

How Will God Regard Me?

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Let us go the Word and before that we will once again look up and look to Him, the author and the finisher of our faith. What He began, only He can finish, only He can perfect. So, let's, once again, surrender our hearts, our minds, our emotions, our entire being to Him and say,

Father, the shepherd of our souls, come Lord Jesus. Speak to us. Teach us. Take control. We are here, Lord, to be taught of You." I pray, though I speak, what Your children hear and receive will be only what You speak through me. Let everything else fall to the ground and fade away from their minds but what You speak is life, let it remain. Let it become their life, Lord. I speak peace into every heart, rest into every soul and healing into every body that the strength of the Lord be your portion, for He is faithful. For the one who said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" is also the one who said, "I am the one who is true and faithful, who has the keys of death and Hades." So, Father, it's to You we come. Speak to us. Teach us once again, Lord. For in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

We are having different sections morning and night but especially the past few nights, for those of you, who have been regularly following, you know (I believe) I have been led by the Lord for the young leaders because I believe all of you will one day, when situations change, become house cell leaders, when all this freedom is taken away and God is preparing us. I am setting the fundamentals of faith of our salvation. So those, whoever is hearing, to somebody, probably God is saying, you need to take those messages and not make transcripts (I am not talking about transcription), you need to be able to edit it so that one day, we have it in the form of a book. For that, you need to be good in English first. You need to be good in your Word that you understand what you are hearing. Third, you are able to take it away from this format that is being spoken and put it as into the format as of a book. So, somebody has heard and I know you will get back to me because I won't do it. My wife has been after me for 8 years and not even one line has come out that way.

So, we have been setting the fundamentals of salvation – 'Repent, believe and be baptized'. *We are saved by grace, through faith.* That faith is in Jesus Christ and His work alone, nothing else, all the days of our lives, even post-salvation. Salvation is only in the work of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the greatest sin in the world is a sin of unbelief, where we don't believe the work of God. We also saw the difference between the Old Testament and New Testament, *the law that came through Moses and grace and truth that came through Jesus Christ.* One is a shadow and the other Jesus Christ is the substance. We also saw that Jesus came to fulfill the law so that He could save all who are kept captive by sin under the law. He destroyed death. So, we saw the principle in *1 Corinthians 15:56* – law, sin and death. We also saw, I think last night or maybe before, He fulfilled the law in different ways. One by His birth – He was born of woman under the law to save those who were under the law. He kept the law by His life, perfectly sinless from beginning till the end. That's why He had to be born of woman, of God so that He was not born in sin or shaped in iniquity. He was sinless when He was born like Adam but He had the same body. So, He was tempted at all points but did not sin. So, He fulfilled the law by His birth, by His life and we saw He fulfilled the law by His death. *Cursed is the man who hangs on a tree. Anyone who doesn't keep the works of the law is cursed.* So, He became curse for us. He took our sin. *He who did not know sin became sin for us* but it didn't stop there. If it had stopped there, death would have been more powerful. So, He had to defeat death, too. So, Scripture says, "He rose again on the third day."

So, repentance is primarily repenting from all our sins and all our efforts under the law for our salvation and believe in Him and Him alone. So those who know they are sinners have to repent and also those who think they are righteous, both have to repent because both works lead to death. That's why it is *repentance from dead works or works that lead to death.* Then, we put our trust in Jesus and Jesus alone because remember – repentance comes first. You cannot believe without repenting. It does not work. You repent and you believe. You get rid of all this baggage and say, "Lord, I don't put my trust in it at all and I put my trust only in You." Then God declares us 'just', not forgiven; 'just' as we never ever sinned. He takes our sin, puts it on His Son, spiritual exchange takes place, puts His Son's righteousness, which was the righteousness of God and puts it on us. That is in simple format the only way for salvation. So, we are declared just or righteous by God, the judge of all flesh. Remember, that's how He is declared in the *Book of Genesis*, the first Book.

How Will God Regard Me?

Then, He says, “The most important part in our current teaching,” after that, those who have been justified or righteous, they shall live by faith. I shall put ‘only’ there in brackets like Paul says, “I also believe I have the Spirit of God.” They shall live ‘only’ by faith. No other life is acceptable to God. From faith unto faith! Now we are going to that one part that we missed.

Romans 8:1-2

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...

When I got saved, you got saved, everyone who is hearing got saved, God took us and put us in Christ Jesus. Now we are hidden in Christ Jesus. If you are in Christ Jesus, you are under no condemnation. How do I know I am in Christ Jesus? My works will show! The works of a man hidden in Christ and the works of a man who is not hidden in Christ is shown by the works and the works are different.

...who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

That’s how you know whether I am hidden in Christ or I am not hidden in Christ. We may say, how does anybody know? God knows and the devil knows. In the second and third realm, nothing is hidden. That’s what the sons of Sceva suddenly realized. Seven people were trying to use deliverance like a mantra, “In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches!” Paul was nowhere around there. I don’t know how many hundreds of kilometres he was away. The demons said, “Jesus we know, Paul we know. We know Paul is hidden in Christ; when he says, “Get out,” we get out. But who are you guys?” In the second and the third realm, there is nothing that is hidden.

So, when we say, “Repent and believe,” this is a continuous process all our lives. Because we are living sacrifices and not dead sacrifices, we have this habit of getting off the altar. We quietly crawl off the altar or jump off the altar. So we have to keep on getting back on the altar, that is repenting and getting back and staying there safe. The Spirit of God and the spirit that is demonic! So the Holy Spirit will show, not to condemn us but to protect us, He says, “This is there that is exposing you to the other realm, which will have power over you while you should have power over them. You should have dominion over them but if you don’t, they will tempt you, take you to sin and instead of you having dominion over sin (because you are under grace), sin will have dominion over you.” So instead of justifying, we repent. That was the problem with Saul. Whenever God tried to speak to him, he kept acting very nice, “Oh! I have obeyed the instructions of the Lord.” He said, “No! You haven’t obeyed. You can’t fool a prophet of God.” All he had to say was, “I goofed up” like David did. Don’t cover up but acknowledge and the blood of Jesus cleanses. So this is a continuous process. So here you look at verse 2.

²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

Two laws are being shown there in verse 2. If you are living by the flesh, then you are living by the law of sin and death. Immediately the law starts operating. What is the law of sin and death? Any man who is under the law, law awakens sin and sin brings death. That is the law given through Moses. So there are two laws. One is a law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. What is the law? I call it ‘the law of faith’. That’s the law of faith- *faith unto faith*. That sets you free from the law of sin and death because if you are walking by faith, it is a life of Christ Jesus and God says, “That’s enough! You are perfect in that area. It doesn’t matter what people say. It’s irrelevant. My life of My Son is always acceptable to Me. If you have any doubt, take a look up and you will see the Son is sitting on My right hand side. Approval, power, strength, salvation and everything- that life is acceptable. Every time you walk by faith, you are seated in Him on My right hand.”

So, there are two laws over there. One is a law of Spirit of life in Christ Jesus that sets you free or if you are walking in the flesh, you are going back to the old law, which brings condemnation- the law of sin and death. One is the law of the Spirit and it’s the Spirit of life. The other is the law of sin and death. How do you know you have sinned? By the law! The more you study the law, the more you are aware of your sins. Now if you go quickly to *Galatians 3:1-2*, that’s what Paul was talking about.

Galatians 3:1-2

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?

What is the truth? Why did you step out from the law of Spirit to the law of sin and death again?

² This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Now, he is talking about the Spirit because the Spirit will only take you in the law of the Spirit by faith. Why did you leave that and go into the law, which only brings judgment and condemnation? Understand these two laws. This is what we need to understand. One is the law of the Spirit, which is the life of faith and the other is the law of sin and death. Don't go back to that. That's why hearing is so important. Each one of us, though we have common hearing, we have different hearing, too because the Spirit will speak to us through same words but touch us where we are struggling. It may be the same message and different people go off with different hearing(not interpretations); hearing different things from the Spirit because the Spirit is telling you, this is the area you will run into condemnation, you will run into trouble. You will go into flesh and other things will start bringing condemnation. So quickly repent of it and get back inside. Don't give the enemy a foothold. Forget a foothold, don't even give him a toehold. So how does it happen? Go back to *Romans 8*, we will read verses 3 and 4, but actually 4 is the most important verse here.

Romans 8:3-4

³ For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,

Verse 3 is talking about what Christ did, the first four things I talked about. Born of a woman, born under the law, kept the law by His life and kept the law by His death and resurrection. All that is verse 3. Verse 4 is what He does through us. That is the important one.

⁴ that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us...

Now, you get it? Christ fulfilled the law. Now Christ continues to fulfill the law in us,

...who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

That is why Jesus said, "The law will not pass away. I have come to fulfill the law. Heaven and earth will pass away but the law will not." When will the law be irrelevant? It will only be in the new creation because nobody needs the law then. Everybody has been transformed, conformed in the image of Christ Jesus. This body of sin has been taken away. You get a new glorified body in which there is no flesh. Satan has been thrown with all that causes temptation. All that evil has been put in the lake of fire. So, it is an entirely different ball game, *Revelation 21* onwards. Till then the law will remain. But we are fulfilling the law. We are not keeping the law. Keeping the law is the letter of the law. We don't go there at all because you get condemned. But when you walk by faith, you fulfill the law. So, Jesus did not go by the letter of the law and Pharisees were very mad. "Your master is doing this!" All the kind of things He did on Sabbath, literally to make them understand that by the letter of the law of Sabbath, your interpretation is wrong. I am keeping the Sabbath by the Spirit. That's where we have to understand.

So, Jesus fulfilled and we also. When we live by faith, we are fulfilling the Spirit of the law. It is the Spirit of God living the life of Jesus Christ through us. These are all secret mysteries, which God revealed to a man, who was looking for it. It was through Paul, not through John or Peter or James or anybody. These mysteries were revealed through this man. It doesn't matter how you begin your race or when you began your race. He didn't begin his race well unlike the other apostles. He began terribly persecuting the Christians and he was very young and much later than all these apostles. But he went miles ahead of them. Turn to *Galatians 2*. His life is a very strong source of encouragement. People like him and like Moses, who goofed up in the beginning, like Jacob, who goofed up in the beginning, all these goofys are very, very good examples for us. They goofed up really bad. It's not normal. They goofed up really bad in the beginning but they finished extremely well; all these three people if you look at it. People like Daniel and Joseph and all give us a complex. But people like them, they really encourage us. *Galatians 2:20* – this is the whole secret of what Paul is.

Galatians 2:20

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;

How Will God Regard Me?

He says, "I died with Christ; I rose with Christ."

and the life which I now live in the flesh

Meaning, in this body; I am living in this body. I am not talking about any outer body experience or anything. No! This is not any one of those things. A real, normal life, I am living in this body.

I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

It's a life of faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. So, he understood what his life was, which is absolutely, totally acceptable before Christ, perfect before Christ because it is the life of Christ Jesus. You hear, you believe, you understand, you obey and God says, "That's My Son living 'vicariously' through so many people." The devil also speaks to people and they hear, they obey and the devil also lives 'vicariously'. That's why they are called the sons of disobedience. You read in *Ephesians 2, the spirit of the power of the air*, he was controlling their minds and their bodies were given over for his. Two sons walking on earth- sons of disobedience and sons of obedience! They are getting more and more and more wicked and one side is getting better and better and better and God says in *Revelation 21*, "Let it be." In one, a different spirit is working and here a different Spirit is working. Here, one Spirit alone is working and here different spirits are working. So, one fellow goes, he brings seven others and they become more and more wicked. That's what is happening. So, please understand. That's why we preach so much on faith. People will ask, why do we preach so much on faith? It's because no other life is acceptable. But please, every time you study or even hear a message, pray like Paul prayed in *Ephesians 1:17*. It's very important that we pray like that. Humble yourself before God and say that—

Ephesians 1:17

¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,

It's very important that we pray like that; that we need wisdom, we need knowledge and above all we need revelation. Don't study like the way you would do it in school. It won't work. With God, it does not work. In school, you can do a lot of hard work; in the Kingdom of God, hard work is involved but if God doesn't reveal, all the hard work goes waste. So, hard work should supplement your faith. Hard work should not substitute your faith. Please understand this. Revelation!

Don't use scholastic methods to study. A lot of people asked me, how do you study the Bible? There are different ways, which are all good. But if you ask me, how do I study the Bible, I will say, 'by faith'. That's how I study the Bible. Regular format is there. You need to have the regular format but beyond that you need to have a format, which is designed for you by God by faith. Like if you want to study on faith, "I am going to open the Bible, keep my concordance and study about faith according to concordance." I am telling you, sometimes, it will be a total goof-up. Like if you look at *Deuteronomy 32:20*, the first time the word 'faith' is mentioned in the Bible. If you want to start like that, you would shut there itself.

Deuteronomy 32:20

²⁰And He said: 'I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end will be, For they are a perverse generation, Children in whom is no faith.

"Bye, Lord. I don't want to study about faith. Let me pick another topic." It's like *the fool says in his heart, "there is no God"*, he closes and then he opens another portion, "speak to me" and it says- *You also go and do likewise*. You can't study like that. This is first time in the Bible the word 'faith' is mentioned. So, you can't study like that. Sometimes, it works and sometimes, it doesn't work. Why do I say that sometimes, it works? It's because the first time the word 'priest' is used in the Bible is in Exodus when Moses runs and he marries Jethro's daughter, Zipporah. Jethro is called the priest of Midian. That's the first time and before that you know Joseph married the Egyptian priest's daughter. But other than that, 'priest' first really, typically as position is mentioned is Jethro. After that you hear that God's desire for Israel is that 'you shall be kingdom of priests for Me'. If you follow that format and do a priestly study, you will understand.

So, sometimes, it works and sometimes, it doesn't work. So, Let God guide you. Do your overall study but before you study anything in the Kingdom of God, first establish the importance of anything you choose to give your attention. Like typically,

How Will God Regard Me?

when I advise young kids, school kids when they are starting, (this is how I used to advise my kids, school kids, all of them everywhere), “In your schools, you may have 8 or 9 or 10 subjects; all subjects are not equally important. When you are starting, focus on two subjects. One is English and the other is Math. These two subjects, really focus well because every other subject when you go up higher is a combination of English and Math. After 10th, you can make your options but many people choose options because they are weak in English. If you are very good in English, you can understand your subjects.” A lot of people struggle with science, economics and commerce is because when they hear, the language is so weak, they are not able to understand concepts. If your language is strong, like honestly, I am not very strong but pretty strong in English, I can understand almost any subject. Economics, no problem! I never did economics. History- no problem! Commerce- no problem! The fundamentals of what is there, you can get it because your language is strong.

So, English is the most universal language. It has got nothing to do with the British. We are more English-speaking people in India than anywhere in the world. So, it is not their language. It should be called ‘Hinglish’. It’s our language now. So, one is your language, whichever language you choose and the other is Math. What is physics? English and Math! What is chemistry? English and Math! What is economics? English and Math! What is commerce? English and Math! History- only English! Geography- Math comes in, graphs and all. So, you realize even when you are training your children, train them on two subjects, when they are very small. Understand as parents the importance of their subjects- English and Math. After that as they go in, as God is guiding them, they will pick their subjects and they will go but they will be able to generally do well in any area they choose because foundations are strong. So, whenever you study the Bible, too, give your attention to what is important in Kingdom of God. So, we will go to *1 Corinthians 13:13*.

1 Corinthians 13:13

¹³ And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

‘Abide’ means that which will last. One of the reasons love is called the greatest is because when Jesus comes, faith and hope will go. You don’t need faith anymore and you don’t need hope anymore. So, in one way, it is not saying that love is greater than faith. One way is that you don’t need faith and hope anymore. So, greatest here is love. So, I will put love first, faith second and hope third. But in terms of importance, I will put faith first because without genuine faith, you cannot even receive the love of God in which we need to function because there is a love of man (my love) and the love of God which I receive from God. It is the love of God! The love for God and the love of God, like the zeal for God and zeal of God are two different things. To receive that love of God, to constantly walk in it, I need faith. Greatest is love but in terms of importance for man or child of God, I would put faith. It’s very, very important. If you are upset with my statement, then it is okay- love first and very close to first is faith. We have done an entire series on love and we will continue some day. So, the most important right now in these studies is faith. We have established the importance of faith.

Ephesians 2:8

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

Grace is from God. God can have a billion gallons of grace but if I don’t have faith, I cannot receive it. You may have 10 lakhs in your account and if you are stuck in your house, unable to go and you don’t have online facility, all your money is stuck there. If you have no online platforms engaging in to receive or send money, what’s the point? So you need faith.

We know about the first generation.

Hebrews 4:2

² For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them...

Everybody has heard the Gospel, including Abraham.

...but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

The Gospel is the Gospel of grace, both to the Israelites and to the Gentiles. All of us, it was the same Gospel always. God never changed His Gospel. The Gospel is always the Gospel of grace. But because they did not receive it with faith, it was of no use. So, we are establishing the importance of faith; step-by-step I am establishing.

Hebrews 10:38

³⁸ Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him."

Don't take it lightly. If we draw back, God is not pleased. In *1 Corinthians 10:5*, after giving the whole list about how much He had given to Israel, at the end, Scripture says,

1 Corinthians 10:5

⁵ But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

So, what happens to people, if you do not please God with your faith? You wander and die in life. You never possess your inheritance. You never overcome. You may make it through the flames, but in heaven you will realize you lost everything. Your salvation is there. That's only one thing you believed- 'the blood of the lamb' and got out but after that nothing. So don't take faith lightly. If God is not pleased with you, then you will die a wanderer. Next premise I have to establish is we have to be absolutely sure what faith is and what faith is not.

Hebrews 11:1, we saw that very clearly, faith has very deep convictions.

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

We know it well but let me make one statement here. Faith is not hope and hope is not faith. Faith is the substance of things hopes for but faith is not hope and hope is not faith. Yet there is hope in faith and there is faith in hope but they are not the same. If you look at Paul's journey and in his letters, he will say, "I am pressing on, not that I have already achieved." Do you know what he is talking about? It's hope! It's not faith; it's all hope. But in that hope, there is faith. When he ends his life,

2 Timothy 4:7-8

⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness...

It's not hope. It's faith! He is absolutely clear, what he is waiting for. So you have to see the difference between hope and faith. Right now, we are all in the hope journey. When does hope become faith? It's when you have heard clearly. "Yes! It's a done matter." That's when hope becomes faith. Abraham and Sarah are hoping and hoping and hoping. Then God says, "this time next year, according to time, you will have a child." Very clear! Absolutely established! So, you may hope to get a good job. It's a good hope. But one day, God will say, "It's a done deal." Then, you will be just looking around, where is the job coming from? Because It's coming from somewhere. He has already spoken. So, faith and hope are not the same though both are there. Faith is being absolutely sure of what God speaks.

Romans 10:17 will tell you another premise about faith, how you get it.

Romans 10:17

¹⁷ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

If you go to *Romans 10:9-10*, it will add a few more. You hear, you believe, you confess. There is hearing, there is believing and there is confessing. I hear and what I have heard, I have believed and my hearing, my belief and my confession goes into one line. One more has to be added to that which James will bring it.

James 2:17-18

¹⁷ Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

You heard, you believed, you spoke and there is one particular work associated with that.

How Will God Regard Me?

¹⁸ ***But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.***

James 2:26

²⁶ ***For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.***

Let us say, I heard the Gospel. “Repent, believe.” I heard. “Confess with your mouth Lord Jesus Christ.” I heard, repented (in repentance, there is lot of work), believed and there is another work, which I do. That is called baptism. It’s work of faith! That’s why God is very clear. Repent, believe and be baptised. Baptism is an absolutely physical work. You cannot imagine you got baptized and come out. No! It’s a physical work. You need to go into the water and get yourself dunked down into the water full and come out. So it is a work. So there is hearing, there is believing, there is confessing and there is a work. So understand how faith works. We are establishing the preliminary premises of faith. Then what does faith do? We already saw, *we are saved by grace, through faith*. But *Romans 5:2* gives us a standard procedure for day to day life.

Romans 5:2

² ***through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.***

It’s a daily thing. Everyday God gives you the grace for that day. But how do you access? By faith! That’s what the manna they ate and the water they drank ‘everyday’. “Don’t keep manna for tomorrow. Tomorrow’s will come tomorrow. Just believe. Just trust Me. Get up in the morning, trust Me, go out and it will be there. You have to believe.” In Him, we access grace every day; not just for getting saved, but grace for living. What is the grace? That’s the power of God! That’s why Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of grace.

I am explaining what are we studying and why faith is so important.

2 Peter 1:3-4

³ ***as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness,***

What is His divine power? It is grace. Let us, in place of ‘divine power’, put ‘grace’.

³ ***as His divine power (grace)has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness...***

Everything that believer needs for this life.

...through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Then, verse 4 says, “You have these incredibly great promises in the Bible.” So, as you are going through the Bible, one promise may jump at you and God is speaking to you. That’s your promise. By faith, you access My grace using this promise. To you, it may be something else, but there are literally 9000-10,000 promises in the Bible. Through those promises, what do we do? We partake of the very nature of God, divine nature and we escape the corruption in this world. So, please remember what faith does. What is the first thing we looked at, what faith does? It gives us access to the power of God, the Spirit of grace for life and godliness.

Next thing—

1 John 5:4

⁴ ***For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.***

By faith, we do not allow the world to overcome us. That’s what happens to all the people, who don’t understand the fact but through faith, we overcome the world. That’s one of our victories because only overcomers receive anything in heaven. Salvation is the work of Jesus Christ, but overcomers only get rewards. So, one of the things we are called to overcome is the

How Will God Regard Me?

world. How do you overcome the world? By faith! Again, if you turn to *1 Peter 5:8-9*, then we would have, kind of, done the fundamentals of faith.

1 Peter 5:8-9

⁸Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

So, we have an invisible enemy looking- roaring lion, hungry lion, looking whom he may devour, our spiritual enemy, the enemy of our soul.

⁹Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

How do you defeat the enemy? *Resist the devil and he shall flee from you.* So, how do you resist the enemy? Only in faith! You have to be steadfast in faith, continuously. It's a daily battle! It's never going to go away. He will keep on coming back. If you have won today and you are feeling so good, you go to sleep and you wake up in the morning and you realize he is back again. So we overcome the world by faith. We overcome the devil, his kingdom by faith. The seen kingdom and the unseen kingdom, both have to be overcome. So, these are the fundamentals of faith.

Now let's go further, go back to *Hebrews 11:1-4*. Now we are going to study chronologically faith.

Hebrews 11:1-3

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.²For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.

All the elders, we looked yesterday. What was the first good testimony they all received? They believed in creation!

³By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

They all believed in creation. There was no evolutionist among the believers in the Bible. There were no evolutionary believing scientists. They were all creationists. There is a massive animosity between these two. Not that the creationists hate the evolutionists, but the evolutionists hate creationists. The problem is the minute you accept creation, along with comes all morals. There is a God absolute, then there are absolutes in life. Evolutionary scientists do not want absolutes.

It's like all elective surgeries have been postponed. Why? Everything is being kept for corona cases in US and everywhere but ACLU has gone to court in Texas, because Texas has taken off abortion from elective surgeries. In the midst of this pandemic with two thirds of America shut in, they are going to court to say that we want abortion to be included among the essential services. Killing a baby is abortion. Do you know why you will come with that premise? It's because you are evolutionary scientist and not a creationist. So, don't ever take *Hebrews 11:3* out, it is fundamental to what is happening in this world, knowing the real God and not knowing God. So, verse 3 is very important.

Hebrews 11:4

⁴By faith Abel offered...

Remember everywhere you read through *Hebrews 11*, the most important chapter about faith, you have this 'by faith'. Scripture says,

⁴By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.

So, in verse 4, we have the first man of faith being mentioned, though he is fourth in human order, after Adam, Eve and Cain. But he is the first man to be mentioned in faith history. The other three are not mentioned, only the fourth man is mentioned. He is also the first man to please God. Adam didn't please God. Eve didn't please God. Cain didn't please God. Abel pleased God. If you look into *Hebrews 11*, sixteen names are mentioned; innumerable others are mentioned in terms of reference

How Will God Regard Me?

without their names. By the way, Joshua is not mentioned though he was incredible and Caleb is not mentioned. It's just a list. There are so many there. It's not like we would say, "this writer needs to be corrected. I have to make my own list." Leave it. That's God's list. He is not saying anything.

So, we look over there – 'by faith'. Second word we see is 'sacrifice'. Third thing is that he was commended, God testifying of his gifts. He received a commendation that he was righteous. If you look at the entire list in *Hebrews 11*, righteousness is connected with only 2 people – one is Abel and the other is Noah. Nobody else! Different works but righteousness is not added to that meaning, this is somehow connected to salvation. Every other person's work was not connected directly with the salvation work, only with Abel and Noah. So, get these things.

So, today, we shall take our dear 'Abel' of the Bible and put him under the scanner. We will have to go back to *Genesis 4:1-6*. All my dear children, "I know Abel and Cain story very well", we will go back and recap all the things we have heard.

Genesis 4:1-5

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the Lord."

We will leave that alone because there is so much in that. We are not talking about Adam and Eve and all that.

² Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel.

So, you have two sons there, Cain and Abel, not Jeffrey Archer's 'Kane and Abel'. Abel is dead and he still speaks, but you are dead and you are speaking death, not life.

² Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

So, the first two professions are mentioned over there- farmer and shepherd. If you read old stories, there was always a conflict between these two groups. One fellow tills the ground and makes something come and the other fellow's animals want to eat this. So, fences will automatically come in between even if they are brothers. But that's not the case over here; there is something else.

³ And in the process of time it came to pass...

We don't know how long but in the course of time, offering time or sacrifice time has come. They both brought an offering.

...that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord.

He is the farmer, he brought the fruit of the ground.

⁴ Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, ⁵ but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

We will leave Cain out of this. We are looking at Abel. Outwardly, they both brought offerings, if you look at it, it seems according to their profession. But remember, *Hebrews 11* says, "Abel offered by faith." So, it's not outward. Something is there connected with the unseen. So, you are offering in the seen realm, you are offering your sacrifice to the one who is unseen. Faith taps into the unseen. So, one offered by sight to the unseen and one offered by faith to the unseen. The word is very interesting. The word used over there is- '*The Lord respected Abel*'. NIV will use the term- *He looked with 'favor'*. Another version, ESV, will say, *He 'regarded' Abel*. So, you have to read it very carefully even if you have heard it so many times, please look at it. The 'and' there is important. The Lord respected Abel and his offering.

Genesis 4:5

⁵ but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

How Will God Regard Me?

What does it mean? It means even if Cain had brought blood as his offering, He would not have accepted it, because He's looking at Cain first. He's respecting first Abel and not his offering. So, there is something there. He regarded Abel first and his offering. If the issue was with the offering alone it would have been written God respected and regarded Abel and Cain but only regarded or respected Abel's offering. Okay? But that's not how it happens. Whatever we do, what I'm doing now, what you're doing now, everybody is offering to God something. First God looks at the person then only He looks at the offering. That's the nature of God. First God looks at the person. In *1 Samuel 16:7*, we will see this principle established by God.

1 Samuel 16:7

⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature..."

What is He looking at? That is his offering. They have washed. They have anointed. They have worn their best robe and they're standing there and saying, 'Lord, here I am!' and he (Samuel) looks at their offering and says, 'Wow, this must be surely God's anointed.' He's looking at his offering. And then, what happens?

...because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

So, when Scripture says, "God respected Abel," God looks into his heart. He was looking at his heart. And when He had looked into his heart, he regarded Abel. God had favor on Abel. He respected his heart, whatever was in his heart. God respected it. So please remember, God looks at the heart first. That's the most important lesson you will learn from Hebrews 11 is this one, when God looks at anything that we bring to Him, He doesn't look at what we bring first. He looks at us first. People will look at us, what we are bringing. So, we'll dig deeper, we'll only look at that first. We'll dig deeper. We have seen this over and over again this mystery of threes in the Bible. God is one but exists as three. We see these three realms—third heaven, second heaven and this material realm. And we are caught in time, time here is caught in three zones – yesterday, today and tomorrow or past, present and future. And then the tabernacle is with of three parts – the outer courts, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. Before Israel is divided into two, they have three kings – Saul, David and Solomon which is talking about three different anointing. So many things are there. The three days of Jesus Christ. Abraham, after three days saw mount Moriah. This three days keeps on coming. Three days is the sign of Jonah and it keeps on coming. And then, *1 Thessalonians 5:23*, God says: all that is shadow, let's look at the substance.

1 Thessalonians 5:23

²³ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So, he says, 'Do you know that you are three?' When I look into the mirror, because I'm body first I see my body. But because is Spirit and He's looking from above and speaking, He talks about the spirit first. He's working from the inside to the outside. We all bathe. Get our body clean and put on everything, because body first. Then, we read and listen for our soul. But that's not how it works with me. God is Spirit. And everyone who worships Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth. Filthiness of spirit and soul is completely controlled by truth. Then we look at the body. Then, if these two work, then the body should be blameless at the coming of Jesus Christ. So, we look at another three – spirit, soul and body. So, we are the temple of God and we have three parts. So, God is looking at us, He's looking at the spirit first. And Jesus' first statement in His ministry when He steps out after having a good meal at Cana, He goes to Jerusalem.

John 2:19-22

¹⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰ Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" ²¹ But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

That was the shadow, the substance is us. So, there is a temple, the outer courts, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. For most people in the world the Most Holy Place is empty. That's why the Bible says, "The body, without the spirit, is dead." Dead men walking. Positionally, the Most Holy Place is empty. There is no presence of God there. No Holy Spirit and no presence of God.

²² Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

Because in the Most Holy Place, is where the Holy Spirit comes. When you are born again the Most Holy Place is when you come alive and the presence of God comes into the Most Holy Place. So, God will try to tell this to us in different ways. In *Deuteronomy 6:5*, we get from the new covenant when people ask Jesus questions.

Deuteronomy 6:5

⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, (first there) with all your soul, and with all your strength(body).

But it begins with the heart, that's where your spirit is. The core seat of your spirit is your heart. Love God with all your heart (that's your center of your spirit), with all your soul and then will your body. If you don't get this concept then we will miss out the first primary lesson of faith. When God spoke to Noah to build the ark, the purpose was different. It was for the saving of his family. Build an ark, get inside and let them go through judgement. But we have looked for two days, pastor Vijay and I, we were talking about Moses up in the mountain and that seventy people and all. But when Moses was on the mountain with God, God spoke to Moses on the sixth or seventh day. He told Moses to tell Israel to bring an offering. Let's go to,

Exodus 25:1-4

¹Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ²“Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering.

It's interesting. One of the things He tells is, 'Tell everyone to bring an offering, but I want an offering from their heart.' The next verses 3-7, we will not go, it's all details about what things He wants for offerings. We'll just take a look at a couple of them.

³ And this is the offering which you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze; ⁴blue, purple, and scarlet thread, fine linen, and goats' hair;

There are so many in that, meaning, you have to hear from God what God wants from you. It's not the same. This is not tithes. What God wants from you so that He can build His temple, He may ask you to give up as sacrifice. You have to hear from Me. So, let's leave that part also aside. Verse 8 he will tell you the purpose.

Exodus 25:8

⁸ And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.

So, what does He want the offering for? So that we make a sanctuary that He may dwell among us. So, if you know the Israeli story in the wilderness, the sanctuary was absolutely bang in the middle of the camp, on four sides, three tribes each. So, twelve in all. And in the middle was the sanctuary. In the sanctuary is the outer courts, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. In the Most Holy Place was where the shekinah glory of God actually came from. So, it was represented to them as a pillar of fire or a pillar of cloud. That is the glory and God dwelt in their midst. This is the symbolic representation of Israel's life. Then from that *Exodus 25:1* onwards all the way to 31 is the building of the tabernacle. The whole list is given. But if you know your Scripture the first thing God asked Moses to make is the ark. The ark was to be made first, yet it is the last thing that will be kept. We won't do stuff like that, but God is different. The first thing He tells them to make is the ark, yet that is the thing which is needed last. That is the first thing that is made, because the presence of God is associated with that. If the tabernacle represents our life, the Most Holy Place represents our spirit. And the heart represents the ark where God's presence will be. And if we do not have matter what else we have. And we all know from *1 Corinthians 6:19* that we are the temple of the living God.

Let's read that so that we understand what God was trying to teach them.

1 Corinthians 6:19

¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

That Holy Spirit resides deep there in that primary position. So, in everything that we do, God first looks at our heart to see if there is a witness of the Spirit. And we need to look into our heart to see if there is a witness of the spirit. The problem is when the witness of the Spirit is not there or the spirit is dead. Then people get zealous very religiously. They may have more zeal than the other fellow, but there is no witness of the spirit. That is why religion turns to murder. That's why Cain murdered his brother. So, what happens is you have to look at the heart. Don't look at anything else in our personal lives and go to the court and look at the witness of the spirit in the heart. And if you know your Scriptures and the message to the seven Churches, the first Church is actually judged for their heart, not for their soul. You're absolutely good with your doctrine. You have judged all the false apostles. You have kept it. You're absolutely good with the works of the body, but the problem is with your heart. You've lost your first love. Your soul is good and your body is good. There is an issue with the heart. The witness of the spirit is gone. I'm not first in your affections. Love God with all your heart. You love God with all your soul. I can see that in how you're handling doctrine. I see that. That's my fear always with GTC. We're so good with doctrine, we may forget the heart. You're so good with your social works. You're feeding everybody. During this season, we have fed the poor to the cops. All that is good. That's not the key in anything that we do. At the end of the day, it's the witness of the spirit. Do you love me with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength? So, what happens when sin and rebellion enters and continues? The presence of God departs. If you know when the ark was taken away, Phineas' wife named her son, Ichabod – the glory of God has departed. In the *Book of Ezekiel*, you'll actually see the Spirit of God leaving and the looking back. It's a heart-breaking scene. I just don't want to go over there. I get sentimental when I go over there. God leaving His people. Once again, looking from the top of the hill hoping that somebody would see and say, "Lord, come back!" Then He goes. The next time He comes is when Jesus steps down on earth. He just leaves His veil and goes. You have to look at all these when the presence of God leaves.

So, God looked at Abel and had respect from him and regard for him. He looked at his heart and this guy has got Me at the top in his heart. When He looked at Cain He saw that he had no regard for Him. How many interpretations people have brought. His vegetables were rotten. Nothing of that sort. It had nothing to do with that. The first thing God looked at was the heart. So, if our heart is not right with God, then it's irrelevant what we do. People will be benefitted. So, we have to keep on doing good. People need to be taken care of. We have an obligation to society. Don't start doing what you have to do. Get your heart right and keep doing what you have to do. Today we'll examine our heart and allow the word of God and the Spirit of God to do a little open-heart surgery. If He needs to put a stent, He will put one. Go to *Hebrews 9:4-5*. It's talking about the tabernacle. Things which we learn from the writer. The *Book of Hebrews* is an unbelievable book. *Romans* and *Hebrews* are unbelievably mind-boggling books. So, we're talking about the Most Holy Place.

⁴ which had the golden censer (which was practically there in the Most Holy Place.) and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; ⁵ and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

This is what it represents, but this is what was there in the Most Holy Place. In the Most Holy Place, there was only one thing, this ark, the cherubim, and inside the ark were three things – two stone tablets which Moses had brought down, golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod. If you look in Israel's history, primarily there were two. One was the tabernacle in the wilderness with so much description and Solomon's grand temple and then afterwards Zerubbabel and all built, but they were always downcast because they used to remember O Solomon's temple. They never talked about the tabernacle. They always talked about Solomon's temple and this is nothing. God says, "The glory of the latter house shall be greater than Solomon's and all this." So, they always had this temple-complex. Not temple complex, but a complex about the temple they were building. There were two temples primarily in Israel's history. One was the tabernacle in the wilderness. That's what it's talking about, the tabernacle which God gave Moses and the details. The details Solomon had were about the construction of the big temple. But the intricate details were given to Moses. Solomon's temple was grand scale. I don't know how many billions he spent on building that. It was massive! The money, the artisans and everything, millions spent on it. and then on the final day when everything is done and everything is ready, this huge massive, expensive, glittering, gold overlaid practically everywhere into the Most Holy Place, that old ark is coming. Not even the angels were of the old ones. If I'm right, he made these huge cherubim and then he fitted in the ark there. Even that he wanted. So, let us look at how it's brought about.

1 Kings 8:3-4

³So all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. ⁴Then they brought up the ark of the LORD, the tabernacle of meeting, and all the holy furnishings that were in the tabernacle. The priests and the Levites brought them up.

They were passing through. They were going through.

⁵Also King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel who were assembled with him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered for multitude. (Grand scale.) ⁶Then the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the Most Holy Place, under the wings of the cherubim.

The cherubim were already there, grand scale gold one.

⁷For the cherubim spread their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim overshadowed the ark and its poles. ⁸The poles extended so that the ends of the poles could be seen from the Holy Place, in front of the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside. And they are there to this day.

That is how the ark is set in the Most Holy Place. Now, read verse 9.

⁹Nothing was in the ark except the two tablets of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.

Unbelievable grandeur but if you looked into the ark, two things are missing. The golden pot is gone and Aaron's rod is gone. So, what looks from the outside and what is in the inside is not the same. You know what's happening now? People are building temples that are so great like Solomon's temple. God is not looking at all that. He's looking at the core of the Church. And He's saying, "What is missing?" This is something which people hardly realize in Solomon's temple. Everybody is going, "Sigh! My Gosh My Gosh! Look at this." But they do not know what's hidden. If this is not revealed we wouldn't even know. Hardly anybody knows, because you can't even open it or look into it. This is revelation. Who will dare to open the lid and look to see what is there in the ark? But it's written a box is coming of three objects only, one object is there. Two are missing. What makes the box the box are these three things? Two are gone. Only one is there. This is what it means, God looks into us first. Are all the necessary ingredients there? Is there love? Is there faith? Is it by grace? That's the first things He'll look for. These are the first things He looks. Do you love me with all your heart, with all your mind and with all your strength? Do you really trust and believe everything that you've heard about me? Are you accessing it and are you doing it in my power and in my grace or not? That's what he's looking at. Is it there? That's what He's looking at. He's not coming to condemn. Don't ever think that. He's coming to convict. He says, "You can have an incredibly grand life of ministry or whatever religious work you are doing, but at the end of the day, learn from the first man. I looked at him and I had respect for him." You don't need the applause of the people. You don't need the respect of the people primarily. You need my respect. The man of faith is looking, does God look at me with respect? Does He regard me with favor? Does He look at me? This is the issue here. And if you look, even the golden censer is missing. It's not there. Let's go further.

Deuteronomy 31:26

²⁶"Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there as a witness against you;

That is also missing. Only the Ten Commandments written in stone is there. The entire book of Moses is missing. So, the rod is missing, the golden pot of manna is missing, the golden censer is missing, and the Book of the Law is missing. And you have the grand cherubim. And God still was humble and filled them with His glory. He's a kind God. Sometimes we just look at the presence of God and say, "God has approved." God says, "I'm just showing kindness." When he hit the rock the second time, He still gave them water, because they were thirsty though they were rebellious. If we look inside and search we will realize that a lot of stuff is missing! There were supposed to be five things, only one is there. Four out of five missing. What grade would you give pastor Vijay if it were an engineering student? I would show some mercy to my poor kids. But you, no! Twenty out of hundred. Are we seeing? It doesn't matter to God first how we look outside. Honestly, we just move from one room

How Will God Regard Me?

to another room and we're dressing. We're dressing for the people and we're not dressing for God. Because we are on camera, and we know it's going everywhere and for their sakes that it should not distract by wearing something, "How can a man of God dress like that and come and preach? He looks like as if he just woke up and got up and came in, like we say in English, the cat brought in on a wet night." Not like that. But actually, God does not look at the outside first. He looks at the inside. That's why the people are like O Solomon's temple. "Forget about Solomon's temple and its glory," He says, "I'm building something. You have no clue. The glory of that house there will no comparison, a set of people who will be blameless in My sight in spirit, soul and body." Absolutely. Unmatchable glory that house will have. So, let us come to our heart. We'll take the lens and go to our heart. We now come to our heart that is the ark.

Exodus 25:17, Quickly we will go. Not the whole chapter, but certain verses I will say.

Exodus 25:17

¹⁷ ***"You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits shall be its length and a cubit and a half its width.***

Exodus 25:23

²³ ***"You shall also make a table of acacia wood; two cubits shall be its length, a cubit its width, and a cubit and a half its height.***

Exodus 25:31

³¹ ***"You shall also make a lampstand of pure gold; the lampstand shall be of hammered work. Its shaft, its branches, its bowls, its ornamental knobs, and flowers shall be of one piece.***

Exodus 26:1

"Moreover you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine woven linen and blue, purple, and scarlet thread; with artistic designs of cherubim you shall weave them.

Exodus 27:1

"You shall make an altar of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits wide—the altar shall be square—and its height shall be three cubits.

Exodus 27:9

⁹ ***"You shall also make the court of the tabernacle. For the south side there shall be hangings for the court made of fine woven linen, one hundred cubits long for one side.***

Now, you go to the beginning again. We read from 25:17.

Exodus 25:10

¹⁰ ***"And they shall make an ark of acacia wood...***

Now, it's talking about the ark. What's the difference between this instruction and all the other instructions? We read seven or eight. There are plenty.

...two and a half cubits shall be its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height.

Your heart is always designed by others, they make your heart. You don't make your heart. God will send all kinds of people into your heart to shape your heart in the image of the heart of His Son. Everything else you can make, not your heart. He will break your heart and crush your heart using the people around you. He will send that kind of people into your life, because they shall make your heart. You're not defined by your friends. You're defined by your enemies. Joseph became Joseph because of his enemies. David became David because of his enemies. They shall make your heart. Understand the principles in the Bible. That's where God sits and the place where God sits is made by others. It's not made by you. They will decide your heart. If you look at another portion there, there's one more thing where it is written 'they', which is Aaron's garments. Your works of righteousness which are your garments which represent your character is also determined by others, not by you. It's interesting when you read the whole picture. They and you. 'You' is written with everything and they is written with

How Will God Regard Me?

only two things: one is the ark and the other is the garments. And you look into the Scriptures you understand spiritually that is the shadow and this is the substance. My heart is decided by others. That's why you can't be a hermit and become a man of God. It's impossible. That's what C.S. Lewis said, "The only place where your heart is secure is in hell." It's hell, untouched by anything. Unbroken and untouched by everything. If you look in the order of how everything was given, the maximum number of verses i.e. thirteen verses are given to the ark. Because our heart is the most important part of our salvation. Salvation begins with your heart. With your heart, you believe. They went astray in their heart. You go astray first in your heart. Guard your heart with all diligence, out of which proceed issues of life. That is why if you look at the salvation prophesied in the Old Covenant in *Ezekiel 36:26*: a New Covenant promise in the Old Testament.

Ezekiel 36:26

²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

The new spirit will not sit on that old heart. It is deceitful beyond imagination. The Holy Spirit requires a new heart. So God will test our heart and our outward actions, however good, they are secondary. And ultimately our heart will be revealed. That's what happened in Lazarus' house when Jesus came. Martha's heart was revealed, though the work she was doing is fantastic, she's cooking for the Lord, the disciples and the guests. The heart was revealed. He looked at her and said, "Martha, Martha, you got one issue. Your heart is troubled by too many things. She has chosen the one thing, she has rest in her heart. She's sitting at my feet. She's at rest. Her heart is at rest." So, let's not our lives be like Solomon's temple with a lot of things missing. That's why God said, "They shall make the ark your heart." That's why God has commanded about the heart. Love God with all your heart, all your soul and all your strength. And as important as the first commandment is the second one. What is that? Love your neighbor as yourself. That's a matter of the heart. Unless we put God first in our heart, the work of God has not even started in our life. Saved but the rest of the work hasn't started. There is an old Malayalam cinema song, black and white, which translates, "Working and working, unfinished house." It never finishes. You know why, the first thing is not right. What is the first thing? Love God with all your heart, all your soul and all your strength. Love your neighbor as yourself. Seek ye first the kingdom of God. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done. It's all a matter of first. So, our first test is our heart towards God. That's why God had regard toward Abel. He looked at Abel, at his heart and Scripture says, "By faith." If faith is real, faith comes from hearing, and hearing from the word of God. So, he heard from God and he put God first. See in everything there is the way of God and other ways. The minute you put the way of God, you put God first. And the way of God usually never agrees with any other way, because the nature of the way of God since it is truth is exclusive. The cross is foolishness for everybody except those who are saved. So please look into the word of God and you will always realize that God first looks into the heart. There are twelve chapters of Daniel all about eschatology, dreams, visions, falling and rising empires, but the entire booked Daniel begins with one verse,

Daniel 1:8

⁸ But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

Take that verse away and there is no book of Daniel in the Bible. It won't be there. No eschatology, no revelation nothing. Everything started because a young teenager, a slave in Babylon decided to put God first. He purposed in his heart. It's a simple thing. That was the only thing he could do. Everything else was out of his control. It was a buffet over there. There was chicken, mutton, biryani, vegetable soup and rice is there. We have to eat because our body matters to the king, so he said, "Can I please have this?" He had no choice over anything. He had absolutely no choice in anything else, what he read, what he wore, his name has been taken away. His everything has been taken away. But he looked at the table and there were so many things over there, meaning you could still have some choice in this. But the soup was only meant to be an appetizer. That was the main course. He said let me ask. And God saw his heart and saw that he had favor with the eunuch. Why did he want to do that? To put God first. Lord I cannot put you first in anything, but in one thing I can use my little free will and God started moving. And after that we have everything written in the *Book of Daniel*.

1 Samuel 13:14; when king Saul goofs up and Samuel is so mad. This is much earlier. This is not the Amalekite battle and all that. This is much earlier.

1 Samuel 13:14

¹⁴ But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."

1 Samuel chapter 13 beginning is that Saul ruled for three years and after three years, now we don't know the actual construction of that sentence, but if this was happening in his third year, he ruled for another 37 years. I don't even know if David had been born then, but God had already seen a man after His own heart. He saw his heart even before he was born or he must have been a little boy. But already He sees his heart. That is where we have the history of David. David is mentioned only in chapter 16. How many years later and how many battles later, David comes into the picture. We don't even know the name of the man and God already knows the man. And what is the key? The key was his heart. So we're building a new covenant tabernacle of the Lord. Don't be fooled by glamour. Don't be fooled by how many followers on YouTube or anything but that's irrelevant. The thing is: are we after God and His presence, because the ark was in the holy of holies and the mercy seat was there. In *Exodus 25:22*, He has said something.

Exodus 25:22

²² And there I will meet with you (There's only one place He promised Moses that He will meet with him.), **and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat** (I will meet you there and I will speak with you there. So that's why this heart part is so important. The spirit part and the heart part is so important, because that's where God meets us and that's where God speaks to us.), **from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.**

And if the voice has ceased in that part of our life, then better cease everything else during this period until it comes back. Don't do one more religious work. On the other hand, God will do everything to clean you and me our heart out that is the seat of His Spirit.

Psalms 90:12

¹² So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.

What he's saying is that it's irrelevant how long or how short you live, that's basically what it means in this context. The whole thing is that how is your heart? How is your heart? You could live for 27 years and receive the heart of God and die and fulfill your purpose. You could live for 90 years and never have that heart, that wisdom of God or understand that God looks into the heart first. You could live a long life. He says, "Number your days." We all have only a certain number of days. And the thing is that we have to realize where does God look first.

Are our hearts empty? Which is good, if you looked into the ark, the ark was practically empty. There was nothing else in the ark except these three things. There's nothing there. The ark was empty except for three things that were connected with God. So, if your heart is empty and I'm there, that's perfectly fine. That's the way I want it. That's why remember in our marriages we say, "Give your wife your hand. Do not give your wife your heart." Solomon gave his heart to his wives. Do you ever hear even though David had many wives and concubines, did he ever give his heart to any of them? No. So, he could always come back and go with God. Saul was another character. He never gave his heart to God or to his wife. He kept his heart for himself and built a monument for himself. There are three different kings over there. All are case studies. So, are our hearts empty and only filled with God? Remember what God told Moses in,

Exodus 25:16

¹⁶ And you shall put into the ark the Testimony which I will give you.

It was God's testimony. It was after that was put in its name changed to the ark of the Testimony and the veil became the veil of Testimony. Everything changed with the Testimony, till then it was an empty box. It's got no relevance. You can have all the angels sitting, but all that's irrelevant until the Testimony was put in there. It was the Testimony of God. Someday we'll look at it in detail. There were three things kept in the ark. One was the tablets of stone. And what does the law reveal? God is holy and God is perfect. That is the Father. Then you have a golden pot of manna. Everyday manna came. Eat it. Don't keep it. If you kept it, it went bad. But only one set of manna never went bad. It was the manna kept in the golden pot in the ark of Testimony. It never went bad. Jesus said, "I am the manna that has come from heaven." The golden pot signifies the purity of His life and the word that has become living. He says, "When My word comes to life in you, it never goes bad. It's life." The

How Will God Regard Me?

golden pot of manna represents Jesus Christ. All these tribal leaders started fighting about leadership and God said, "Don't worry. I will show them. All of them have their rods (staff) right? bring it and keep it before the Testimony. Aaron's also, let it be there. Next morning come and look." Next morning, they come and look. Everybody's rod is lying over there. Aaron's rod has blossomed and budded with fruit. What does that represent? It represents the Holy Spirit. I was a dead man walking. I was put before God's testimony, and the Holy Spirit came and gave life and fruit for the glory of God. So, the ark had three things: the law, the golden life of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. What is missing? Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit are missing. Only thing that you have is the law. And the law kills. But the glamour is there. It's come. That's the testimony of the ark. It's missing. When you talk about faith, God is looking into your heart. When He's looking into your heart, there has to be a perfect balance. The balance should be like Jesus', because Abel is coming and offering a sacrifice. God looks at him and at his sacrifice. He had respect for him and for his sacrifice and He receives it.

John 2:13-17; when God looks into our heart.

John 2:13-17

¹³ Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. ¹⁵ When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. ¹⁶ And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" ¹⁷ Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."

So, one of the first things God looks for when He looks into our hearts is, do you have zeal? Do you have zeal for the temple? The whole temple is there. Do you have zeal in your heart for My house? How zealous are you? That's what you have been hearing in the morning. Phinehas's zeal, it's all for God's heart, cleansing out. Zeal! Do we have a zeal for His house? But you have to be very careful when you are zealous because there is a balance that is found only in Jesus Christ. If you turn to *Matthew 9:13*, you will see that in the prophets in the old.

Matthew 9:13

¹³ But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Zeal and mercy, that's the balance. Incredible zeal for the house of God and unbelievable mercy. Zeal will demand justice but mercy will demand forgiveness. How do you balance this? There was no man who walked on earth who was more zealous than Jesus. Yet there was no man who walked on earth who was more merciful than Him. And God says, when I look into your hearts, does He see both zeal and mercy? And at the top of the Ark was the mercy seat. What the priest had to do was to kill a bull, take the blood for him and his household and sprinkle seven times. Then, take the goat, kill it and take the blood and sprinkle it seven times. It's for the people. He had to demand mercy for him and his household and for the people. Seems like for him and his household he needed a bigger animal, the bull. And he could go there only once a year. He was very zealous when he went it because to kill a goat and take its blood or to kill a bull and take its blood you are very zealous, for taking a life you are zealous for God. But when you are going in there you are actually appealing for mercy. That was Abel. These were the firstborn of his flocks and He heard from God he was very zealous. He did not let the kindness and the compassion for his sheep, the firstborn; cute little things stop him from killing it. He was zealous for the Lord. But God looked into his heart and when he came in with its blood, he was not coming based in his zeal. He was asking Lord, have mercy on me. That's what God looked and that's what when we go back to our rooms after preaching we look into our hearts and says, Lord I was zealous for You but I was also pleading for Your people. At the end of the day when we go out Lord. That's what Paul says, I preach to You Lord first. You have to have the zeal for the Lord. Consumed for the zeal of the Lord. Yet that man says I wish if it was possible let my name be taken out and theirs may be written.

Moses had zeal for the Lord. Who is for the Lord? And then, incredible mercy and says, "Lord, take my name out." You know it starts with Abel, the first man in the Bible when God looks into his heart He saw incredible zeal for the Lord. To be able to kill for the first time and yet have incredible appealing only on God's mercy. He did not go based on zeal. He went based on the blood. And it was when God looked at the blood which represents the Blood of His Son and He was pleased and He extended mercy. Are you getting it? That's the picture in the Bible. That is when the ordinance is passed in *Leviticus 17*; remember later when the law is given?

Leviticus 17:10-12

¹⁰ 'And whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. ¹¹ For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.' ¹² Therefore I said to the children of Israel, 'No one among you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger who dwells among you eat blood.'

If you go to verse 11, what is the reason? The life of a creature is in the blood and I have given what? Blood for atonement. Why did He give blood for atonement? Because life is only in the blood nothing else in your body which has blood on its own except blood. And wherever the blood flows, life flows. And life is in the blood and He said, if you sin you shall die. What does death mean? Loss of blood and the entire universe there is only one thing that has life which can replace the death we loss, that was temporarily and what is that? Blood and He said, you shall offer it. That's why till today all the Muslim brethren do not eat blood. We don't understand what Halal means. This is the reason because life is in the blood. But this was only a shadow, this is temporary. Ever year and over and over again they had to do it. But basically, God was looking into the substance and it was the blood of His Son. In His blood is eternal life. If you turn to *Hebrews 10:19-20*.

Hebrews 10:19-22

¹⁹ Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹ and having a High Priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

What he is saying? When they were doing it, when Abel started it and later when I made it into a law and what was happening? It was representing My Son, His blood and His body and His life and that is the only life which is acceptable no other life is acceptable. So, we need to realize that in every one of our offerings we go appealing for the mercy of God nothing else. That's the mercy of God and that's where Abel comes and now do we understand the principle? God is pleased only with the life of His Son and nobody else's life. That is the only life perfect. Abel by faith he brought fat portions and in that there was blood. The body and the blood and came to God. God looked at his heart and so saw he was seeking mercy and not approval. Cain was seeking approval of his works and not mercy. No man can boast before God of his works, you are saved by grace and grace alone. If you have to be saved by grace in any situation the only thing we can appeal to is to appeal to God's mercy. So, the question is: when we go before God as Abel is teaching us, what are we seeking? Approval or mercy?

Hebrews 4:16

¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace...

How? Through the blood and the body of Jesus Christ for He had made a living way, by faith we go through that.

...that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

First is mercy. We only go through that doorway of first appealing for mercy. They are not for grace first, its mercy. That's what Abel teaches us. It's not declaring our righteousness before God as they teach you. No! Say, Lord Your Son is righteous but I have goofed up in so many areas still and I am still coming to you for the things that I know and You know so much that I don't know. And I'm coming to you first appealing for mercy. Lord, mercy because You are perfect, holy and righteous. So, we getting the picture? On the day when Israel came out of the Mount Sanai, after 3 months or roughly more this was Gods desire for them was.

Exodus 19:26

⁶ And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

You getting it? This is His desire for every one of the 12 tribes. You shall bow for me and a kingdom of priests. Every one of you serves. You look further you would have realize how everyone would have priest. Everybody, firstborn would have been

How Will God Regard Me?

priest, every tribe and every family. So, they would have actually a kingdom of priest. Yet you know the day when law came in? They were having an orgy downstairs; a lot is going on around the calf. Dancing naked and all gone crazy. Moses comes down with Joshua and this is what he says. The zeal of the Lord takes over now in *Exodus 32:26*.

Exodus 32:26-28

²⁶ then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, "Whoever is on the LORD's side—come to me!" And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him.

Because God was looking. There were 12 tribes and God was looking into every body's heart and Moses is speaking. Eleven tribes didn't move. Judah didn't move, Ruben didn't move, nobody moved all the way down. Only Levi moved.

²⁷ And he said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.' " ²⁸ So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And about three thousand men of the people fell that day.

This is what I think, they were drunk and naked lying all over there and they went and killed them. They had an Orji like it keeps happening like in Western nation all drunk, high on drugs or whatever like now. All were lying over there and they went in and all those who were exposed naked lying over there were killed and all the others were killed and some of them were killed by their own. They are all related any way flesh and blood. So, what happened in *19:6*, the zeal of the Lord caused them to kill flesh and blood. That's what Jesus looks at spiritually and says, "*If any man loves his father or mother, wife or children more than Me, you cannot be My disciples.*" It's not possible. You need to have that zeal for Me and put Me first.

Exodus 32:29

²⁹ Then Moses said, "Consecrate yourselves today to the LORD, that He may bestow on you a blessing this day, for every man has opposed his son and his brother.""

What was the blessing they got? The Levitical priesthood began. What was meant for 12 went to one tribe. From that day, there is a division between 11 tribes and one tribe. If you had to go to God, you had to go through this people. Simple, meaning? You want to approach God? You cannot approach God without zeal. You need to be zealous for the Lord. So, the first thing Jesus shows in His ministry is His zeal for God. That's why the first Church Ephesus God says, you have lost your first love and the last Church He says, you have lost your zeal. You are neither hot nor cold. Get hot or get out. That's the actual title for the Church in Laodicea, get hot or get out. I don't want people without Zeal in My house. That's what happens. What did God choose them for and why did God choose them for? Because they, well, let me show you I never saw it that way.

He chose them the Levites were chosen as priests because they were so zealous for their Lord that they opposed their own flesh and blood and killed them their own people. For what? For all the generations that appeal for mercy. The zeal of the Lord had caused them to kill and after that what are they going to of all their lives? Appeal for mercy for their brothers. Zeal and mercy. I saw your zeal and for the rest of your life you will appeal for mercy. That is ministry. I've seen your zeal for Me, now this is what you will do. Your every message is basically appealing to my mercy to change the hearts of people. Zeal and mercy, the balance. That's what God looks into the heart and that's what He looks into Abel. This man is a Sheppard. Who can't pluck an apple? It breaks your heart? Pastor Vijay wouldn't know it but I'm a kind of person who grew up with all kinds of pets. I had minas, sparrow. I had a monkey; I had all kinds of dogs. I grew up in the mountains and I know every time a sparrow died out, I wept and my mom gave me a little box and I went buried and made a Cross as a Catholic. I cried every time, even the chickens which I was supposed to take care of when they died; when they were killed and eaten there wasn't any problem but when they died I cried. My dogs I loved them, how many dogs I had starting with a Himalayan sheep dog, big black one. When I was four years old I used to sit on its back and that fellow used to take me. When we were transferred to one place to another because there was a huge river and we couldn't take it so my father said, you will come back after 6-8 months and take it. But by the time we came back the dog never ate any meal, he sat there near our old quarter and he died. I loved animals. How much more does a Sheppard loves his lambs. But the zeal for the Lord caused him to kill it. But he is not going with zeal; he is appealing to His mercy. And God says, this is a balance you need to understand.

How Will God Regard Me?

That's why this faith is so important and the shadow is in the Old Testament and the substance is in the New Testament and all this is a picture of Jesus Christ. It's the Spirit of Jesus living through these people. That's what when faith happens and when faith happens Paul says, I know I no longer live. So, the picture of Jesus Christ is transformed through all history. Abel worshipped God by faith, a Sheppard killed his lamb. God will kill His own Son for our own sake. In His zeal for us, He killed His Son and He is appealing for mercy for our sake. Enoch will walk with God and its God who is walking. Noah building an ark, its God building the Church specifically. How do you build a Church with godly fear and sticking to God's specifications? You have to hear every day. One plank is ready and pitch is done. No, you have to hear. So, go back and check that's not right. you may think that is right but you have no clue about the nature of the judgment that is coming all it takes is one leak and you are going to be in the water for 6 months or over a year. That one leak will kill you, you'll lose something. You have to keep on hearing and that's how we build the ark. The walk of faith and the work of faith and everything comes from hearing.

How do you hear? I keep telling you, you hear with your heart. You don't hear with your ears, you hear clearly with your heart. When your heart is pure and cleansed by God it's very easy to hear. Even a whisper, you'll be able to hear because you don't hear with your ears. You hear with your heart because He is seated over there and the Holy Spirit says, "No." "Lord, are You happy with my ministry today?" "No." "But people were all encouraged." "Are You happy with that?" "No. You want to know why?" "Yes, Lord." "Remember that one line?" "Yes, Lord." "I didn't like your tone." "Why, Lord?" "Because I'm supposed to be speaking through You, right?" "Yes, Lord." "So, I don't use that tone. It's My life or your life? You asked me a question whether I was pleased? I'm giving you an answer." Most people won't ask questions because they don't want the answers. That is what we hear about David, right? We heard about cutting the edge of Saul's robe and that man becomes the hardened man and again becomes sensitive. It's all got to do with the heart. That's the funny thing, right? God picked them for their zeal and used them for His mercy.

Let's stop there because if you go further, we will go into the next part of it, that He bought the Firstborn. He brought the Firstborn. It's an entire sermon in itself as to what it means. He didn't bring the secondborn. Let's go there, Genesis 4; so that we touch it and close.

Genesis 4:4

⁴Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock...

It was not the secondborn or the third born. Because the only born you can offer by faith is the firstborn. You cannot offer the second one by faith. By then, sight has come in. You've got two. You are giving one to God. You already got two. Once you've got the second one, if you give one, you are already saying, "Thank You, Lord. You take one, either the firstborn or the second one. But I have one; You have one." But when you are giving the firstborn, you've got no clue whether you are going to have a second child or not. So, you are putting God first. That's the whole problem with tithes. The whole problem with tithes. People tithe and tithe and they don't get blessed. The reason is – they don't give the first part. They give the last part, especially now that quarantine has come. And they are worried. Because only the first part, you can give by faith. You cannot give after that by faith. Because you already calculated all your expenses, paid everybody, including the landlord. The landlord has become king, god; because you paid him first. Whoever you pay first is your god. Even if Sunday comes only on the 7th day, you put that aside and then, take care of the rest because you are saying, "Lord, I don't care how much pressure I am in. I know one thing – You come first."

If you turn to *Numbers 3:12-13*, in Israel's history. You know the firstborn law of Israel. Every firstborn of animal to God.

Numbers 3:12

¹²"Now behold, I Myself have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of every firstborn..."

Did you know the law has changed? "So, I don't want the firstborn of everybody. You can keep all your sons. Reuben, you can keep your son. Simeon, you can keep your son. I don't want them. Judah, you can also keep your son. All of you can keep your sons. I want the firstborn of every Levite." He changed the law.

...who opens the womb among the children of Israel. Therefore the Levites shall be Mine,

How Will God Regard Me?

Meaning – the Levites replaced all the firstborn. That’s the difference. What He’s saying is that – if the Levite had 5 sons, all 5 were God’s. And let us say, Judah has one son, “I don’t want your son. Even if you offer him to Me, you can take it back. I only want the Levites.” That is how we became. But that was not how it was originally given. What was originally given was that every firstborn is separated to God. But He changed that rule also, because of one tribe’s zeal. The Levites became the priests. Zeal, mercy, put God first. In the New Covenant, God comes and changes it all and says, “Priesthood has changed. My Firstborn is the High Priest in the order of Melchizedek and under Him, you are all priests.” And we love it. We are a royal priesthood. Royal because He is King. Priesthood because He is Priest. God asks, “Do you have zeal? Do you have mercy? Do you put Me first?” These are the three things My Son did. My Son did this consistently in His life – He put Me first; He had zeal for God and He had mercy.” The first time He opens His mouth, you will see His zeal. “Son, where were You? Dad and I were looking for You! Three days! “Am I not in My Father’s house, attending to My Father’s business?” 12-year-old. Listening and asking questions. Zealous for God’s work, zealous for God’s Word, zealous for God’s house and the parents were looking for Him. That’s how He is first shown. Didn’t He know His parents would be upset? Of course. Then, why didn’t He go? “Otherwise, My Father would be upset. Father would be upset if I go. If I don’t go, My earthly parents would be upset. Everybody knew. From day one, if you see Me, I put My God first.” What does it say in *Hebrews*?

Hebrews 10:7

7 Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come— In the volume of the book it is written of Me— To do Your will, O God.’ ”

That is the Lord’s Prayer – *Our Father who art in Heaven. Hallowed be Thy Name.* Are you zealous? God is asking. First thing, “I am Your Father. You call Me ‘Father’. I call You ‘Son’. How do You handle My Name?” Are you zealous for My Name?

Let’s go to *Genesis 37:1*.

Genesis 37:1-2

1 Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. 2 This is the history of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father’s wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father.

So, what’s the first introduction of Joseph? He was zealous for his father’s name, though he was the youngest. That’s how it is introduced. The elder brothers are messing his father’s name. We don’t know what they were doing. They were all crooked guys, every one of them. Violent, immoral, lying, crooks, they all are; and he is the youngest. Benjamin is small. He is not going anywhere. So, Joseph is there with these elder brothers. The first thing you hear about Joseph is – he is zealous for his father’s name. That’s why, like I keep saying, *chapter 37 – 50* is a record of Joseph, except for one chapter. It’s all about Joseph. Zealous. And that’s where it begins. God asks, “Are you zealous for Me? I am your Father.” Jacob was Joseph’s father. He had other brothers. They were not zealous for their father at all. They did not hallow his name. They did not consider their father’s name worth anything. But this young boy was there. He is watching everybody. He is watching Cain; He is watching Abel; He is watching David; He is watching Joseph; He is watching Daniel. He is watching all of them. Scripture says, “His eyes range back and forth for one whose heart seeks Him and is stayed on Him,” in different ways. You may not really know God as One who has spoken to you but you have known God and His principles through your godly father. Joseph had known. All around him is only bad influence. Samuel was surrounded by bad influence right in the temple. It didn’t make any difference to him. Because his heart was stayed on God, he was always zealous for God’s name. As a little boy, like, now, we have so many rooms over here – one room here, one room here, one room there; everybody sleeps in different places. But imagine if this was the Ark. A little boy is given a choice, “Go, sleep.” Where does he go and sleep? Near the Ark. And God speaks, “Samuel!” It’s a choice. Even in the choice of his sleep, he chose to sleep close to what is connected with God. He has never seen inside the ark. He doesn’t know what is in the Ark. He has no clue about any of these things. The only thing he knows – this is around which everything is going on. “So, let me sleep here. I’ve been given a choice.” And people are making choices. Even when the messages are going on, they are making choices. And we don’t realize – we will never know who heard, who didn’t hear, how you heard, whether you heard. We don’t know. But we don’t realize that there is unseen realm that is watching. God is watching. The enemy is watching. They both are watching. And God sees and God says, “You are zealous for Me. You are putting Me first. I want you also to have mercy.” Do not be like Pharisee, outwardly putting Him first. But inwardly, they were never putting Him first. Outwardly, they were first. That’s what He was talking about that. What did He say? “You are whitewashed tombs but inside, you are dead men’s’ bones.” You know why the Old Testament gives one little picture? It is to show that it is the picture to teach the truth. The Pharisees were all walking around, representing God on

How Will God Regard Me?

earth but God says, "I am not fooled by your heart. I know your heart. You are rotten inside." And He uses an illustration. He says, "You are whitewashed graves. Nice marble plank and all. But inside, what are you? Dead man's bones." But do you know about a dead man called Elisha who was buried? What happened when a dead man was put on his bones? He stood up because his bones were not rotten; because there is an anointing resting on his bones. He was not only whitewashed outside, he was absolutely pure inside. And the anointing was still resting upon him. God gives us all these pictures. You are zealous for God. Yes, you are zealous for your father. You are ready. Now, your test is going to begin, Joseph. We will see whether you will pass the test of mercy. Father will call him and he says, "Father, here I am." "Your brothers are so far away." "Those guys don't even talk to me. They hate me. Aren't there so many servants in this house?" No questions asked. "Yes, Dad." "Will you go check on them?" "Where are they, Dad?" "Shechem." "But isn't that where my brothers killed all those people? Aren't they hostile?" No questions asked. "Brothers hate me. They don't love me. They don't talk to me. The people are hostile." No questions asked. "Daddy, what do you want me to do? You are concerned about my brothers? I will go, Daddy." You were zealous for your father's name without hating your brothers. That's the balance. And you want to extend mercy to them. His test will begin. That's how a child starts becoming a young man. Childhood is over. That's why we are not introduced to Joseph before the age of 17. It is hidden. He has overcome that stage. We are introduced to him, spiritually, as a young man, who has overcome. The Word of God lives in him. He is strong. He is defeating the enemy. "Okay, you are zealous. Don't show mercy." "Shut up. I don't want to hear you. I will show mercy." He has become a young man. He is on a journey. Now, God can start. And He will tell Joseph, "For the next 13 years, son, your heart is going to be crushed. It is going to be powdered by people around you. And then, you will realize – one day, you will stand before the king. The king will look straight at you and say, "You know what? The Spirit of your God speaks through you." And everywhere you go, they will know – your God is with you because I'm framing you through your enemies and how you react outside. I look at your heart and I will see that whether you fulfil the dream that I gave you. I have spoken over you. You are called to reign." He has spoken over all of us, "He, who overcomes, as I overcame and sat on My Father's throne, will sit with me. He, who overcomes, inherits all. I have already spoken over you." Now, you are on the road. And the issue is the heart. He looks, first, at the heart; then, He looks at the works. He looks first at the heart. That's what He has given us. I believe, it's an incredible opportunity that He has given. I don't believe. I don't know. I don't think, humanly speaking, an opportunity will come to believers where they are shut down. Because I believe the next one, the calamity that will be coming, will be violence. It will be war, riots and stuff like that. Then, this peace won't be there. Internet will be cut off, first thing. First thing they will cut off is the net. Right now, we are very happy because we have 24X7 power, 24X7 high-speed internet. Everybody's got it. We have all formats. We have listen to it on the net; we can listen to it on the radio; we are on podcast; we are on YouTube; we are on Facebook. Whatever you want to; and you can spend your time with God. You have heard, searched, prepared and get ready. It's all there. Next time, I don't think the world will ever get a chance like this. Even my kids who are far off countries where 4G itself is very slow and very expensive, they are tickle-pink by the radio format. Even now, while I'm preaching, they are sending me, "Thank you. I'm listening." Because it doesn't take any data. So, from the lowest segment of internet speed data to the highest ones, to the 1080. You want to see me with clarity where even I don't know I had so many pimples on my face. You can see; you can listen. All format but one extreme to the other extreme. It's not to see; it's basically to hear. Faith comes from hearing so that we come through the process. Today is day 11 and the last day of the month. So, the question God asks is: God looked at Abel; God looked at Cain and He looked with respect at Abel. God looks at us today. Does He look at us with respect? Does He look at us with regard after 11 days? Does He look at us with favor? Leave Cain's response aside. Our response is the only thing that matters. Let's pray.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we just come to You, Lord. 6000 years ago, if Abel could come to You with zeal and yet, appeal for mercy and he looked at this young man and You looked at him with respect. You looked at him with regard. You looked at him with favor. That's why, even though he is dead, he still speaks. Abel is dead but the life of Christ in him still speaks. Because Christ never dies. He is eternal. From everlasting to everlasting, He is on the throne; yet, He lives through every man, woman, child who lives by faith. And we've been hearing about faith, O God. I pray, as we hear, Your Spirit would work in the way only which You can do, Spirit of God, in all of our lives. That You sit only in one place – that is in our heart. Let our hearts be empty, like the Ark, except with the things of God. Solomon's temple had such a great grandeur but people hardly knew the Ark was empty. Out of 5 objects, only one was there in the Most Holy Place. We don't want to build anything fanciful, Lord, if our hearts are empty of You. The tabernacle Moses built looked very ordinary from outside; just skin, made out of skin of animals. Very ordinary. But in the Most Holy Place, there was the Shekinah Glory of God. The Manna did not go bad there. Aaron's rod blossomed. The two tablets of stone with the law was there. The Book of Moses was there. And from the censor, smoke arose 24X7. Our prayer is, Lord, when You look into us, You may find the truth of God in us; that prayer is always rising because You said to the

How Will God Regard Me?

people of Spirit, "Pray without ceasing." And the Word of God is alive and not dead. It's not gone stale. And the Holy Spirit is moving within, bringing forth more life and more fruit. And yet, there is this hunger and thirst for the righteousness and the holiness of God, imprinted deep within. The cry in Heaven is reflected in the deepest part of our heart, "Holy, holy, holy is my God!" I pray, Father, through all this, a Church will emerge. A Church upon whom You will look with regard, with respect, with favor. That's my prayer as Your servant. All around the world, everywhere Your people are listening, especially our own Pastors who are listening – a Church will arise, shepherds will arise upon whom God will look with favor. That's all we need, Lord. You looked at Abel with favor. Till today, he speaks. You looked at Noah with favor. He saved his family. The favor of God. The respect of God. The regard of God. Help us to be servants like Paul, Lord, who preached unto You because he wanted Your favor even in his sermons. He says, "If not, I'm not a servant of Christ." Help us, Lord. Help us. Even the little ones who are hearing, our little children in our home, the Abigails, the Joannas and the Sarahs and the Krithikas – every little one who is hearing, Father, even little Josh. O Father, let our children grow up like Samuel grew up, zealous for the Lord, yet extending mercy. Zealous. Little children, let them grow up. Our teenagers become like Joseph, zealous for the Father's Name. Like Daniel, zealous, who would purpose in their hearts. Touch us in this season, Lord. Touch us. Purify us. Cleanse us. Sanctify us. Every one of us. Let our hearts be occupied with You and You alone. Like Mary and not occupied with other things. Our minds may have many things in it but our hearts – only one thing – empty, except with the presence of God. Nothing else. Thank You, Father. Once again, I thank You for these days. We plead for mercy during this pandemic that the Word of God will go and break even the hardest hearts. And to Your people, I pray – a refined, triumphant people will arise. Mercy. That's all we can appeal – mercy, that we find grace in the hour of need. Mercy, Lord. Now, by faith, we bless Your holy Name. And we declare – Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever, Lord. For in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

Benediction:

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