

Father, this morning, we come to You once again for the hearing of Your Word. Two thousand years ago, Your servant, Peter, said, "Where can we go? Because You alone have the words of life." We come to You, Lord, for life; more of Your life. Our life does not have the power to overcome. Only Your life and we want that life, Lord. So, speak to us this morning. Transform us continuously, Spirit of God, from within to without. Touch our ears, touch our hearts, touch our minds so that we understand what we hear and we retain what we understand and we persevere in what we retain because You said, if we endure till the end, we will be saved. Help us, Lord, to endure. Speak, Father, to us once again. For in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

We turn to *Genesis 18:16-23*, like we have been hearing over and over, I believe the Church, I hope you are prepared because for years and years and years we have been preparing constantly through the pulpit, people to be prepared. You have to be prepared for the worst case scenario not the best case scenario, the worst case scenario, the worst case scenario is that we don't see the end of the day, that's the worst case scenario, if you are prepared for that, you are prepared for anything, like statistics wise, you know we have scientists with all kinds of models and they will pick it up and they will work it out, this is Australian scientist who has good scientific models they have used and said, by the time this best case scenario, this virus goes around the world and finishes may be year, two years by the time it withers out sixteen million people would have died and 2.8 trillion Dollars is the loss for the world economy, best case scenario, worst case scenario he says, 8 trillion Dollars, we can even add zeros to it, world economy and 68 million would die and it is actually true, it just goes around and goes around, by the time panic is all over, people are still dying, and dying, and dying, and dying, but we never prepare for a virus, we prepare for life, at the end of life, this life which we all enjoy, there is a definite end to that life, absolute definite certain end, it is appointed unto man to die once and it is judgement, then, this is Abraham, before that what happens? Abraham is 99, God visits Abraham's tent and has a good meal, he feeds Him a good meal, must beef by the way, good meal, he had good meal and now He is leaving

Genesis 18:16-23

¹⁶ Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on the way. ¹⁷ And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, ¹⁸ since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? ¹⁹ For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him." ²⁰ And the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, ²¹ I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know." ²² Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. ²³ And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?"

So, the fellowship meal is over, God comes down, two angels and I believe and all theologians practically agree, this is the preincarnate appearance of Jesus in human form, two angels and Jesus, so fellowship meal is over, the first part of the visit is accomplished, you are going to have a child, you shall name him, all the promises are given, God is satisfied, Abraham and Sarah are satisfied, promises have been received and now they are leaving, small details are important, when you read Scripture, first of course read your Bible through the year but then after that you start the microscope, if there were no microscope, you wouldn't know there was a Corona virus, is in the same way if you use God's spirit to read Scripture carefully you will see little things.

Genesis 18:16

¹⁶ Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom* (they arose and looked toward one particular direction, they are in Mamre and they are looking towards Sodom), ***and Abraham went with them to send them on the way.**

Little details, sometimes, when a man of God comes to your house, it's good to go with him and see him off because you do not know what you will hear on the way, you will not know what you will hear on the way, it's important, it happens to me

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almost every visit, after the first time, first time it is different, after that they are fighting to take me back, I want to come with you, I want to drop you and on the way, there are questions asked and answers given, questions asked and answers given, this this this, so Abraham walked with God, look at *Acts 21*, Paul is leaving, I don't think Paul has ever come back to Ephesus,

Acts 21:5

⁵ ***When we had come to the end of those days, we departed and went on our way; (the whole church came, to see him off, the whole church came) and they all accompanied us, with wives and children, till we were out of the city. And we knelt down on the shore and prayed.***

One of the times, many years ago, when it was very dangerous and very difficult in that country when Christianity was banned and meetings were not allowed and preachers were not allowed and I had gone in and preached and when I finished all my meetings and I was leaving by bus where I reached bus station in the morning, the whole Church had come practically, you know how it helped me, when the whole Church came over, the driver whom I did not know, wouldn't know me, came and said why are you all here, because he was a believer, and they said, "Pastor babu is here." "Oh!" he said, "Pastor, Jai Masi, Jai Masi, Jai Masi," and then he said, "Sir, sir, sir. Please give me your bag." He took my suitcase and you know, in buses, you have a separate locker for the driver's kit, he took my box and he put it in the kit, everybody said bye, hugged, everything, left, first check post, cops came in, open the bags, open the bags, open the bags, checking except mine, you know why, because it was in the driver's kit, you know why it was in the driver's kit, because everybody came to see me off, Scripture lives over and over in the lives of people for 2000 years, all came, accompanied us with wives and children till we were out of the city, the city is not very friendly, city is hostile outside and we knelt down on the shore and prayed, they would never see Paul again but they would remember his last prayer for them, they would remember, you know why, because they went to see him off, that's why Bible is living book and all those little, little details really open up and you see God living over and over and over in time through the loves of His people, what if Abraham had just stood at the door way of his tent and said bye, *Book of Genesis* would have probably written differently, verse 17 let's go back, this is Christ speaking

Genesis 18:17

¹⁷ ***And the LORD said, (because he walked) "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing***

See, there is difference between what God had done and what God is doing. See, we all know what God has done, it is here but you and I want to know what He is doing, the question is are we willing to walk the extra mile with God so that He can tell us what He is doing or are we satisfied with soulish knowledge, intellectual understanding of the word of God, we don't want to put that extra effort, extra sweat to walk with God,

Genesis 18:17

¹⁷ ***.. "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing***

This is Jesus in His temporal form speaking, not to Abraham, He is speaking to His father, see the Trinity always had communication going on, there is no problem with communication in the Trinity because they are one, there is no disagreement among them so there is always communication in the Trinity, if you look when Jesus was on the earth, He had habit if talking loudly to Himself, so that others would hear, I will give you.

John 11:41-42

⁴¹ ***Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. ⁴² And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me."***

He was saying loudly, "Dad, thank You for hearing me. Thank You, Lord, I know You always hear me but I am not telling it to You, I am telling it to them so that they will know that You sent Me." Again, Jesus is saying, "Shall I keep from Abraham?", there are counsels that God hides from man, there are counsels that He reveals, the secret things belong to God, much of what we need to know is already revealed, it is there, that's why the Bible ends with the book of Revelation, now much of what we need is revelation of revelation, how to read it right o Lord, like I said, whole Bible is a parable with parables

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within, what is interesting in Genesis 18 is, we all know because we know Scripture what is going to happen, what is He going to do in Sodom and Gomora, is He going to judge? But little before is redemption, Isaac is going to be born, the promise seed is going to come, so redemption and judgement goes together, you know that, if there is no judgement, you don't need redemption, in one chapter, first half is the birth of Isaac, prophesied, very clearly told, second half is localized destruction of the cities of the plains, judgement, now the question is, is Corona virus a judgement? Answer we do not know definitely, we can assume, presume, read the signs, why? Because we don't have 100% divine revelation to make help us make judgements like that but Sodom and Gomora, definitely yes, because He said so, Noah's flood, definite yes, because He said so, the ten plagues over Israel, definitely, the Babylonian captivity, yes, the last day's judgement, yes, so the only confusion is when these things happen, is it part of what has been prophesied, so the plague the world is experiencing, what is it, well we can tell you definitely what it is.

Matthew 24:7-8

⁷(Jesus said) ***For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom*** (actually, it means Ethnos, which means communities, so what we saw two weeks back in Delhi was two communities fighting within a nation and there is this incredible divide going on around the world within communities). ***And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.*** ⁸***All these are the beginning of sorrows.***

What are these, these are the beginning of sorrows, other translations, labor pains, these are beginning of signs, sorrows, signs, so is it a sign, definitely it is a sign because in recent history, we have been faced a pestilence like this, we haven't faced that has caused so much scare, so it is a sign because you see we want to think God is detached from us but He is not, He is intimately involved in the affairs of men and if you want to know how intimately He is involved, you just have to look at the Cross, the Cross is the ultimate symbol of God's intense and intimate involvement in the redemption of mankind, so in verse 20, if you go back to *Genesis 18*,

Genesis 18:20

²⁰***And the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave***

And He gives a reason, there is an outcry, we never know the outcry that goes to God, we only hear each other's complaints, God hears a cry of His people in China, millions upon millions upon millions, tortured, labor camps, organs are harvested, taken out of living healthy people just taken out and transplanted into rich people who have money to pay, the kind of brutality that is going on, Iran, another nation, you look at the epicenters where it is hitting, Italy, the city of seven hills, which is the height of the apostasy, so is there is a cry that is going up, we do not know of, we don't know cry was going on, who cried we don't know but God says the outcry, may be sin itself has a voice and all of creation Scripture says is waiting and crying out for redemption so may be the rocks are crying out, may be the plants are crying out said, Lord, you made us, though You did not make us in Your image, You made us and we are getting contaminated by the sin of those whom in image you made, we don't know who cried out, He said the outcry came to Him, I will go down and see whether they have done all together according to the outcry against it that has come to Me, if not, I will know, question is why should God personally come? So that no man will stand before God and one day said, you were not fair, God said, I was fair, I was there, I was there, I was there, look at *Genesis 11:5*, after the first judgement of Noah, when its over, new world has started, 2 generations later

Genesis 11:5

⁵***But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.***

He came down, God understands, God sees, God comes down, God visits, that's why we looked at last Sunday, pleasing God everything at the center there is a God who walks in the midst of men and men have don't have any clue, you know when Israel was given all this laws about cleanliness and holiness and everything, finally at the end of it God says the reason, "*I will come and walk in your midst. I will dwell among you.*" That's the reason. It is not pursuing holiness for holiness sake. Nobody will finish it. Holiness for God's sake is a different thing. Ultimately, He came and dwelt among us. So, He understands us. The book of Hebrews will say, "*We do not have a high priest, we do have a high priest who sympathizes with us because He was tempted at all points and yet did not sin.*" So, He knows us. So, when anybody is in trouble and says God does not understand us, God says, "I do."

Let's go back to,

Genesis 18:22-23

“²²Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom (the two angels went towards Sodom) but Abraham still stood before the Lord. (Abraham didn’t go with them. Abraham stood before God. Read carefully.) ²³ And Abraham came near.”

This is true prayer. It’s not standing still. Its drawing near. Three people are there. Two of them went. He stood still and his eyes are not on those who went, his eyes are on the one who stayed back and the Scripture says, *“He went near.”* The apostle James will say, *“Draw near to God.”* In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus took his disciples; they were into groups. He took Peter, James, and John even further and He said, *“Tarry and pray”*; and then the Scripture says, *“He went further because he was drawing nearer to his God.”* Understand what prayer is. Understand what intercession is. He stood. He didn’t look at the two who were going; he was looking at the one who was standing, and he went near. And then, he begins his intercession. God has already told him and now he begins his intercession.

“²³ And Abraham came near and said, “Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?””

You can never intercede with God without balancing justice and mercy. You cannot. Be very careful. There is a distinction between justice, righteousness and unrighteousness. That’s why the first step of understanding God’s will is “good.” Why? Because we ate of that tree. Adam did; we all did. We all have this blurred idea of what is good and what is evil. Earlier, only God could tell you what is good and what is evil; now man decides what is good and what is evil. Jesus says the day will come when man will call evil, good and good, evil. You cannot intercede, pray, draw near God really as a believer without having basic idea of what is good and what is evil. In *Romans 12:2*, Scripture says,

Romans 12:2

“² Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

First is “good”. Let’s go to “pleasing.” Pleasing we saw last time. *Abraham came near*, that’s intercession. My wife has this habit, when I am reading something else or news, suddenly she will say, pray. And I said, “I can’t.” Even last night, she said “pray, my knees are hurting.” I said, “Okay, your knees are hurting. I will pray!!” I can’t because my mind is elsewhere. You cannot pray to God suddenly without drawing near to him. “You can, because you are always praying.” That’s why even on Sundays before we call you to pray. We give you a little time ahead and call you so that you can prepare personally. Doesn’t matter how much you may or may not have prepared, we give you 5 mins to draw near to God before you can intercede. But you cannot intercede without having a rough idea of the righteousness of God otherwise some of our prayer request maybe absolutely unrighteous in God’s ears. And, you cannot intercede or really pray unless you have a picture of the judgement of God. You cannot really pray. “Jesus teach us to pray”, they thought, “abhi aa jaega mantra (now will come the magic words) with that mantra we can work like him.” Jesus said this is how you need to pray, *“Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom”*- What is that? Judgement. When the kingdom of God comes, we are finished. You are done or undone. That’s how you pray.

Every prayer is connected to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Judgement of God! You don’t really know how to draw near to God unless we have a concept of righteousness and a concept of judgement. That’s why the last book in the Bible, is the book of revelation. And, the book of revelation is the revelation of the judgements of God. You know, there are 22 chapters in the book of revelation. From chapter 2 to 20, is judgements. Chapter 21, *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth because the old heaven and the old earth had passed away.”* Judgements are over. 19 out of 23 chapters, is about judgement. Think about it. Why?? Because this is the season of lent. If you keep it, if you don’t keep it, whichever way its lent season. Whole Christian world, large chunk keeps 40 days of preparation. Preparation for what? Judgement? Giving you 40 days to examine yourself.

In the old days, the Church made this rule, whole 40 days examine yourself. Reflect and prepare because all of life is a preparation for one day. This is called the day of judgement. All the kids in school study in school for 10 years for 1 day. That’s the day when your board exam results will be declared. Those 10 years labour is for that one day. When the result come, everybody is checking. Lord mercy!! 10 years for 1 day. And that 1 day will decide where you are going. One day, 10

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years! How much more that day of the Lord? And there is a day coming, the day of judgement coming and there is only one place, safe. That is the place of righteousness and there is only one place safe, i.e. in Christ. For there is a righteousness that comes from God that is apart from the works of the Law, that is in faith in Christ Jesus. Jesus alone. There is only one safe place. One safe place from corona virus, any virus, disease, accident, calamity, earthquakes, famine, pestilence, wars, you name it. Only one place safe. That place is called in Christ.

You read the Bible, everything in the New Testament is promised or spoken to people who are in Christ. Only one safe place and the Church was supposed to be a visual manifestation of an escaped people. A people who have escaped the fury and the wrath of God, by faith in Christ and Christ alone. That's why we announced about baptism and what is baptism? Gone and I have come. I have died, have risen in Christ and hidden in Christ. Lord the old man has been judged. Please understand that this is what God prepares His people for. Jesus said, *"When the Holy Spirit comes, He shall convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgement."* Judgement because we don't believe. This is the holy Spirit's work. The writer of Hebrews talks about elementary primary class teaching for believers. Repentance from dead works, faith towards God, doctrine of baptisms, laying of hands, resurrection of the dead, and 6th one- judgement. Imagine going to school without exams. Who will study? Don't have to study, no homework, just sit and listen. You know what, school is not Church. Well, Church should be like school.

Listen to what Abraham asks God in 18:23,

Genesis 18:23

"²³ And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?"

Read carefully, the enemy comes to steal, to kill, to destroy. Killing and destruction is something else. Destruction means you are finished; you were not given time to repent. You died in your sins. Enemy doesn't come to kill; he comes to destroy. And that's what Abraham is asking, *"Lord, will you destroy?"* You and I can be killed, we cannot be destroyed in Christ. That's why Paul says, *"Struck down but not destroyed."* Indestructible. Why? Because we are hidden in Christ. Able was killed but, he still speaks. Cain was destroyed; therefore, he doesn't speak to any man. Cain's generation was destroyed. None from the generation speaks to humanity anymore. Abel still speaks because he was only killed and not destroyed. Political leaders die and their dead bodies are taken. The crowd behind will say "jab tak sooraj chand rahega.. (Till Sun and Moon exists), nothing rahega (nothing will exist)." Gone! One statue is there. When the statue was put up there in the night, crooks were coming and breaking different fingers so now different fingers is pointing up. You look at the statues in the city. This is the person who caused terror in the lives of people. When Saddam Hussein's statue was brought down, the people were celebrating.

If you don't have Christ, you don't die, you are destroyed. Perspective changes. Unless you see death and judgement, we will not really value the work of Jesus Christ. Many struggles with the Church. All over the world; even here. Especially the young ones, struggle with the Church. "When will it finish?", like children on a trip, "When will we reach?" Here this thing is going, "When will he finish?" Let me tell you about those 8 people caught in the ark - Noah and his family. They were in the ark for a long time. Not with humanity; with animals. I am telling you; it was stinking inside. Sometimes the Church stinks but I will tell you; this thing inside was better than the storm outside. Nobody tried to jump outside the window or the door because they knew outside was death. The stink inside was suddenly better. And they made it through the storm in spite of the stink. It must have been claustrophobic.

You know what claustrophobic is? Small spaces; dark spaces. I got a medical scare, so I was asked to do all the tests. Here I was going for the first time, doing test. Ultrasound, MRI; I have never done MRI in all my life and I looked at the MRI machine. You have to go into a machine. And I am very claustrophobic, and I hate small spaces. I am looking and wondering, 2 weeks back I was there with Betsy and she was going into that machine for radiation. Last time she went into the machine and they asked us to leave. And now after two weeks, there I am going into a machine. So, I asked that guy, "theek hai na andar, swaas toh le sakte hai na", "Sir kuch problem nahi hai, aapka sir toh bahar hi hoga." Don't worry, in your case your abdomen is what we are doing, your head will be outside. Got into the machine, the machine went inside. It was okay, it was cool and then I realized I should have taken my book. I could have read in the machine. But you don't like closed spaces.

You know what CIA used to do, and I believe they still do, to get the information out of terrorist who were caught? It is called waterboarding. It's when they put that plastic cover over you and keep it until you are almost dead; then they will

take it out. One second before so that you will tell the secrets. "I will not tell the names" but, once you have almost reached the last second before the death's due time, you will tell every secret. It was claustrophobic in the ark but, outside was destruction. Let me tell you if you feel claustrophobic in the Church, the world is only destruction. The Bible says, "*one day the world will be burnt away.*" Nothing will be left. And the Bible is a book of warnings. Every judgement is a signpost or a sign of the big one that is coming. *Hebrews 11:7* says,

Hebrews 11:7

"7 By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, (He was warned of a judgement nobody had ever seen. Nobody had ever known about the flood. He was warned about judgement!) moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith."

We don't even realize; Noah is building something the very work that God told him to build is a work of judgement. And the work he is doing is suddenly dividing the whole world into two groups- righteous and the unrighteous; the work is doing it. Finally, when the work is finished, 8 are declared righteous and the rest are declared unrighteous. God saying work that we do, declares the judgement and righteousness of God because Scripture says, "*When we go out to one set of people, we are the aroma of death that's why they hate us; to the other, we are the sweet fragrance of life- those who are being saved.*" Let me ask you, do you get angry with believers around? Do you get upset with believers more than unbelievers? Watch out! It happened from the beginning. He did not see. Revelation 2 -20 are warnings of things still unseen; we have only seen little bits. People hate preachers who warn them. They want lovey-dovey religion that says, "Jesus loves me." Which is true. Tell that to your grandchildren. "For the Bible tells me so. Yes, Jesus loves me." Bible tells you that, true. But the Bible also tells you many other things. "Jesus judges, this I know", has anyone heard that song? "For the Bible tells me so. Oh yes, Jesus judges." So, the fact is that there is even a book called Judges in the Bible. Get the full picture. Yet people do not even have the discernment to distinguish between good and evil. That is the first step, what is righteous and what is unrighteous. You see, what we are as believers and unbelievers are completely different. God does not look at believers and unbelievers differently. Unbelievers make judgments according to the flesh and intellect and everything. We don't. believers always have to make their judgment based on eternity and God, not on temporal things. Let me give you an example. 2020 is a very important year. All these things are happening because of 2020, because in November, there is an election. And the election will decide in so many ways the future of the world because India doesn't decide the future, nor does China; America does. Because America is the foremost Christian nation in the world. The only nation which wears its religion on its sleeve, the one-dollar note – In God, we trust. They proclaim and everyone will say, "God bless America." So, there's an election coming. The problem is – America says it's a Christian nation. Majority of the people claim they are believers, not even Christians but believers, born-again believers. But ask them, "How do you vote?" It's not like us. Here, my vote or your vote makes no difference. We are swarmed by a majority. So, our votes don't matter. There, it matters. And every member of the Congress will come to his local town, his town hold and the opposite people will ask them questions. You know what are the questions people are the most worried about? First, healthcare. What are Christians worried about? Healthcare. That's why there's a health scare now. "If you, My people, are worried about healthcare? So, I will give you a health scare because you didn't trust Me." Second, what are they worried about? Illegal immigration. These are all real issues of life but do you think that's up there in God's list? As a believer, the first question I should ask if Peter and Dr. Richard are sitting here and I want to fight for the Congress, the first question Peter will ask is, "Sir, one question. Republic or Democrat, it's irrelevant. Sir, I have a question to ask." "What is your question?" "What is your stance about abortion?" "Why?" "Because my God is the Author of life. I want to know your view." That's the first question you should ask. Start with life. Will we ask? That's a question. You know how they all, whether it is a democratic or a republic, the wishy-washy ones, you know what they say? "I believe in the right of the woman." That's a wishy-washy answer. That's not the question that I asked. "Sir, can you tell me about abortion." So, there are two people involved, right? The right of the woman and the right of the baby. Whose right do you want to protect? The right of the woman is only for 9 months, right? The right of the baby is for all its life. You know what happens in US, whether you are a republican or democrat? The people who vote without asking these questions or vote in spite of knowing their answers, their hands are covered with blood, the blood of innocent children. 40-50 million babies aborted. Therefore, it matters who you vote for there and this is the question you need to ask. Because the babies don't have any right, right? They don't have any right. But you see, after every election, it's a blood bath because the party is going more and more radical. First, it was abortion. Then, limit to abortion these many weeks. Now, states are passing where even after the baby is born alive, the mother can choose to kill the baby. That is homicide. And you know what? The people who vote them say that they are Christians. And what is the top on your agenda? Healthcare. You kill a

baby and you are worried about your sickness. And you think the cry of these innocent ones are not going up to God? And you know what the Christians, the believing ones say? “Oh, it doesn’t matter if babies are aborted. After all, the babies go to God.” Oh, really? Jyothi, are you saved? Can I kill you? You will go to God any way. Why study? What an answer! We are talking about believers, so-called, Spirit-filled answers of believers. Some of these people, when they make it to Heaven, they will see the babies they aborted telling them, “You didn’t allow me to live. I also had a dream and a vision given by God to grow up and fulfil His purpose. You know what? You killed me but you didn’t just kill me. I robbed my crown. I was not given a chance to serve my Saviour. If we don’t realize all of us nations and individuals are living on borrowed time, no one knows the day or the hour. Because we are moving from darkness to even more darkness and darkness further and further. It was abortion first. Because we all saw this in the universities and we study. “Department of Cultural Studies.” What do they study there? Feminism and homosexual theories. So, first it was about sexuality. Now, it is different. “Department of Gender Studies.” Now, it’s gone beyond homosexuality. It is about transgender. You are switching genders left and right. Morning, you wake up as a man. Evening, you are a woman. You know, you have to read *Romans 1* to understand. When you do not retain the knowledge of God, God gives you over. That itself is judgment. That itself is a judgment. So, when we read the Bible and when we pray, understand the righteousness of God. In your prayer life, don’t make a righteous God unrighteous by Your Words. Will a righteous God destroy the righteous with the wicked? “No. I won’t destroy but I will kill.” Because God says about judgment, “When I draw My sword from My sheath, I don’t put it back.” The righteous and the wicked will die together but they won’t be destroyed. That’s a different thing. We have to see the big picture and there is a small picture. The big picture is – Jacob and his family went (72 people or something) into Egypt. That was God’s purpose – to go in. Famine was the actual visible reason but God had other reasons, took them there, lived under Joseph, prospered until they became a very large protected nation. Then, they became slaves. Then, He brought them out. But for 400 years, they were slaves. So, you see one large circle – famine; second – going into Egypt; third – prospering into Egypt; fourth – a Pharaoh who did not know Joseph coming, enslaved and at the end of 400 years, they were coming out. “Lord, what are You doing?” God had told it to their grandfather in a dream, in vision to Abraham in *Genesis 15*. This is what He tells,

Genesis 15:13-16

¹³ Then He said to Abram: “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. ¹⁴ And also the nation whom they serve I will judge...

“They will afflict them and Egypt, I will judge.”

...afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ But...

When will you come out? Why is this time set of 400 years? For four generations, you have to wait. “Why have I said 400 years?” Why is Israel suffering in Egypt for 400 years? Because something is happening in the land they are supposed to go. What is it?

...in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

God says, “It will take 400 years for the sin of Canaan to be full. When it is full, I will judge them and finish them off.” The clock is ticking for everyone and every nation. No one knows when your cup is full. No one knows. That’s why Scripture says, “Today is the day of salvation.” It never promises you tomorrow. Today. It is ticking. This is God speaking. Tipping point. In human terms, yes, it’s raining up there in the highlands and the reservoir is getting full and there is this mark, second mark; and third, up there is the red level. When the red level goes, the siren starts blowing. Why? The sewage gates are going to be open and the government starts sending news down the sides. What happens? “Move out.” Because judgment is coming. But when God judges, sometimes, there is no warning. There is no warning at all. It was only the mercy and the patience of God. 400 years, He gave them. So, if you die young, it doesn’t matter; as long as you die right. If you live long, don’t be proud. Maybe, He’s giving you a long time. Because He’s a merciful God. That’s why the longest living human being is called Methuselah because he was Enoch’s son and Enoch was told, “When this boy dies, the flood will come.” So, God extended as much as He could. 969 years because of mercy, giving the world time. Like in Noah’s days, everybody is in. Noah is in; family is in; animals in and Scripture says in *Genesis 7:10*,

Genesis 7:10

¹⁰ And it came to pass after seven days that the waters of the flood were on the earth.

“Anybody coming? Let them not say I was unfair. Let them not say I was unmerciful. Let them not say I was not patient. Still, seven days.” They saw this being built. They saw the animals coming. They shall the animals getting in. They saw Noah and the family getting in. The preaching has stopped. Maybe, when they were preaching, they were not willing to get in. Now that the preaching has stopped, maybe they will get in. Nobody got in. Did anybody repent and get in? No. 400 years for the Canaanites! 400 years! But you know, they were lucky. Because of the unbelief of the first generation, they got 40 extra years. 400 plus another 40 years. In those 40 years, God did great things, including destroyed Egypt and Shihon and all that. You know what in *Joshua 2*, Scripture says?

Joshua 2:8-13

⁸ Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, ⁹ and said to the men: “I know that the Lord has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. ¹⁰ For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. ¹¹ And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. ¹² Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the Lord, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father’s house, and give me a true token, ¹³ and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.”

One household got saved in Canaan. One household in those 40 years. All the others were afraid. They saw the signs and they hardened their hearts. My issue with the Corona Virus is this because I’ve seen plagues in the past in Scripture. Every time a plague came, Pharaoh said, “Please pray to your God and take it away. I will let your people go.” The plague was removed and he hardened his heart. My question to you is: every calamity you face, does it make your heart tender or more hard? Every message you hear, is your heart getting more tender or harder? Because it was Moses who was preaching to Pharaoh and his heart was getting harder while the magicians and the astrologers and say, “Please, my lord, let them go. This is the finger of God.” That’s the question we have to ask. Because we need to ask these questions. Corona Virus will come and go but the Day of Judgment will not go away. It will only get closer. The virus is not the problem. Our hearts are the problem. Do you still think God is unjust? Have we been extended mercy? How do you know? I was telling the young men who came yesterday. Look at *Genesis 8*. Noah has come out of the Ark. He came out of the Ark.

Genesis 8:18-20

¹⁸ So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him.

Let me use my memory. He got into the Ark, if I’m right on the 17th day of the second month of his 600th year and he came out on his 601st year, 2nd month, 22nd day. So, technically, he was in the Ark for 1 year and 10 days. Claustrophobic. If I had been in the Ark, my head would have been out of that window for that one year. When my wife puts on the AC, I get claustrophobic because the window gets shut. One year 10 days! And he came out.

¹⁸ So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him. ⁹ Every animal, every creeping thing, every bird, and whatever creeps on the earth, according to their families, went out of the ark. ²⁰ Then Noah built...

A house? Looked for a job. Looked for something to eat. No, what’s written? When mercy has been extended to you, what’s the first thing that you do? What’s the first thing that you do today morning? What did you do? It says,

²⁰ Then Noah built an altar to the Lord...

Probably, it was his great grandson, Nimrod, who built a tower. The great grandfather built an altar. You know why the Word has no effect in our lives? Because we do not have altars. We do not have consistent altars in our lives. Because he understood mercy. Noah knew he was saved by the mercy and grace of God and not by his good works. The problem is – if you sit in the Ark and you look around and look at all the people dying, “Oh, you were all bad. That is why you died. You see, I’m good. That’s why I’m inside.” No. “I received mercy. That’s why I’m alive. The first thing that I’m going to do when my

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eyes open is – Lord, thank You for one more day because if I had died last night, I probably wouldn't have been ready for judgment.” How can you say so, Pastor? Because Scripture proves so. Look at *Genesis 6:5*,

Genesis 6:5

⁵ Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

That is the beginning of judgment. He saw every thought, every inclination of man's heart has reached tipping point. So, God said, “I need to judge.” He judged. One year over, 8 people come out of the Ark with the animals. Now, you look at what God says when they come out.

Genesis 8:21

²¹ And the Lord smelled a soothing aroma. Then the Lord said in His heart, “I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.

You see, nothing has changed inside and Noah knows- “I am saved only by mercy and not by my good works.” Nothing has changed! When we start putting trust in our good works, our prayer life changes; we slacken. The Church is option! Reading the Bible is an option! Asking the Lord “speak to me” is an option. Why? I am good now. But that's not what Noah did. When he came out, the first thing he did- he built an altar. Please note this. It was not the building of the ark that saved Noah; it was ‘the getting into the ark’ that saved Noah. You can build the ark exactly according to Noah's dimensions, just given by God but when judgment comes and if you are outside and the door is shut, you and I are doomed. That's why Peter will say, “Don't take a chance.”

2 Peter 1:10

¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;

Don't take this for granted. Don't take your salvation for granted. The great Paul, the builder of Churches, what will he say?

1 Corinthians 9:27

²⁷ But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

I pushed everybody like the trains in Tokyo. You have to see the trains in Tokyo. You don't have to travel; you can see everything on ‘YouTube’- the easiest way to save your money and be a tourist and never fear ‘corona’ virus. You don't have to wear a mask before ‘YouTube’. You can watch any place in the world better than you actually go because professional cameramen have shot all these places, which you will miss when you go. Do you know how they push? Two guys will be standing behind every door because the crowd is massive. When the crowd comes in, at the last they will push them in and the sliding doors will close. That's what Paul is saying. I have pushed people into the Kingdom but last, I shouldn't be out. Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus, Galatia - I pushed everybody in, but I need to be careful I am not out. That's why we have to be careful.

The children of Israel who danced when they came out of the red sea, how quickly they forgot everything and started complaining! How quickly we look back! How quickly we go back to our past! As soon as we get out of this hall, fellowship becomes gossip; fellowship becomes about the world and not about the Word. Actually, if you are really impacted by the Word and you came for the Word, when you go out, you will be sitting and talking about the Word. But it went like water off a duck's back, that's why when you go out, you talk about the world because that was always there. So, the children of Israel in the wilderness, they were not talking about the greatness of Yahweh; they were talking about glories of Egypt. 40 years- Egypt! Egypt! Egypt! We all talk about our school days and college days. How come nobody remembers about Church when God spoke to me? Don't you even have one day like that in your life? Scripture says, Noah built an ark and then he built an altar. Do you know before he began building, the first lesson that God taught him? It's interesting!

Genesis 7:2

²You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are unclean, a male and his female;

The Law will come hundreds of years later but the first thing God teaches him is- “this is clean, this is unclean; this is right, this is wrong.” You see, this ‘clean and unclean’ is all connected with the holiness and nature of God. Even whole of creation is divided into clean and unclean. Why? “This is who I am!” That is what the Jewish kids are told right from the beginning- “You can eat this; you cannot eat this.” Why? It’s because that is the nature of our God. “This is clean. This is unclean. You can do this. You cannot do this.” Why? “This is right. This is wrong.” Why? It’s because our God is like this. Scripture says, when he came out of the ark, he offered clean animals sacrifice. Was our sacrifice clean today? It was the clean sacrifice that smelled good to God’s nostrils. What was the nature of our sacrifice? The blood is there if any man confesses. Did you confess last night? Did you ask the Holy Spirit- “if I have forgotten anything, can You bring into my remembrance because I want to offer a ‘clean’ sacrifice?” The blood is there, the Spirit is there; the Word is there. Bible says, all these sanctify. I, too can and you, too can offer a sacrifice, which is clean. If you build an altar, you, too can offer a sacrifice.

If you look at the order in the book of Genesis, father is dead, so finally Abraham moves into the promised land and encounters God. Scripture says, in *Genesis 12:7*, *he built an altar* and in verse 8 will say *he pitched a tent*. First, an altar! We pitch our tents first. “I need a job. I need to buy a house. I need a wife.” Where is your altar? When is it going to come? “When I am retired!” Man gets out of the ark after 1 year and 10 days, first thing he does is he builds an altar and offers a clean sacrifice. As what? ‘Burnt offering’! Do you know what a ‘burnt offering’ is? The whole animal is offered. Wait a minute, Noah! What did you eat for 1 year and 10 days? “Vegetables, dry fruits.” “It won’t matter to God if I take one piece from that roasted meat.” No! He gave it all to God. He gave it all to God what he hadn’t touched for 1 year and 10 days.

This is our problem. Israel forgot. What is happening? God didn’t forget.

“Is there no water?”

“Have water.”

“Is there no food?”

“Have food.”

“Is there no meat?”

“Have meat.” What is ticking? ‘Tick tock!’ Drip by drip, the cup was filling and one day the cup was full. God says, everyone under 20 will die. “Lord!”

“Sorry! Time up!” You didn’t know the cup was filling. Nobody knows when your cup is filling. Let’s say in mountainous countries when you live, you have the mountains, you have the water tank at the top and if you are at the bottom at the end of the city, when they open the taps and you open the tap, with full pressure the water comes. You fill everything. The tank is filling very fast because pressure is high. But if you are somewhere up, the pressure is less. Both tanks are filling. Some people because of the pressure go into wickedness faster. Some are going slower but both tanks are filling. That’s why for 2000 years, God’s servants always preached about judgment because nothing else is more important in life- not your career, not your job, not your family; nothing. Enoch couldn’t get to take even his wife with him, forget his children! Noah only managed his immediate family; he couldn’t take his in-laws or his outlaws or their children or their relatives; he could take only his sons and their wives. Nobody else he could take.

400 years silence between the Old and the New Testament! Then John comes and 6 months later, Jesus comes. Jesus is preaching and doing only good; He never did one bad act. Everything He did was good. But why did they hate Him? They hated Him because of His message of judgment. That’s why even the disciples left. Everywhere He said, “Repent! Or the same thing will happen to you.”

“Lord! Why did this happen?”

He said, “You don’t decide. You also will die like that.” They gnashed their teeth at Him. Do you know what He told them? They were so angry with Him. This is what He told them.

Matthew 23:31-32

³¹ *“Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. ³² Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers’ guilt.*

Keep filling the measure of your fathers’ guilt! Keep filling! Their forefathers killed the prophets but they killed Jesus and the apostles. By 70 AD, nobody was left alive; everybody was destroyed. The temple was razed to the ground and the city was burned down. Keep filling! This is constant theme in the Bible because tomorrow is not guaranteed to anybody. Make peace today; don’t wait for tomorrow. Paul will say this in *1 Thessalonians*.

1 Thessalonians 2:14

¹⁴ *For you, brethren, became imitators of the Churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans,*

He says, the Jewish believers who got saved suffered under the Jews; you Gentiles who got saved suffered under the Gentiles.

1 Thessalonians 2:15-16

¹⁵ *who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, ¹⁶forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.*

That’s what governments do, even the government here. “Don’t preach the Gospel!” Burning Bibles and stopping meetings and attacking- they don’t want you to preach the Gospel so that people get saved. Do you know what they are doing? They are filling their cup! Through it all, we got an unbelievably, not only kind, merciful, righteous God (because He is righteous, judgment ultimately has to come) but also most important to us—

1 Peter 3:20

²⁰ *who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.*

He is longsuffering! Can you imagine standing in the railway queue for 10 minutes or in the supermarket for 5 minutes? Now everybody is standing because of the ‘corona virus’ (desperate) but before that? I was impatient sitting at the Doctor’s room- “Doctor hasn’t come!” We always carry something to read so it’s okay; we will read. ‘Divine longbearance’- 120 years! A righteous God seeing world going more and more and more wicked and hardening their hearts against His message spoken by one servant. Divine longsuffering! So the question is- what are we building? One man was building. Scripture says, *warned of things unseen, Noah built*. The question is- what are we building? How are we building? There is an interesting thing; long back I preached about this. The interesting part God told Noah -how to build, the measurements, wood, materials- leave all these; another part.

Genesis 6:14

¹⁴ *Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch.*

Wood is given, vessel is mentioned and ‘make rooms in the ark’- that’s also given. *Cover it ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ with pitch*. When the judgment comes (the rain comes), water shouldn’t get in. So inside and outside! See, outside everybody looks so nice. Your smile looks so kind. Are you kind inside? Forgiving inside? Mad inside? That’s why God allows situations to in our lives to see what is inside comes out and we suddenly realize there is only pitch outside, no pitch inside. If there is a pitch inside, it’s like the ‘Australian pitch’; it’s bouncing like crazy. We who learned to play on slow ‘pitches’ don’t know how to handle it. So, we say, “It flew off the handle.” Yes, it did! What is inside comes out. Do you know what, that ark if there was no pitch inside could not have survived judgment day? It is not just the outside alone; it is the inside that matters.

We heard about ‘work’ last Sunday. Integrity, ethics in your workspace is something that is inside; it is not something that is outside. It has got nothing to do with who your boss is. Joseph worked so well for his father because he loved his father and his father loved him and gave him a coat, which his brothers did not get but when he was sold as slave, he got no coat and he got no salary; he was just a slave bought off the block. How did he work? The same way! Why? It’s because what was

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inside just came out. Then he was thrown into prison; worse- now in chains, in a dungeon. How did he work? It's because what was inside just came outside. That's what God is trying to do- change us from inside. The law or religion only changes you from outside; it doesn't change you from inside. So, the religion will allow you to pick your favorite god. "This is my favorite god!" Go there at 8 o'clock in the night before it closes, take your flowers and three times ring the bell. Where are you going? To rob! What do you want? Blessings! If you think the thief does not pray, you are mistaken. He prays everyday better than you not to be caught. There is more prayer happening in prison to get out (not for changed lives) than people outside. Why? There is no pitch inside.

If there was pitch inside, your prayer requests would be different. Pastor, this is my prayer. "I have done my part. All I ask is that when I go into that exam hall and when the question paper comes, help me to remember, O Lord. I have done my part." That's what my father used to tell me when I was a young boy. I was the principal's son. "I shouldn't see you studying the day before the exam. Relax! If you haven't done what you are supposed to do all these days, you are not going to do in one night." Learn. Keep changing. So, God is dealing. That's why we have to look at all these things happening in our lives with a microscope and say, "My God is my father and He is changing me into image of Christ Jesus and when things are happening and things are coming out, God is showing me it's coming out, change inside, put the pitch inside. I don't just need to look good before people; I need to look good before God."

That's why God was telling Samuel, "Samuel, with all your prophetic gifts, you are absolutely wrong. Man looks at the outside. Outside should be good. God looks at the inside." People have changed it today. God looks only at the inside; outside doesn't matter. They wear these shorts, which dogs dragged in, flip-flops and come to Church because God only looks at the inside. Who told you that? All through the Old Covenant, the same God says, "wash yourself, sanctify yourself and look good outside and look good inside." Who told you? What kind of God is he if he only looks inside? Everybody's inside and doesn't bother about your outside? If it didn't bother about your outside why did He go around healing everybody? Because He was bothered about your outside. Why did He go around feeding everybody? Because He was bothered about your inside. But He is also bothered equally about your inside; more about your inside. We are not bothered about our inside. Lives are continuing unchanged, untouched.

We are at a very, very dangerous place. That's what happened to Abraham. Abraham, after all these years, finally got into the promised land, God came and promises were given and he built an altar and offered sacrifice, came to Bethel, pitched the tent and then it says- famine came. When famine came, what was inside also came out. He was willing to sell his wife to save his life. God says, "This is who you are." That's why God puts His children through pressure so what is inside can come out. Pressure did not decrease for Joseph; pressure was increasing and increasing and increasing.

Genesis 8:20

²⁰ Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

What did he offer? Burnt offerings! We don't have to do any of those Old Covenant things but we need to have an altar and we need to have an offering. The question is –is there fire? Today is Women's world cup final; to watch that there will be fire. Some people are smiling so already they have lit the fire. How much fire is there for the things of this world? It is okay. I am not saying you should not pursue certain things in life, which are good and right and appropriate but is there any fire for God? That's what He told the last day Church, "*You are neither hot nor cold.*" Where is your fire? How can you have a sacrifice without fire?

Genesis 8:21

²¹ And the Lord smelled a soothing aroma...

Can God smell your sacrifice? Did God see you last night putting your flesh to death crying out to Him, saying, "Lord, kill this. Burn this off me, Lord." He was more interested in that last night than all the songs we sang today. He says, "It smells good because your flesh is burning. I want to kill it off." Fire will anyway come. God says everything will be burned by fire but to escape it, you can ask for a fire now. *He who comes after me, I am not even worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.* If you go through that fire today, you don't have to worry about the

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fire that is coming. What did God smell today in His house? Abraham stands and intercedes. Why? Because he has inside knowledge that time is running out for Sodom and Gomorrah.

I keep telling my wife- don't stop praying. Cut down every other thing but don't stop interceding for our own children and these children because the more they hear and not surrender, the hearts are not getting better, they are getting harder and harder. I promise you if they finish like this, the day they have their freedom and go from the Church to other places, they will not go to Church because their hearts have been made God-proof. For 120 years, Noah preached and at the end of it, everybody's heart was so hardened nobody wanted to get in. 10 plagues- Pharaoh's heart was so hardened even after his firstborn is dead, he still goes after them and he is destroyed. That's why the great man of God (I can't remember the name) says, the same sun that melts (softens) the wax, hardens the clay. It's the same sun!

These are real things. Is the plague a sign? Definitely! From the top echelon of the society, top people in the government down to the lowest, everybody is touched. Tick-tock! When do you know? One more lie! You lied and lied and lied, you got away. Then one more lie and you fall dead. Why? The cup was full. Where did you die? Right in the Church, in the presence of the Apostles while giving an offering! It was a lie; you died. Why? The cup was full. You did not know the cup was full. God knew. Apostles also did not know. You clicked, you got away; you clicked, you got away; you clicked, you got away; final click on porn and you are done. God says, "My hand is off your life. Go that way." Before you know, 5 years later, you are a hardened bisexual, transgender or whatever because He took His hand off. That's what is happening in the world. It's not that they did not hear. They heard and heard and heard and one day the cup was full; God took His hand off.

One thing I tell my driver, "Calm down! Calm down! Calm down!" We have 4 drivers; the calm one died and three angry are still left. I tell them, "Somebody will be cutting you across, just leave it." You get angry and your blood pressure is going up. One day, you will just fall dead on your feet. Why? Because you were angry and you did not even have time to repent. That's why the first thing God tells in the Bible is –don't get angry. They will call it hypertension; we call it 'anger disease'. So, they will tell you how to manage hypertension; we will tell you how to manage anger. Angry, proud and right in the temple, leprosy broke in the forehead. Who was that? Uzziah. Out of the temple, secluded, quarantined till he died. Today's word. From man and from God. Let me tell you children. One thing I will tell you – people die in so many different ways. So many different ways, you can die. It's all okay. You can die in any way. It is okay, except one way – don't die in your sin. Every other way is okay – accident, old age, disease, heart attack, lung failure, kidney failure – all that is irrelevant. Head chopped off, gun shot, crucified, it doesn't matter. None of those things matter on how you die. Only one way – don't die in your sins. I didn't say that; He said it.

John 8:21

²¹ Then Jesus said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin..."

"I am here. I spoke. You rejected My Word. You know what? You will die in your sin."

...Where I go you cannot come."

Because you are going to die in your sins. To thief on one side, "You will be with Me tonight in Paradise but you guys, Pharisees, you will die in your sins and you will not come where I am going." Three verses later, He thunders again. Look at that.

John 8:24

²⁴ Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins...

Boy! If I had heard that then, I would have had a heart attack then itself. Imagine! When the Holy Spirit comes, He will convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment.

See, Noah believed in God's judgment. Abraham believed in God's judgment but when you live these compromised lives – half in the world, half in the Church; half in water, half in land – you don't know whether you are a platypus or a fish, you are not sure you are a crocodile or a whale. You are not very sure because half the time you are in the water like the buffalo and then, you come out in the land and give milk. So, you think your good works will serve you. And after that, you are gone

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back into the water. So, you are called a water buffalo. Are you living in water? No. You live on land. But what are you called? A water buffalo. And Lot was like that. The problem was that man was not that he was righteous but he had no clue about judgment. Totally unprepared for judgment. Absolutely unprepared for judgment so that when he has two heavenly witnesses. Angels from Heaven personally sent to his house to warn him, you know what Scripture says in *Genesis 19*?

Genesis 19:17

¹⁷ ***So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, "Escape for your life!...***

What are they saying?

...Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed."

What does Scripture say? He lingered. Can it be more clear than this warning?

Genesis 19:26

²⁶ ***But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.***

In *verse 22*, they will say, "Hurry! Run for your life." Scripture says, "His wife looked back."

Genesis 19:22

²² ***Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there."***

And in *verse 26*, what happens? She looked back and became a pillar of salt. You know what? The cup had become full. She didn't know. She was not leaning on the everlasting arms of God. She was banking on the righteousness of her husband and was turned to salt. A lot of people who are banking on somebody else's prayer to make you through. Somebody else's faith to get you through. That was Mrs. Lot. What does Scripture say? "She looked back." One glance. Did you ever think one look can cost you eternity? But the problem was not one look; she had looked many times. This was the last look. That was when the cup was full. You know, the Bible says, "*To whom much is given, much is required.*" Do you know she was a very privileged woman? In the entire world, there were only two righteous men – one was her husband; the other was her uncle. Incredibly privileged women. When there are only two righteous people on earth with no knowledge of God, no Scripture, no books, no Church, no testimony, no witness, nothing and you are married to Lot – the Bible calls him righteous – and Lot's uncle is Abraham. You are privileged. Scripture says in *2 Peter 2:7-8*,

2 Peter 2:7-8

⁷ ***and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked⁸ (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)—***

Who is this? So, didn't she see the torment of his soul every day and it had not effect on her? Didn't you see the torment your righteous husband is going through because of the unrighteousness all around. You mean you were unaffected? That's why I said she was a privileged woman. She saw his torment but was not a partaker of his torment. And not only that, the angels came home. And the angels took them out. The angels warned, "Don't look back." But you see, Mrs. Lot only had pitch outside; she did not have pitch inside. She was not waterproof. She looked back and so much can be in a look. Let me explain to you from Scripture.

James 4:4

⁴ ***Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?...***

Is there anybody who is friendly with the world? I'm not saying that you shouldn't go to the world. What preachers couldn't do for years and years, Corona Virus did it in one day – malls are empty; theatres are empty; tourist spots are empty. Everybody used to tell, "Pastor James, you need to take a break. Don't preach like that. I will pay for your ticket to go for a cruise." All cruises are lying empty. They are not allowing any cruise ship to dock. Everybody is saying. In Phuket, one ship is saying, "No, we will not allow you here." Another place, it is saying, "No, we will not allow you here." Why? Because in the cruise ship, what is there? Corona Virus. What God couldn't do with all His servants, He did it with a virus.

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Nobody wants to go anywhere now. Kya bhaat hain! God, send some more viruses, Lord! No, Lord. I'm just joking. Friendship with the world is enmity with God. And you know what friendship with the world is defined as?

1 John 2:15-16

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes...

She was caught with her looks. Who? Mrs. Lot. Lust of the eyes. "So nice! Can I buy it?" "Do you have money?" "No." "You want to buy it?" "Yes." "What kind of an answer is that? Can you afford it?" "No." "Do you want it?" "There is something wrong with your eyes." Now, read the first verse once again.

1 John 2:15-16

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

This is where we go wrong. We don't read Scripture properly. It does not say, "If anyone doesn't love the world, you don't love God." You see, we are confusing our feeling for God as Scripture. God does not say that. He says, "If you love the world, the love of the Father is not in you." It is the love of the Father that makes me an overcomer. I don't have that power to overcome. The love that does not fail is the love of the Father in Him. These two loves cannot co-exist. If I love the world, the love of the Father goes out. I may still feel that I'm loving God but that love will take me nowhere. *Behold, what manner of love the Father has shed on us. It is the love of God inside me that prompts me to follow Him.* It is not my love for God. And this heart has space only for that one love. The minute the love of the world comes, the love of the Father goes out. And I can promise you – everyone sitting here loves God. And you confuse because you love God, it is okay. It is not okay. We are not talking about your love for God; we are talking about God's love in you. Because we confuse, "Yes, I go shopping. I go to the mall. I watch this. I watch that. I go to the movies. And I love God. I love You. Hold me close." God says, "O, child. You don't know. I'm nowhere there. You're mistaking your love for My love." That's what happened to Lot's wife in *Genesis 19:26*. She reached to the very gates of safety and looked back. What does the Bible say? What does it say? He became a pillar of salt. It's interesting. The next day morning, Abraham looked. The whole area is burnt. Smoke is rising. Lot's wife was not burnt. She was made into a signpost. If you and I had been living in that day, at least, for the first few months and years, you could see a clear statue of a woman looking back. Probably, hands like this because at that moment, the husband left, the daughter left. Stuck, looking back. She was not burnt. She was not consumed. She was not in ashes. She became a pillar because Scripture says, "For all of eternity, it will be written – you are a sign to people not to look back at the life you have left. Move on with God." Now, read again.

Genesis 19:26

²⁶ But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

If salt has lost its savour, you are good for nothing. Stand there for all eternity, Mrs. Lot. You are a salt and a pillar that has lost its savour – good for nothing. Understand. Eternity matters. These are all temporal things. Irrelevant. Without eternity, your life is irrelevant. She became a signpost. So, let me ask you this question: what do you see? Dust or future? "Oh, I wish!" What do you wish? What do you see? What do you see – what you have left or where you are going? What do you see? Lot's wife looked back. The children of Israel looked back. What do you see? Hanging on the Cross, the last thing – He's not looking back. He's looking forward. Death is coming. Tick, tick, tick, about to die. Looking forward. "Father, into Thy hands, I commit Myself." Looking forward. Stone. Bang, bang. Death is coming. "Looking forward, I see the Heavens open and one is the Son of Man, standing at the right-hand side." What do you see? "I wish I passed. Nobody cares for me!" What do you see? Prisoners of the past or hope of glory. "Time has come for me to put away this tabernacle." Who is that? Peter. Why? You are going to get a better one. Here, there are arthritis, knee ache, body ache. "I struggle now to preach but, O Lord, something better is coming." What does Paul say? "I see the crown of glory." What do you see? It is not bad per say to look back. If you see your sins and you see the incredible mercy of God and then, offer your life as a living sacrifice, that's what Noah does. That's what he sees. "Lord, I look around. One year ago, this land was full. One year later, nobody, Lord. Why did I come through?" That's what happens finally when Wuhan is open to the world. People will look around, "Boy! This city was full. It was jammed with people and activity. Where are they all? Gone. Why did I come through, Lord?" It's good to look back. Because sometimes, you have to see. "Lord, 120 years, I laboured to build the Ark." "Are you happy now, Noah?" "Yes, Lord." When you were woken up early in the morning and was told by your mother, "Study, sit."

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Today, when your results came, are you happy? “Yes, sir. I am happy.” When your Pastor shouted at you and screamed at you for 10 years and if Jesus comes today and you are safe, will you be happy that he put you on the narrow road? Keep short accounts with God. Don’t carry forward your account. Don’t carry forward yesterday’s balance. Make peace. Looking back is good if you look back with the right set of eyes. One look finished her but we don’t realize – little things actually show the state of one’s heart.

Many, many years ago, when her husband, Mr. Lot, was given the chance by his righteous uncle to choose, he took a look forward and chose Sodom because he thought, “Success, man! I’m making the right decision.” Years later, his wife looked back and perished. How many men? One look, one puff, one sip. It’s gone. Where are they? That’s why you have to be in ministry to hear the sorrows of people. One man; he says, “You know where I am today? Why I am miserable – slave to sin? You know why? Because many, many years ago, in my house, you know what happened? I was just going through some books and among the books of my father, I saw a pornographic book. I was just a child. I opened and looked. My life has never been the same again.” One look destroyed that man. Parents, men drink and leave it there. They’re very smart also. “Come here, chotu. Taste some brandy. Here.” They think they are being cool. Fifty years later, that fellow is coming home like this because one drop started him on a journey. Wife is beaten; children are howling. One puff. One sip. One look – they have destroyed countless lives. “Come out,” says God. Do not be partakers of the sins of Babylon. One day, you will be declared a fool. I’m telling you. You choose to be a fool for Christ Jesus’ sake today, it does not matter. One day, God will declare you are cool. That’s what I said – what years of preaching around the world couldn’t do, one virus did. One little virus. Malls are empty; tourist spots are empty; cruise ships are empty; airlines are crashing. One airline is already grounded because it’s gone into debt. FlyBy in UK. You and I don’t have to die in our sins. We don’t have to. I wish God had preserved God’s wife till today. Oh boy! How many messages would have been preached around the world without her statue. If you saw Lot’s wife, eyes wide open! You know what? You could go and blow the ash of her eyes. Frozen as salt. That’s not how you are supposed to die. The old man, Jacob. He hears, “Joseph is alive. He is king in Egypt. He has sent all the carts.” Still hesitating, “Should I go or should I not go?” He goes to ask God, “Lord, should I go?” Listen to what God tells Jacob.

Genesis 46:3

³ So He said, “I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt...”

That’s how you should go into the world. “Lord, should I go to the mall?” “Go, do not fear to go to the mall. I’m coming with you.” Boy, you don’t have to worry. You think our God doesn’t go to the mall? Then, He doesn’t go to the prison too. He went to Potiphar’s house as a slave along with Joseph because Scripture says, “God was with him.” When he was thrown into the prison, God went with him to prison because Scripture says, “God was with him.” When Daniel’s three friends were thrown into the fire, He went into the fire with him. When Paul and Silas were in the prison, He was there with them in the prison. If He sends you into the mall, He will come with you. You don’t have to worry about shopping or picnic or anything. You don’t have to. Go.

...for I will make of you a great nation there.

“Where are you going, Jacob?” “I’m going down. I’m not going up. I’m going down.” When you go to the world, you are always going down. “I will also surely bring you up again.” And what did he say?

Genesis 46:4

⁴ I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes.”

Who will close your eyes? How many sons did he have? Who will close your eyes? “The son in whom My Spirit lives, he will close your eyes. Don’t worry.” He didn’t say, “Reuben will close your eyes.” “Simeon will close your eyes.” No. “Joseph will close your eyes.” That’s how you and I should die. Jesus, Yeshua, will close your eyes. You know, my father had five children. He still has five children – 3 sons and 2 daughters. He died in the year 1994. He was admitted into the ICU on December 30th of 1993. He had five children of which two were doctors. You know who was with him the last 12 days? Because at that time, even my sister was not saved. One son who was saved alone was with him. Not even my mother was there. She came two days before he died. You know why? Because I was one son who knew Christ. I sat with him for 11 days, read to him, spoke to him, sang to him, prayed with him and when he was dying, I’m telling you, it was my presence that closed his eyes. The doctor didn’t close his eyes. The engineer didn’t close his eyes because God wanted him to know

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Him before he died. Nobody has to die unsaved because He died. Nobody has to die in their sins because He died for sins. Nobody has to live in their sins because He not only died for our sins; because His Name is Yeshua, He will deliver us from our sins; His Name is also Emmanuel. He is God with us. I can precisely remember the moment he was dying. I looked at him and I knew he was dying. I knew he was going. I told my Mum, "Amma, just look at him. Let me run for the nurse." And as I was running at the corridor, the anointing of God hit me and I was laughing when I reached the nurse's room because I knew he had made it. Nobody has to die in their sins. Nobody. Ultimately, you will realize when death comes, only one thing matters – do you know Jesus? That's the only that matters. No other question matters. Nothing else matters. Do you know Jesus? Does Jesus know you? That's all that matters. Nothing else matters. So, we have to be careful where we are looking. The little, little things. The Spirit of God that convicts us. The Spirit of God says, "Change direction and I am with you. I will help you. Come on. Change direction. Make peace. Live in peace." You don't need a Corona Virus for that. All you need is this. Because the virus will go. After some time, it will disappear. Summer is already here. The virus will die. And then? What happens? We go back to default setting. Praise, worship, seeking God should be our default setting, right? That's why Scripture says, "After one year and 10 days, when he came out and everybody came out," I like it. All the animals are coming out two by two. "You come here. You come here." Seven unclean. He had pairs of the same animal. Six were allowed to go. Two here. "You come here." Do you know, 14 animals that came through the judgment, when they came out, they died? You know that? 14 animals – male and female – that came out of judgment, when they came out, they died. Figure it out. I'm not explaining to you what it means. Go figure it out. I will give you the clue – Paul will say, "I want to share in the sufferings of Christ."

Shall we stand? Not that I'm tired but time is running out. *For God so loved the world, He gave His only Begotten Son that anyone.* It doesn't matter what the condition of your soul is. Anyone who believes in Him shall not die. It's a promise sealed by the hand of God. So, the title of today's message – Plague, Panic, Promise and Peace. Wear your mask, wash your hands and do not fear. Do what you have to do. Do not fear. Keep short accounts with God. Every day, see that the balance sheet tallies. Shall we pray?

Closing Prayer:

Father, we just come to You, Lord. It's 12 mid-day and we stand in Your house. We stand before You. It's been a long Word. Our bodies may be tired but I pray, our souls are not weary. I pray there is a quickening in our inner man to go to God, to go back to the altar and to offer Him the sacrifice of praise, to offer ourselves as living sacrifices once again, cleansed by the Blood, sanctified by the Word, consecrated by the Spirit, holy and acceptable in Thy sight. I pray for many today when the open the Word and read, they will read with new eyes. They will start seeing the good, the acceptable, the perfect will of God. I pray, Father, for many let today be a new beginning. Let them not look back but let them look forward like You set Your face like a flint towards Jerusalem. No turning back. Going on with Christ. Help us to read the signs correctly and not be terrified but be excited because You said – when these things happen, lift up your heads because your redemption is near. We stand in Your house and by faith, we lift up our heads and we say, "Maranatha, come, Lord Jesus." Let no one's cup be full, Lord. Let no one die unrepentant. Let no one die outside the gates of safety for Christ has died for everyone. Let there be mercy, Lord. Our young ones. Young people. They are confusing the vigor of youth for time given but Your Word says, "Serve your Creator in the days of your youth." Yes, follow your eyes. Ecclesiastes 9:11 says, "Follow your heart, but God will bring to judgment everything." So, I pray our young ones will choose right with their hearts and with their eyes and they will be men and women set apart for the glory of God, a peculiar generation. Older ones, us too, Lord. Strengthen our feeble knees that we may also lift our feeble hands and walk straight and forward with You and our praise and prayer life will never stop. It will always rise before You and will be a sweet, smelling aroma in Your nostrils, O God. For we are given over to Your Word and to prayer, O God. Thank You, Father. Believing we are sanctified by Your Word, by Your Blood and by the Spirit, we lift up holy hands in the house of God and we bless Your holy Name. And we declare, O God, in Your house, Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. And all God's people said – 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.