like the class example because people who are successful are successful. He has his own unique attitude. The topper has his attitude. Seven habits of highly successful people. Yes, there are habits of successful people in the world. Now if they are doing it for a perishable crown, how much more we for an imperishable crown. When you look at these attitudes you'll say, 'Vijay, I'm useless.' Joshua was also a very fearful fellow. We'll come to that later on. That'll be the final icing on the cake when you say that no I can't be like Joshua. I'll encourage you how to be like Joshua. First you have this attitude. Look at this guy's attitude. He was not a part of the fleshly crowd. He also does not want to be part of the nominal crowd. How do I know this?

Exodus 33:7-9

⁷Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of meeting.

One Church close to our place is called the 'Tent of Meeting.' The tent of who meeting whom? God meeting you. That's what he's saying. Moses set the tent outside the camp so that you can set yourselves apart from all these people and go outside and it is called the tent of meeting. Who's meeting whom? God is meeting Moses.

...And it came to pass that everyone...

Ah! The opportunity was not just for Moses. Moses just took his tent and put it outside.

...who sought the LORD went out to the tabernacle of meeting which was outside the camp. ⁸So it was, whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle, that all the people rose, and each man stood at his tent door and watched Moses until he had gone into the tabernacle.

Now what happened, everybody can go. But when one person goes something is happening.

⁹And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses.

And everyone was watching. When one guy goes, the presence of the Lord comes. When one guy preaches, the anointing of God comes. When one guy goes and prays something different happens like when Jesus prayed. Anthony sent a WhatsApp forward today, what would Jesus do? He would go to a secluded place and he would cry to His Father. Whenever He was crying to His Father, the glory of God would come and the disciples saw this and were like we never saw this kind of prayer and said to Jesus, "Can you teach us to pray like this please?" But these guys, they also used to go to the tent of meeting, but from afar. Look at the next one.

¹⁰All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped, each man in his tent door.

That is what, they're all worshippers. I'm not saying that they're not worshippers, but what are they? Nominal. How do I know? Look at the next guy.

Exodus 33:11

¹¹So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.

He would say, "How did Moses worship that the pillar of cloud came? I also want this." I'm still not there, but I want this for myself. First thing, they loved God with all their heart. Second, they followed Him hard even when they did not see anything that they would receive from God. Third, they were separated. They were not just separated from the fleshly, they were also separated from the nominal. A lot of believers are separated from the fleshly, but you are all nominal. You're worse than the people who are separated from the fleshly. You be there, or be in the Spirit, not in the middle. He was under consistent mentorship. He was called what? The servant of Moses or the assistant of Moses. This is very important. I told you a story. I have a cow whose name is Mow. Mow eats grass and gives milk. Mow eats more grass. Everywhere I go I tell the same story. One story. Come under consistent mentorship. Don't get frustrated if I've said this for the two thousand and five hundredth

How Strong Are Your Convictions?

time. I will tell it till you get it. I'm telling it because I don't see it. It's amazing, right? Paul tell the Galatians in chapter 4, 'My dear Galatians, we have become like you. Now you please become like me.' What a challenge! Come under consistent mentorship. There are three levels of separation. There's the holy. There's the common and there's the unclean. Profane is common. There's the holy, the common and the unclean. First of all, you must cleanse from the unclean, to become clean, but you're still not holy. You're just common. And from the cleans part, you become separated and then you become holy. I'll tell you what I mean by that. Ten lepers came out of which, a Samaritan was there. They said, "Jesus have mercy!" Jesus said, "Go to the temple and show yourself to the priest and you will become clean." You're unclean now. Go and separate yourself. Go and show yourself to the priest and you'll become clean. So, they went to the priest and even as they were going on their way, they became clean. And nine people said, "Hallelujah!" One fellow came back. Jesus looked at him and said, "There were ten unclean. Nine have become clean and they've become common. They're just like other people. You came back to Me. Now you're separated unto Me. You've become holy." That is what we call as total absolute surrender. That's the reason why a mentor is important. I will only submit to God. How can you submit to God whom you cannot see when you cannot submit to a mentor whom you can see?

1 Samuel 24:5-7; I'll tell you why I'm saying this.

1 Samuel 24:5-7

⁵Now it happened afterward that David's heart troubled him because he had cut Saul's robe. ⁶And he said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD." ⁷So David restrained his servants with these words, and did not allow them to rise against Saul. And Saul got up from the cave and went on his way.

Who's the master? The one who's trying to kill you. That is the worst-case scenario. Hardly, you'll find masters who'll want to kill you. May be, in your organization there is a master who wants to see that you are out of the company. I don't know. If he wants you out of the company because you're a bad worker, I understand his problem. If he wants you out of the company because you're a good worker and he's jealous of you, I don't have a problem. It's good. That's the reason why you should not be beaten for your faults. What profit is it? Servants be submissive to your masters, not only to the good and the unjust but also to the unjust, for it is commendable before God if one submits to a man and continues doing the right thing and if he suffers wrong doing, it's commendable before God. For this you were called. What? For Christ also has left for you an example when he was threatened, he did not retaliate. But He continued entrusting himself to the one who judges righteously by whose stripes you are healed. You are all sheep going your own way. Now we've returned to the shepherd and the overseer of our souls. The ultimate shepherd is there on top of you. In the middle, I appoint some masters or lords or some managers. (Senior managers, AVPs, VPs and CEOs. I can appoint all these people. I have appointed them. Submit to them. Why? Because there are a lot of people who are unclean and a lot of people who are common. But there are few people who come back and come under who are holy. So how many of us want to be holy is the question. I have only few people here. So, Joshua was a guy who came under constant mentorship.

2 Timothy 3:10-11

¹⁰But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, ¹¹persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. ¹²Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

Follow people who are suffering persecution. There may not be perfection but there's definitely persecution. And they're being persecuted for righteousness' sake. Follow them.

First, they loved God wholeheartedly.

Second, they loved and followed Him even when they didn't see anything.

Third, they separated themselves from the crowd. What kind of a crowd? Both the fleshly and the nominal.

And finally, they came under consistent, constant, godly mentorship.

Fifth, they were men of war.

How Strong Are Your Convictions?

What were they? Men of war. Warring against what? The first time you see Joshua in the Bible, you know where the word Joshua occurs for the first time in the Bible? It's what we call as the law of firstmanship or the principle of firstmanship. It teaches us a lesson. The first time Joshua enters into the holy writ is found in *Exodus 17*. No wonder God chose this man.

Exodus 17:8-10

⁸Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim...

Rephidim means the place of rest. Whenever you're in a place of rest, God will allow Amalek. Who is this Amalek? Amalek was the descendant of Esau which denotes flesh. We'll understand why it denotes flesh now in this particular passage.

⁹And Moses said to Joshua...

Is he called the assistant of Moses, not yet. He's called an assistant much later.,

...“Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.”¹⁰ So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

This is what we call as a man of war. What is this guy? He obeys when it is absolutely difficult to obey. That is how we kill our flesh. See, it's easy to obey when you like to do what is required of you. If desiring God is so easy, why do people not desire God? If desiring God is so easy, why does He say, 'The cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and desire for other things', why does He say that? If desiring God is so easy, why does the song writer say, "prone to wonder, Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love, here's my heart O, take and seal it, seal it for thy courts above." Why does the song writer say that? If desiring God is so easy, why are we not all raptured by this time? If desiring God is so easy, how come God had to test Enoch for three hundred years before He took him? If desiring God was so easy, how come the ark was not built in one day? Anything of value and of God which has eternal purposes, faith should have strong convictions of the unseen, Noah did not see a flood, but he was warned of God that this world was going to be judged. And he prepared for himself an ark and it took him a long time. 120 years is not easy. It's a long obedience in a single direction. If desiring God is so easy how come when God says, "Twenty-one days, I'm going to shut down, because you have to desire Me." It's not easy, because so many other things are calling for your attention. Now sit at My feet. Don't be so easily distracted by Martha. You're doing a lot of ministry for those people who are in the ministry and those who do Martha-ministry. This is the time God is asking you to be a Mary because one day He can use you as a Martha so that you can do the works of God, so that you can from rest. Isn't it interesting that Mary sits at Jesus' feet and she hears and one day she breaks her alabaster flask of expensive ointment and she anoints Jesus' feet. And what does Jesus say? "She's doing it for my burial." She heard that she has to anoint His body now. You know why? This is the time to do God's work. This is my work that I have to anoint His feet. Tomorrow what is going to happen? People will also go to the tomb to anoint His body, but His body is already gone. It'll be like the five foolish virgins. They have no anointing. So, it's not easy. It's not easy to sit under consistent amount of teaching every day. It is not easy. One day or two days is okay. But for long obedience in a single direction you have to struggle. So, let's see.

¹⁰ So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

Isn't it interesting? You're asking me to go and fight while you go and happily sit there. We have to do the hard work and you will go and the prayer? Nonsense. You go and wait at tables. What will you do? We'll go and pray and read the word. Hello! Hello! You want us to do the menial work and be bus boys, while you want to go and pray. Isn't it interesting? Stephen didn't even complain. He was full of Holy Spirit and wisdom. Oh, if you're full of Holy Spirit and wisdom what are you supposed to be called to? The ministry behind the pulpit. I should be the one who's going to be the next apostle. Nothing of that sort! Please go and wait at tables. So he goes and waits at tables and ultimately he preaches. Amazing! You fight. We'll pray. Does he obey? Of course. That is how we know that he is a man of war, a man who obeys no matter what the circumstance. It's not easy to fight Amalek. I'll tell you why it is not easy to fight Amalek.

Turn to *Deuteronomy 25:17* onwards.

Deuteronomy 25:17

How Strong Are Your Convictions?

¹⁷ ***“Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, ¹⁸how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks (Can we use the ESV for this verse?), all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary; and he did not fear God.***

Deuteronomy 25:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ ***how he attacked you on the way when you were faint and weary, and cut off your tail, those who were lagging behind you, and he did not fear God.***

See that is what Amalek is after. What is he after? When you are faint and weary, tired and discouraged and when you're weak, he wants to overpower you. That is actually when your flesh is strong ironically. See, many people when they disobey they think that they are strong people, but they're weak, because they cannot obey. See that! Faint and weary. Nothing which causes me to stumble will be in my life. Nothing which causes me to compromise will be in my life. Every one of us has weak areas, right? Has God become strong in those areas. Like pastor said, "In believers not all parts in your heart are hard. But there are parts of your heart which are hard." That is where your flesh is strong. You want your way. You've not yielded that part.

Exodus 17:9-10

⁹ ***And Moses said to Joshua “Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.” ¹⁰So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.***

What does it say? Joshua did as Moses said. It's not as God has said. Joshua did as Moses said. You do as Moses says, and one day you'll do as God says. You do as your husband says, one day God will speak to your husband. That is the reason why after comparing with evil masters, *1 Peter chapter 2, 1 Peter chapter 3* starts with something interesting. It is only in the Bible. So, if you have some controversy with me, I'm only reading Scripture.

1 Peter 3:1-4

¹ ***Wives, likewise...***

Like the servants who submitted to their evil masters,

...be submissive to your own husbands...

Your husband is evil. He might be very nice. There could be parts of him which are very godly but there could be parts of him which are evil. Don't close your ears. That is the reason why it's so interesting. Even if you close your ears, I will speak. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Be submissive to your own husbands, in other words there is a particular kind of honor that is reserved for your husband and you have to show your honor to him. As we have to have to show honor to our own husband, who's our own husband? Christ

...that even if some do not obey the word (They don't obey the word.), they, without a word (Kya baath hai! Amazing!), may be won by the conduct of their wives (He said, "Don't take Bible study in your home." Just behave. Don't say, "Thus says the Lord," just behave. Just pray and be quiet.)

² when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. ³ Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—⁴ rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

So, when you're doing this whom are you honoring? God. So, when Joshua is obeying Moses, whom is he honoring? God. That's exactly the parallel that I'm trying to reiterate over here. When you submit to your masters who are evil, whom are you honoring? God, because it is commendable to God if you do that. For to this you were called, honoring God.

That is why he's called the man of war. What is he warring against? He is warring against every vestige of flesh in his life by submitting to authority and obeying. Every vestige of flesh.

Exodus 17:10-11

¹⁰So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. ¹¹And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

So, there'll be times in your life where the flesh will get the better of you. Did Joshua say, "Moses what are you doing?" No, he kept on fighting. He kept on. You know some people just give up. It is impossible for me to overcome this area in my life. My goodness! There were some strong areas in my life which were a struggle to overcome, but I kept at it even if some days, Amalek got better of me. Amalek got the better of me. I kept on it. And when he let down his hand Amalek prevailed. So, could be possible and sometimes, you might just fail in the flesh because the flesh gets a better of you. But, will you give up? No! Next verse, look at this.

Exodus 17:12-13

¹²But Moses' hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him...

You know what is the stone? Who's our stone? We know it, its Aben.

...and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. ¹³So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people (how?) with the edge of the sword.

Kya baath hai! (Amazing!). How did he defeat him? With the edge of the sword. Turn to *Romans 8:11-15* and *1 John 2:12* onwards.

Romans 8:11-14

¹¹But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. ¹²Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

I want to explain verses 13 and 14 together very clearly. Yesterday, we heard this. In *verse 13*, what is the sword of the Spirit? The Word of God. That is the only offensive weapon. Arm your mind with the same kind of thinking. How do you think? Like the way Christ thinks. How did Christ think? The Word of God, okay? The only way to fight the flesh is to have a scriptural sharp mind where the Spirit can take that one word and cut off the enemy with the edge of the sword.

¹⁴For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

He is a true son, Joshua. Are we all Joshua's? See, the only person in the Old Testament whose name we conveniently used for our children is Joshua. We never name our children Jesus. What does Jesus mean? Joshua, why are we so convenient or comfortable with the name Joshua? When Jacinth and I got married, I said, "If we have two sons we will name them Joshua and other as Celeb." We have decided it when we got married but of course we have Abigail and Emmanuelle. That's also great! Shibu's two sons, elder one is Joshua and the younger one is Celeb. Why do we call him Joshua? Why are we so conveniently naming our children Joshua? Because you were baptized in My name and in *My name, you will cast out demons. If you eat anything poisonous nothing will harm you. I have given you authority to trample over snakes and scorpions and nothing of the enemy will harm you.* In My name, you can overcome the flesh, the demonic realm. That's exactly what Joshua was doing here. With the edge of the sword just like Jesus by saying it is written, "*Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*" Because the world, the flesh and the devil are made for each other. He says, in My name you shall cast out demons. So, by the Spirit if you put to death the deeds of the flesh and what is the word? The sword of the Spirit is the Word of the God. You take it like He says; "*Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*" It is written that, "*He will give His angels charge over you.*" It is also written! It is written, "*Once saved is always saved, that nobody can pluck him out of His hand.*" It is also written, that if I don't continue in belief He will cut me off. It is written, "*Anyone who comes to Me I will by no means cast him off.*" It is also written, if I have been once enlightened and tasted the heavenly gift and if I tasted the age to come and if I fall away to renew me back to

How Strong Are Your Convictions?

repentance is impossible. It is also written, I just don't want one part of the Scripture because the devil can get two parts here and there. So, what do I do? I need to have the exact word, the anointed word to cut off the deeds of the flesh and that is Joshua. Got it? *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*

So, he was cutting, he was a man of war. Let's go back to Exodus 17 now verse 14. And look at this, it is fantastic.

Exodus 17:14-16

¹⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." ¹⁵ And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-LORD-Is-My-Banner; (Jehovah Nissi). ¹⁶ for he said, "Because the LORD has sworn: the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

Why is he rehearsing this in the ears of Joshua? Joshua, one thing you need to understand. First thing, you might win the battle with the flesh today but tomorrow it will come back again. It will happen over and over again until you put the remembrance of Amalek from rest of your life completely else it will come after you. You have to do pre-emptive action against Amalek, you don't allow Amalek to come. So, when did the Amalekites come and attack David? When the men were not there. When the strength of the camp was gone that is when Amalek came and attacked David's camp. The flesh will always come when the spiritual strength has reduced. So how do you recover what has come back? You first hear from God and then what do you do? You peruse, overtake and you recover Amalek. You do preemptive action, you go hard after Amalek and you won't wait for it to attack you now. That is what I said, what does Amalek do? It will attack you when you are in the weak positions; the spiritual strength is gone from the camp and what happened? Nicely people came and attacked the children and that is what Amalek is. They think they are very powerful. No, they are not powerful, when the spiritual strength is gone, your flesh becomes strong, when the spiritual influence over your life or the Spirit of God and His influence is gone. So, keep in step with the Spirit. Turn to,

Galatians 5: 16-18

¹⁶ I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

How long? As long as you are alive, from generation to generation. After your generation is also gone, it will start from next generations and the flesh will come. You understand? Declare war! Joshua was a man of war. He was just not a person who followed after God wholeheartedly or a person separated from the nominal and the fleshly, or not just a person who came under mentorship but he was a man of war. Boy! What are we supposed to become now? Men of war. You cannot compromise, and that's exactly what had happened to Saul. Why do you think Saul was cut off? Ultimately, he was pampering his flesh. Sometimes, you want to fight the bad things in our flesh but there are good things also in your flesh as well. Religion is a good thing. God says, the good and the bad in the flesh, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. That means even if you do good things in the flesh I cannot please God. He says, "I will not accept it because it is not by faith. You might do a lot of good in the flesh but in the sight of God it is not acceptable." God says, "That was not of Me and not by faith." *For we walk by faith and not by sight.* Those who are in the flesh cannot please God and those who do not act by faith cannot please God. For without faith it is impossible to please God and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. So, both cannot please God. If you are in the flesh you are not acting by faith, you are not walking by faith, not walking in the spirit. There is war that is going on. What should we do? Declare war and how do we declare war? Fast! Sachavu nuvvu (you are dead), what? Flesh. You are going to be dead in my sight and I'm going to beat you and pulverize you to submission. He was a man of war. Finally, now turn to Numbers 27:15 onwards and this is what I like about Joshua and we will stop here. Everybody knows that he brought a good report and he said, "They are fodder to us and he had eyes of faith as well." Maybe, we will look at it some other time. And this is one of my favorite and I just want to look at one word. I want you'll to pay attention to one particular word even as I read it.

Numbers 27:15-20

¹⁵ Then Moses spoke to the LORD, saying (who spoke to the Lord? Moses): ¹⁶ "Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, ¹⁷ who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be like sheep which have no shepherd."

This is a prayer of Moses and whose prayer God would answer? Look at God. God's answer is not even Caleb, that's my point. Look at verse 18.

¹⁸ And the LORD said to Moses: "Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; ¹⁹ set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate (commission) him in their sight. ²⁰ And you shall give some of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.

This is the ultimate test before Joshua could lead. You are a man who is separated, following Me wholeheartedly and loves Me with all of your heart. You are a man who is not only separated from the fleshly but also from the nominal. You are a man who is consistent under authority, a man of war. But can I trust you with authority? Ardham avuthundha? (Do you understand?) Koncham authority isthey etla behave chesthav? (How will you behave when I have given you authority?). I will take some of your authority and give it to him. Let me see if he truly has a Shepherd's heart. What did Moses ask for? "Lord, please I want you to give us a Shepherd after your own heart who will go and feed the children of Israel so that they may not be sheep without a Shepherd. And there are so many people in this world who are sheep without Shepherd. Will we be Shepherd's to them is the question and Shepherds are an abomination to Egyptians. To this world we are an abomination. But you know what God tells? I'm going to take some of your authority and I'm going to give it to you and let me see how you will use the authority. Turn to Mathew 20 and verse 20 onwards please. What does it say?

Matthew 20:20-23

²⁰ Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. ²¹ And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom."

Who are these sons? James and John and what did Jesus call them? Sons of thunder! Fire on these fellows. "Lord, the Samaritans have not respected You, can we get some fire from heaven and consume these fellows?" And you know what Jesus say? You do not know what kind of a spirit you have but I thank God for John, he changed a lot latter on. But right now, let's see his current condition. If God were to give him power and authority right now what would he do? He would get fire out off heaven and kill everybody in his congregation. Finish, gone, they all will be like toast. So, look at what it says.

²² But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able."

They don't even know what is coming and they are saying we are able. Kya mazaak hai yaar (What a joke it is.)

²³ So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father."

It's very interesting, Moses asks for a Shepherd and God gives them Joshua and what was God's answer? Joshua. Not anybody else because God knows and that is the reason why don't try to exalt yourself because promotion doesn't come from the East nor from West but from above. That was my daily reading today, Psalm 75. That is the reason why humble yourself under the mighty hand of God so that He may exalt you in dew season. Psalms 75 says, "He exalts some and puts down some, so submit to His authority." But in the mean time, I'm going to check how you would handle authority. So, He gives us families. Fathers, how do you handle authority? Mothers, how do you handle authority? You think you don't have authority over your husband, well you do. The cold treatment can be easily given. One face expression can change and that fellow will say, what happened baby? Ungli pey nachaa sakthey (Can make them dance on your fingertips.)

You think children don't have power? You think congregation has no power? Everybody has it; how do you handle? Everybody has power, some authority that God has given them. How are you going to handle it? That is the reason why I said, "Vrudha naari pathi vrathaha!" (An old woman without strength). If you don't have authority and you behave like this, what will happen to you? If God gives you some authority what would you do? That's the problem with Saul. After that, he moved into the flesh. God had given him an authority and he is using it only to kill the most anointed man. It's remarkable! He should

How Strong Are Your Convictions?

have facilitated throne transfer, crown transfer but he didn't. There could be only one head in every home; if you have two heads, then you have multiple visions. That is the reason why it is called as 'division'; which means two visions. There can be only one vision. Univision. *Philippians 2:1-3*,

Philippians 2:1-3

¹ Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy,

Look at the way he is pleading.

² fulfill my joy (how?) by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. ³ Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

This is what we call. This is the attitude with which you should approach authority because authority is not given to destroy but to protect. So, the ultimate question with Joshua is: how is he going to handle authority? You know what He is doing to do? "I'm going to take some of your Spirit so that the children of Israel can learn to be obedient." How did we learn obedience from Christ? Because He beat us up? No. "If you love Me, you will keep My commands." You know what He is saying? "The ultimate challenge for you, Joshua, is this – will the people start loving you so that they will be obedient to you? Will you win them over with love?"

Let's go back to *Matthew 20:24*. Look at what it says,

Matthew 20:24-26

²⁴ And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. ²⁵ But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them.

But then, He says something very interesting.

1 Peter 5:1

¹ The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:

How is he an elder? Because he was a witness of the sufferings. A lot of people are born to become elders without taking part of sufferings. They want to become elders, have positions. Otherwise, they say, "There are no elders in your Church." But are you there to become partakers of the sufferings with which the Church is going through? "No, we want to be from afar but we want to be elders." Why is this important? Go to Luke's Gospel. Same context.

Luke 22:24-31

²⁴ Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. ²⁵ And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.'

"I funded your ministry. What are you going to do to me? I will cut off your funding if you don't put my name on that fan." I recently went to a Church. I don't want to mention its name. So many fans with name. I'm wondering, "What is this? All names in the Church." If the Pastor will not write their names, they will sit on the Pastor's head. Have you observed it? I was looking at all the fans. "What is this? Oh, names!" Fans also have names – Karuna, Mercy, Mary. If Karuna's name is not written, she will not give Karuna anymore; she will give Corona. Means – she will become a virus in the Church. That's what I mean. You see that? Benefactors. "I will cut your funding, Ayyagaru." I was listening to one man of God. He was telling this person. One brother from another Church said, "Ayyagaru, please pray for my Church. Please pray. The Pastor is doing this. The Pastor is doing that." And he said, "If your Church is so bad, why don't you leave and go to another Church?" "How can I leave, Ayyagaru? I've given one lakh rupees for that door of the Church." The Pastor looked at him and he said, "Are you going to die hanging by the door?" It's amazing. Benefactors! That's how you exercise authority. That's the reason why in our

How Strong Are Your Convictions?

Church, we say, "Please don't write your names whenever you give your offerings." Because we don't want benefactors. I'm sorry. It is hard but it is a fact. It's written here. Dispute with Jesus.

And then, look at what He says,

²⁶ But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves.

In other words, I'll tell you something – a lot of people who truly give, don't want their names to be written. They would have given the maximum but they will shut their mouth most. There are some people who give this much, one fan and they will want their names to be written on it. Benefactors. You don't give them something, boy! You know what? You are using your authority or you are abusing your authority, my dear brothers and sisters.

I need to finish. Next verse. Look at what he says,

²⁷ For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.

Look at the next verse. I love this.

²⁸ "But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials.

That is what He is saying. The attitude of a servant; the person to whom I can give and entrust authority, the person who is gone through trials and the sufferings in the Church. God says, "Okay, you are ready now with authority." "I know Joshua. He has suffered for other people. He has gone for war for other people. I could trust him to fight My battle. I could trust him." That is the reason why,

²⁹ And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, ³⁰ that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

"I can trust you with authority now. You know why? Because you continued in My trials. You know exactly how to use authority, not to abuse it." That is the reason why authority cannot be given to people who cannot come under authority.

That's the reason why Joshua overcame, my dear brothers and sisters. *Psalm 75:1-8* and we will stop.

Psalm 75:1-8

¹ We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks! For Your wondrous works declare that Your name is near. ² "When I choose the proper time, I will judge uprightly. ³ The earth and all its inhabitants are dissolved; I set up its pillars firmly. Selah ⁴ "I said to the boastful, 'Do not deal boastfully,' And to the wicked, 'Do not lift up the horn.

Do not become proud.

⁵ Do not lift up your horn on high; Do not speak with a stiff neck.' "

Why?

⁶ For exaltation comes neither from the east Nor from the west nor from the south.

But from where?

⁷ But God is the Judge: He puts down one, And exalts another. ⁸ For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, And the wine is red; It is fully mixed, and He pours it out; Surely its dregs shall all the wicked of the earth Drain and drink down.

How Strong Are Your Convictions?

You're taking a deep breath, it's good. But God is looking for people who will be like Joshua. How did Joshua struggle? How could God give him? For 40 years, he identified himself with the people who failed him. Why did Joshua and Caleb lose 40 years of their lives? Because of the failure of other people. Did they complain? When God came and said, "Moses, I'll wipe these people out and then, I'm going to start from you, except from Caleb and Joshua. All these fellows, let's wipe them out." You know what Moses said? "LORD, what will people say about Your Name?" And Joshua would have heard the prayer and he would have said, "Master, why should we have to be faithful with these fellows?" He never said that. He lost 40 years of his life for a man who is tough, not easy to follow. And for a set of people who are tough, not easy to be a part of. And when he came through, God gave Joshua a set of people who will support him in this. You know what he will say? "Wherever you send us to go, we will go. Whatever you ask, we will do. Only be thou strong and very courageous." You be obedient to God and God will give you a bunch of people who are obedient to you. Don't abuse authority. Submit to God's authority. That's the answer. Amen? Let's pray.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we just thank You, Father, for this time. Father, I pray, Lord Jesus, that we will continue to sit at Your feet and we will continuously learn. We thank You. We praise You. For in Jesus' Name, Amen.