

July 21, 2021

Father, we just want to thank You once again this morning. There is no other way for any one of us but to trust and obey, to be happy in You, to delight in Your ways. Lord, this morning, even as we meditate upon Your Word, I pray that we will delight in Your Law because You said, "Blessed is the one who delights in the Law and in His Law he meditates day and night." And this morning, Father, we want to delight – we don't want to think about Your Word as something hard, but Lord, something which will deliver, which will cleanse, which will exhort, for it is through the washing of the water by the Word that You sanctify us, that You set us apart by Your truth so that we may be made clean and be ready as a spotless bride without wrinkle for Your coming, Oh Lord Jesus – gorgeously appareled, beautiful to behold in the sight of the Lord. And therefore, this morning, even as we meditate upon Your Word, speak to our hearts, grant us grace to understand Your ways. Anoint us afresh this morning to understand and obey. We thank You, we praise You, in Jesus' name, Amen!

We have been looking at the mind – so, minding our mind is what I wanted to look at this morning. You know, two things we have been looking at: we have been looking at the heart and mind; both are important. The heart, we know, speaks about attitude and the mind speaks about our thought processes, the way we think, our patterns of thinking. So, your heart could be right, but your mind may not *always be right*, there could be, what we call as, stronghold, and that has to be dealt with—everyday, until we meet Jesus. There is a fantastic verse in the Bible which I want to share with you, it's kind of contradictory, it's remarkably interesting. This is talking about Asa, righteous king – this is what is mentioned about Asa...

1 Kings 15:14

¹⁴ But the high places were not removed. Nevertheless Asa's heart was loyal to the Lord all his days.

It's remarkable, isn't it?! You could have high places in your life and your heart is loyal to the Lord. And he is not a bad king, by the way. See, this is so important –It's not just important for you to have heart right— "God knows my heart"—absolutely, but He also wants to see your mind, what is there in your mind. David's heart was absolutely right when he wanted to bring the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem and he said, "I am dwelling in houses made of cedar, how can the Lord dwell in tents?" was his argument – not a bad argument, right? But then of course, the way he brought the Ark of the Lord into Jerusalem—tried to bring, rather—invited the judgment of God because it was not done in His ways, and then Uzzah was struck down dead and it says that David was angry and then he was afraid and then he was wondering as to how to bring the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord into Jerusalem. See, these are things which we need to understand.

Therefore, heart and mind, both are important. Lot of people have a heart which is right, and mind, totally gone; the attitude is right, but the ways are wrong. I know lot of young people who are like that. I know there are some—I speak to lot of people from different other churches also, a lot of people, at least, few are from different other churches and they all have a heart to do the right thing. So, they have this theology forum and all these other forums, where they are being trained to do or do the worship or conduct the worship services in the ways of the Lord. So, it is very important for us to understand, a heart could be right but our ways are also important. Therefore, both have to be given to God and God in the New Covenant, He deals with both – our attitudes and our minds, our thought processes.

Colossians 3 (NIV)

¹ Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

So, this is so important for us to deal with both our attitudes and our thought processes, and therefore, coming with an attitude of humility becomes a very-very important requirement, or prerequisite, if you will, to understand the ways of God and this is essentially the teaching of the New Covenant. If you see in Hebrews chapter 8 – there are 3 things which are mentioned, I am going to read few verses, I am going to show you the order.

Hebrews 8:10-12 (NIV)

¹⁰ ***This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord.***

I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. (You see, both – the hearts and the minds)

I will be their God, and they will be my people.¹¹ ***No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.*** But when is this going to happen? Look at verse 12. ¹² ***For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.***

That is where it starts! First, our Christian life starts by God just not forgiving our sins, but by not remembering our sins. It's a complete brand-new life that we are given, brand new start, and once we have a brand-new start, verse 11 says "All of us will know God." Meaning: every one of us in the New Covenant has a relationship with God. You know in the Old Covenant, Israel was looked upon as a nation but in the New Covenant, every individual is important to God – yes, we are a body of Christ, but God is interested in the individuals in the body of Christ. So, every individual in the body of Christ has to know Him and God says that in the New Covenant, it is possible for all of us to know Him and hear His voice specifically for our own situation. Even though I am speaking and teaching the Word of God, honestly, every time you listen to the voice of God, God will speak to you corresponding to the situation that you are going through, it happens all the time – at least most of the time, if not all the time.

And then He says, "I will put My laws in their minds and write them on their hearts."

So, what is happening? He is going to change our attitudes and He is going to change our thought processes. These are two important things, okay. Otherwise, what happens? We will become like Asa; we will follow the Lord with our hearts, loyal to God all the days of our life but our high places may not be removed and those things may become very significant in the long run.

If you look at another king – *1 Kings 22:42-43* – this is talking about Jehoshaphat, godly king again. Look at what it says!

1 Kings 22:42-43

⁴² ***Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi.*** ⁴³ ***And he walked in all the ways of his father Asa.*** The problem is that he did not walk in the ways of David. ***He did not turn aside from them, doing what was right in the eyes of the Lord. Nevertheless the high places were not taken away, for the people offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places.***

Now think about this, whom are they offering those sacrifices to, in the high places? It is not to Baal or Ashtoreth; they were offering those sacrifices to God. Now, why is this significant? We will look at this, we need to understand the significance of this as to why these high places are important and what these high places in this particular context actually signify. Look at another king – this is another godly king, not a bad king, this is talking about Jehoash.

2 Kings 12:1-3

¹ ***In the seventh year of Jehu, Jehoash became king, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba.*** ² ***Jehoash did what was right in the sight of the Lord all the days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him.*** ³ ***But the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.*** Albeit to Yahweh, but where? In the high places. Let me tell you what these high places are.

See, whenever you wanted to sacrifice, the place where you were supposed to go to is Jerusalem—"No, journey is too long, who is going to go all the way to Jerusalem? Okay, worshipping God, okay fine, no problem." What happens is—you make God into a God of convenience and most often, you don't want to pay the price, you see! For example: if you go to a new city, where do you choose your home? Close to your office or close to your church? These things are important. See, Jerusalem signifies a spiritual high place, the ultimate place – that is the reason why when they go to Jerusalem they sing the song of ascents, and even as you ascend you have to shed weight. You can't carry weights uphill, right? So that is a physical walk of course, but even when we are going to God, God will always say, "Come up," and it will always cost us. But the problem is, we have high places and make a God of convenience. So, it's a dangerous thing. How do I know it? How do I come to this conclusion?

Look at what it says—one king who actually dealt with his high places and it says this king followed Jehovah not like their fathers but like their father—who—David.

2 Kings 18:1-4

¹ Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign.

Ahaz was like bad news, okay, bad king. Now, let me tell you, it doesn't mean just because your parents did not have those spiritual inclinations, it doesn't mean that we, the next generation, should not have spiritual inclinations; and it doesn't mean that just because your parents are godly, you are automatically going to be godly. Every generation has to make their choice, notwithstanding who your parents were.

² He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abi the daughter of Zechariah. ³ And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done.

Now, look at this my dear brothers—this is the important thing which is being mentioned along with this information that has been given about Hezekiah.

⁴ He removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles. He broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made, for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it. (It was called Nehushtan). In other words, Cross lost its affect because the message of the Cross was not being preached and then it goes on to say in 2 Chronicles 30, look at what it says...

2 Chronicles 30:1-3

¹ And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, (Where? At Jerusalem!) to keep the Passover to the Lord God of Israel.

² For the king and his leaders and all the assembly in Jerusalem had agreed to keep the Passover in the second month. (When? In the second month. They were supposed to keep it in the first month, the month of Abib but they changed, why? Because all these fellows were making a God of convenience. And he says "No way, you have to come to Jerusalem."

³ For they could not keep it at the regular time, because a sufficient number of priests had not consecrated themselves, nor had the people gathered together at Jerusalem.

You see! "Ah, it's not convenient to go, let me just sacrifice in the high places."

⁴ And the matter pleased the king and all the assembly. ⁵ So they resolved to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, that they should come to keep the Passover to the Lord God of Israel at Jerusalem, since they had not done it for a long time in the prescribed manner.

So, high places are there in all of us—in good people, the problem is not in bad people—high places in good people, high places in Christians whose heart is loyal to God but they still have thought processes, that's the reason why we have to come to the teaching of the word of God. So, if you have your heart which is right, then your mind also has to be inclined to the Word of God, okay.

Let's come to the New Covenant now.

Romans 12:1-2

¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

The mind has to be renewed—metamorphosis, transformed, from which we get the word 'metanoia,' which again means repentance—in other words, repentance is a constant process. Trust-obey, trust-obey, there is no other way. So, you have to renew your mind constantly, every time we listen to the Word of God, it's always a confrontation with a thought processes in our mind, with a value system of our mind, the categories of our mind. See, your heart may be right; but just because your heart is right doesn't mean you will understand the ways of God unless you have those categories established in your mind.

That is the reason why teaching of the Word of God is constant. Slowly, God has to build, for all Scripture given by the inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine - that which is right; for reproof - that which is not right; for correction - how to get it right; for instruction and righteousness - how to stay in the right path, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work and requires nothing. That's what it means—renewing your mind, transforming your mind, being transformed is the word 'metamorphosis' – keep on changing and changing and being transformed into the image of the Son, that you may prove that which is good and acceptable and the perfect will of God.

In other words, you will never be able to prove the will of God unless you have a transformed mind. The will of God is right there in front of your eyes but you don't have the mindset to accept it – for example, if you are a teacher, as a teacher you would know, unless and until a student has a particular background, you cannot teach him a particular subject. For example, if you have to understand my language, you should know English, minimally. So, if I speak in Chinese, it's an uncertain sound to you because you don't have the categories for Chinese or I could speak to you in flawless Hebrew, what does it avail? I will only display. You need to have certain things in your mind to be able to make connections and then to be able to prove: okay this is the will of God in my life. You will never be able to prove the will of God or test the will of God unless and until you have a transformed mind. To have transformed mind is only possible with a particular attitude, you know that right? In Ephesians chapter 4 we know this.

Ephesians 4:20-25

²⁰ But you have not so learned Christ, ²¹ if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: ²² that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³ and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. ²⁵ Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another.

Because every mind has a point of view and that point of view has to be questioned as to whether it is in accordance with the Word of God or not. And again, another chapter, 1 Peter chapter 4 – all my favorite verses.

1 Peter 4:1-2

¹Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, ² that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

So if you transform yourself, you will understand the will of God; and once you have the mind of Christ, you will begin to live out the will of God. Therefore, question to all of us is, the same question God asked the children of Israel through Jeremiah – Jeremiah chapter 4.

Jeremiah 4:14

¹⁴ O Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness, (that is your attitude) That you may be saved. How long shall your evil thoughts lodge within you?

Renting space free of charge, in fact, you are paying for them to stay. Somebody said: "Bitterness is a poison you drink asking your enemy to die," it's not going to be possible. That's what happened to Ahithophel – drinking poison, how to kill David! Ultimately, he went and hung himself.

Therefore, how do we deal with this?

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,"

Yesterday I was just following the world cup chess that is happening. There are two top guys from India – India ranked 3 and India ranked 4 – they were fighting for the position in round 4, and the commentators, they were saying, "These two were friends off the board but when they are on the board, it is war." Now chess is war actually. So, how do you war? ***"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds."***

In other words, our weapons are not fleshly weapons; our weapons are spiritual weapons. For example: studying the Word of God is a spiritual weapon; prayer is a spiritual weapon; fasting is a spiritual weapon. Why is fasting spiritual weapon? Remember, when Jesus' disciples were not able to cast out the deaf and dumb spirit and they come and ask Jesus why they were not able to cast out the demons and Jesus said, "Because you do not have the faith" and then He says, "This kind doesn't come except through fasting and prayer." Now think about it – what is required to drive out the demons? Faith! So, what will fasting and prayer cause? It generates faith! You see. So fasting and prayer generates faith, through faith you access the power of God. Therefore, fasting is a spiritual weapon – not feasting, but fasting.

So how do we pull down the strongholds? Who are the captives here? Not the people but the thoughts – the thoughts are captive. How are they made captive? By strongholds. What are the strongholds? Two things, very specifically mentioned: Imaginations and High things. Actually, NKJV uses the translation ‘arguments.’ You know what the word for argument is in the original Greek? I will give you different renderings. To argue is to compute, a calculator essentially. Second, the word for argument is to account, to reckon, to reason, to despise etc.

So, *casting down arguments* – that’s the first thing, *and every high thing which exalts itself against the knowledge of God*. There are thoughts which are captured by strongholds, those have to be released so that those thoughts can be brought to the obedience of God’s Word. So we have strongholds which are holding captive your thoughts, now what are the two things which are actually empowering this stronghold? It is first your arguments and second your high things or exalted things, whatever it is exalting itself against the knowledge of God and these two are actually very close friends – arguments and high things. This is the argument which causes the high thing, and high thing which empowers the argument. So, what is argument? See, argument is your chartered accountant, it’s always calculating: what will happen if I make this reason, how do I escape this? ... you know, there is always a calculator inside of all of us? The chartered accountant and high thing is your philosopher, so you have one PhD degree and a CA degree. You have one chartered accountant and you have one philosopher, these two fellows have to be tackled so that you can release your thoughts. How are you going to feed these people? 300 dinar – calculator, very fantastic calculations you make, we all make calculations – it’s too expensive to follow Jesus. We always calculate.

For example: if you are coming late to church; you are coming late because of your indiscipline. My personal experience, I am driving the car and I am already calculating the reasons as to what I should say to Pastor. The calculator – if I say this... Remember there is a verse in Romans chapter 2 verse 15, it says...

Romans 2:15

¹⁵ ***who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, (their conflicting arguments) and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them,***

The problem is, there is no full stop after that statement, there is a comma, lot of us put full stop (period). I will give you an example: there was this guy who sent a cheque of 1.5 lakh rupees to the ITR, anonymous demand draft—I mean, when you make demand draft, nobody knows who sent the demand draft. He sent DD to the income tax department saying, “Sir, last year I cheated 1.5 lakh rupees on my taxes, this is the money, and if I sleep well tonight, depending upon how I sleep, I will decide to send the next cheque or not.” The problem is you put a comma. He says, “Their conflicting thoughts either excuse them or accuse them,” you know when? “On that day when God is going to judge the secrets of men through my gospel by that Man Jesus Christ.” Then ultimate accounting is going to happen there, Jesus also is a chartered accountant. Here in our internal auditing, we can do lot of things, right Sammy? I can explain it off to my internal auditor and also to my CA, and he will do the calculations.

That is the reason why it says, “The Kingdom of God is like the one who settles accounts.” There is an accountant and there is a philosopher, a thinker. My Dad told me this long time ago when I was growing up, he said, “Vijay, one American – one business; two Americans – two business; three Americans – paradise on earth, they have Disney land; one German – one scientist; two Germans – two scientists; three Germans – third world war; and then he said, one Indian – philosopher; two Indians – arguments; three Indians – confusion.”

You see, we are very good at philosophy. I will tell you something, the passion with which easterners argue: you want to see the passion, you read the book of Job in Telegu. Oh, my goodness, the arguer in Job! I have seen that language only in old movies where kings address themselves. Oh my goodness, the language! I mean when you read it in English, you kind of lose the punch and then when you read in Telegu—because we are all easterners—all the emotions come into the words. Have you seen when Telugus argue? It’s only full drama, full drama; crying, weeping, and arguing, exactly how Job and his friends are arguing – back and forth, back and forth – my goodness, it’s fantastic, I think we should make a movie out of it in Telegu, it will be great, the arguments will be great. You see, so you have an argument and you have a high thing, and what is actually empowering these arguments is the exalted thing, and who is that exalted fellow? You, yourself! We will come to that, okay, the chartered accountant in you and the doctor of philosophy in you.

Colossians 2:6-9

⁶ ***As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:***

⁷ ***Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.***

You see these are loaded verses.

⁸ ***Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world,*** (the elementary principles of this world) ***and not after Christ.***

Let me tell you something – In the sight of God it doesn't matter how exalted your earthly position is, it is elementary.

⁹ ***For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.***

Like Pastor was talking: the queen of Sheba came from somewhere to listen to the wisdom of Solomon and we all say "Solomon, Bah! GPA – 10/10; IQ – 9.8/10," and you know what Jesus says? "Behold, greater than Solomon..." just think about that statement! When we think about Solomon, we have all this imagination, right? He would have answered questions like that, he would have tackled problems like that, and all kinds of things, but who is greater than Solomon? Solomon is elementary; Jesus is fullness of Godhead!

So we have chartered accountant and philosopher in all of us, let us first look at the chartered accountant, his arguments, okay. What is his problem? We should understand the nature of the argument; how this argument comes; and what empowers this argument? The nature; how it comes; and what empowers. If you understand these three things, then you will be able to tackle the strongholds; otherwise, you will be loyal to God with your heart but the high places will still be there. It's like a saying in Telegu: "He is a very nice man but his character is very wrong, he doesn't think straight." So, these are very important things for us to understand, we don't take these things lightly.

Mark 11:27-28

²⁷ ***Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him.*** ²⁸ ***And they said to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority to do these things?"***

²⁹ ***But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one question; then answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things:*** ³⁰ ***The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me."***

³¹ ***And they reasoned*** (chartered accountant came, okay) ***among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?'*** ³² ***But if we say, 'From men' "*—they feared the people, for all counted John to have been a prophet indeed. ***And Jesus answered and said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."*** That is the reason why it says, "Answer a fool according to his folly lest he think that he is wise."**

That's the reason why He says "With the humble, you are humble; with the upright, you are upright; but with the perverse, you show yourself shrewd."

He is very shrewd: "I will also not tell you."

Let us examine this passage very carefully. ²⁷ ***Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple,*** That's exactly what Jesus does, He walks in the temple. Who is the temple? We are the temple. What does He do to the temple? Remember, when Jesus was on the donkey and He was entering into Jerusalem and they said, "Hosanna, hosanna," what does hosanna mean? It means 'Come, reign over us, reign over us.' They thought He was going to Pilate's palace and kick him out, but where did Jesus go? Into the temple. And then something very interesting according to the Gospel according to Mark is mentioned.

Mark 11:11

¹¹ ***And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things,*** (When God is coming, He is looking at every area of our life. That's why David says, "Even if I make my bed in hell, You are there; even if I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea, You are there. Where can I run from Your presence?") ***as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.***

You know what, Jesus comes and He examines His temple, He examines all of our lives; every department, every area; every thought, every intention, every inclination. That means Jesus is testing us every day, you know that? Job has this incredible brainwave, look at what he says in the book of Job.

Job 7:17

¹⁷ ***"What is man, that You should exalt him, that You should set Your heart on him,*** Till there you will say, "Wah! Great verse!" look at the next verse. ¹⁸ ***That You should visit him every morning, and test him every moment?***

You know every moment you are tested? Do you realize that? Every morning you are visited. Another word for visit is 'Pakad' in Hebrew, you can imagine "Pakadliya." Let me give you the verse for pakad: "By this time next year, I will

visit you and Sarah will have a child.” Okay, that’s a picture of our new birth. God visited us through the preaching of the Word, whatever it is; through visions or dreams, or whatever it could be the way that He has visited us, He visited us and gave us new birth and after He has given us new birth, He keeps on visiting us, He keeps on testing us—He tests us not just every morning, He tests us every moment—is it good or is it bad? It depends. If I am going through a very tough situation – good, but if I want to have my own time like, “Can You just give me a break, Jesus,” – no, every moment.

Let me tell you something, even your vacation is testing you, vacations are dangerous, especially when you are in school and if you are in a position as a teacher, you will understand why vacations are dangerous because we give summer vacations to many of our students. One and half month they take vacation, after they come back to school, gone, it is all gone and we have to start from scratch— “Every body continues in a state of rest or in a uniform motion unless it is acted upon by an external force,” this Newton’s law is applied there. Suddenly multiplication is gone, division is gone, everything is gone. One week you give them a break; it’s gone. So, if I have my daughter, what am I going to do? I am going to visit her every morning, but thankfully for her, I can’t test her every moment, but Jesus does not sleep nor slumber, He tests us every moment. And you say, “Lord, this is too much!” Look at what it says in Amos chapter 3.

Amos 3:2

² “You only have I known of all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.”

The word for punish is what? ‘Pakad,’ ‘Visit’ – “I will pakad you for your iniquities, I will visit you for your iniquities.” And of course, when I am testing Abigail, I am not punishing her – I am saying: this is right, this is wrong. My goodness, little-little things they forget and I’m like, “How come you forgot this?” You need to take these things very seriously, even when you are on vacation, it is not vacation from God. I remember bunch of pastors who took a break from ministry and went to the golf course. So, when they were playing golf, one of the pastors said, “You know, the Lord was saying to me this...” and the other pastor said, “Please, this is vacation, we are not going to discuss about God!”

Hello! Vacation from God?! There is no vacation from God. Vacations are good but I know the pain of vacation when you come back, it is such a difficult process—that is the reason why it is called as student orientation—why? Because they are all disoriented, we have to orient them back. We call parent orientation, student orientation. “Please parents, orient your child, first let us orient you.” That is the reason why God said in Deuteronomy 6: “These things which I have commanded you, thou shall teach your children.”

“ Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.” What are iniquities? They are all arguments. How long will iniquitous thoughts lodge? What are iniquitous thoughts? The word for wicked thought is ‘iniquitous’ amoral thoughts. What is amoral thoughts? Thoughts which empower sin. “How long will those thoughts lodge inside of you? And I have to remove that because you are My son.” See, my daughter—I am so passionate about so many things in her life than she is for her own life, I have so many plans for her, I have my own earthly plans for her. Many times, she may be thinking, “Look at this ‘fellow, I don’t know, why is he after my life, why can’t he just give me a break” but... “You only have I known of all the families of the earth,” that’s what I will tell my children, right? Look at what He says in Psalm 89...

Psalm 89:30-34

³⁰ “If his sons forsake My law and do not walk in My judgments, ³¹ If they break My statutes And do not keep My commandments, ³²Then I will punish (Lord visits) their transgression with the rod,

And their iniquity with stripes. Why? Because stripes, where do they reach? The inmost parts. There is a saying in Telegu: “For a nice ox, one whip is enough.” What does whip do? It makes the ox more disciplined; if you whip a donkey, it will run, it will kick you actually; but if you whip an ox, the ox will go on a straight line. See, it will realize that.

³³ Nevertheless My lovingkindness I will not utterly take from him, Nor allow My faithfulness to fail. ³⁴ My covenant I will not break, Nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips.

Two things He doesn’t do: He will not change His words for us, just because you are not walking in the straight and narrow path, He is not going to change His standards, He is not going to alter His Word, He has exalted His Word above all His name, He is not going to compromise on His Word. See, the point is this, I also cannot do it just because I have some weaknesses, I should not even dilute the intensity of Word of God even for my own self, let alone for you. I am not going to alter, I am not going to change the Word, I am not going to make it less palpable, I am not

going to sugarcoat it, like the way they do with medicine, right? Why do they have capsules? Because it is bitter inside.

Sometimes we can do it, but bitterness should be there inside; it should be honey, but when it goes inside the tummy, it should become bitter, it doesn't change. And God is a God who comes and sees and examines our life and He sees what is going on. It's good that He examines us because He is interested in us. It's like a teacher who has a student who is not interested in studies at all, but every day in the morning he will go for his class—the teacher goes, not the student. I remember my uncle, my dad's elder brother – he had a student, not very good student and he was struggling; young guy, he was struggling with sin, he was not interested in God, always interested in playing all the time. So, one day his mother came to my uncle and said, "AiyaaGaru, please do something with my child." You know from that time onwards; my uncle took him under his wings. This guy used to run away to the basketball and my uncle used to go there and wait for him. I will not mention his name because he is the head of Christian organization now – no wonder he became the head of the Christian organization! My uncle used to wait for him, wait for him, this guy is not even interested. Now he is a Reverend. You see, that's how God exactly does with all of us. You know sometimes universities will say, "If you are not interested, please go," but you know, God is not like that, He says "You are not interested, what should I do to make you interested? I am gonna come after you, I will not utterly forsake My faithfulness, but I will also not alter the Word that comes out of My mouth." So, He is gonna visit us, God visits His temple – who is this temple? We are!

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

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? ²⁰ For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

It says, "Temple," and therefore He has to visit His temple.

Proverbs 20:27

²⁷The spirit of a man is the lamp of the Lord, The spirit of regenerated man we are talking about, because the unregenerated man has no spirit, he is dead in his spirit.

Searching all the inner depths of his heart. In other words, it goes right down—the word for innermost depth in the Hebrew is 'Kidneys,' it checks whether your kidneys are working properly or not, and what does kidneys do? Purify. Like, last time we heard – two things they do: reproduce and purify.

He visits His church, He visits His temple – you and I, and He visits His church at large. Look at what it says in Revelation...

Revelation 2: 1

¹ "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, (this is to the pastors) 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: ² "I know your works, (you don't have faith) your labor, (you don't have love) your patience, (you don't have hope) and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; ³ and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. ⁴ Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. ⁵ Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. ⁶ But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

So, God is a God who comes and visits us and tests us. Jesus is coming, watching the temple. Who comes now, let us go back to Mark 11.

²⁷ Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him. ²⁸ And they said to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority to do these things?"

Let me tell you something, what do arguments do? They question the authority of God's Word. "By what authority...?" As I said, there are two things: argument and high things. Now what is empowering this argument? The fact that they are chief priests, scribes and the elders. Chief priests, scribes and the elders – these are the people who think that they have some kind of standing with God. They have a position but they don't have authority—this is very important principle—Just because you have a position doesn't mean you have authority, you need to have anointing, because authority comes from the anointing. Saul was the king of Israel but that was only a position, and

when he knew that David was with Samuel, he sent people to capture him three times—everybody was prophesying and finally he wanted to capture himself, he also started prophesying and this time he became naked before them. What empowered their argument— “Who are You? Who gave You this authority?”—the fact that they were chief priests, they were scribes and they were elders. Let me tell you something, what is the principle over here? The principle is this: we gain a lot of knowledge from the world, and just because we are so knowledgeable in so many worldly things, we think or we believe that we can question the authority of God. I have seen that, many times. Look at this, who questioned Moses? Miriam and Aaron, and then who else?

Jude 1:11, look at what it says.

¹¹ Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah.

What is gainsaying? He is arguing against the authority of Moses. It's very dangerous and it's very subtle. Like Pastor keeps saying, “Just because you are accomplished fellow in the things of the world, somehow, suddenly, you have this thought in your mind – “May be God chose me because of my accomplishments, and just because of my accomplishments, now I have the authority and the right to question God.” You see that the chief priests and the scribes are the ones that questioned God but it says that the sinners and the tax collectors received Him gladly, they received Jesus gladly but these people questioned the authority of Jesus. “You, generation of vipers,” the same message by John; the same message to the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the same message to the ordinary people; the ordinary people said, “What shall we do?” and what did the scribes and pharisees said? They sent people to John – “Who are you?” You see what is empowering the arguments? What is empowering the argument is your position in the world or may be your position in the church. The word for elder is very interesting—the person who is gray haired—gray hair is a glory to man if it is obtained in the way of righteousness, otherwise please dye your hair. Gray hair is a glory to man—they say in Leviticus, “Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head and honor the face of the old man,” and when should we give respect to hoary head? When he has obtained that hoary head through righteousness. I am telling you, you should go to universities and you will understand; just because they are fantastic in mathematics, they will make blunders in theology—stupidest blunders and they can talk so well about their subject, but when you ask them about God – “Ma..ma...ma.. ba...ba..baa!” Stupid arguments!

“Gainsaying of Korah,” you see, it's dangerous!

Numbers 16:1-5

¹Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men; (What did they do? Took men. what did Reuben have? Position, who had the authority? Joseph.)

² and they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown. Showed up their PhD degrees and their H₂SO₄s.

³ They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, “You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?” You will see this kind of argument in book of Job also—“You think you are only the godly man?” You should read it in Telegu, it's fantastic, you will just fall in love, it's beautiful.

⁴ So when Moses heard it, he fell on his face; Moses fell on his face but these fellows, standing before God. And just because Moses was meek doesn't mean he was weak. He said: you are talking about authority, come you fellows, tomorrow, we will see who has authority.

⁵ and he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, “Tomorrow morning the Lord will show who is His and who is holy, and will cause him to come near to Him. That one whom He chooses He will cause to come near to Him.

What were they? Men of Renown—the problem with the men of renown is they are of the flesh and they are against the Spirit. Look at what it says—the phrase “Men of Renown” again occurs in Genesis.

Genesis 6:3-4

³ And the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.” ⁴ There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

And what are they doing? They are striving with God! Men of renown, mighty men. You see! That is the reason why Paul says—Paul the most accomplished during his days, PhD from the university of Tarsus—there were two

universities those days: university of Alexandria and university of Tarsus—he was the best prodigy of Gamaliel, you know what he has to say?

1 Corinthians 3:18

¹⁸ Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise.

You know how you deceive yourself? Just because you have a great degree from this world, you think that you are great, and in that process, you deceive yourself. I am not saying that we should not be good in what we are doing—no! Not at all but that does not justify or rather, that does not give us the right to think that we are accepted by God or we can question the authority of God. Trust and obey, for there is no other way.

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, “He catches the wise in their own craftiness”;

So, humble yourself.

I love this verse in James—it’s a fantastic verse, you can just kiss this verse if you can, it’s a beautiful verse. Look at what it says.

James 1:9-10

⁹ Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, ¹⁰ but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away.

That’s exactly what He does, when He goes to a woman caught in adultery—He lifts her up from her sin and she begins to glory in her exaltation; He goes to the Samaritan woman and He speaks to her kindly—“A bruised reed He will not break, a smoking flax He will not put out”—He makes her comfortable and He says, “You don’t have to live like that, you can be my daughter,” and she makes a glory in her exaltation; and then He comes to Nicodemus and He says, “Unless you are born again and you become like a little child, and therefore Nicodemus, you should glory in your humiliation.”

“Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, ¹⁰ but the rich in his humiliation...” that’s exactly what happens to people who really are accomplished and God has to break their pride and that’s exactly what happened to Moses—for forty years God broke his pride and finally he says, “Lord, I don’t anything, I can’t speak. I have a very uncircumcised lips and my tongue stammers.” Think about it, no, I like it! And God says, “Now you can glory in your humiliation. I am gonna use you; you are ready.” I remember the first time when I was translating for Pastor James in Telegu: O Lord, have mercy, I was humiliated and what did I have to do? “Glory in your humiliation.” It’s good, otherwise you will thing: no way!

Look at this, I will give you two examples—one guy, he was a tax collector. How did people look at tax collectors? They humiliated them, they called them sinners and traitors right to their faces and even when they went to the synagogues, they looked at them and say, “I am not like these people. Touch me not, holier than thou.” Look at what it says, once again Mark chapter 2.

Mark 2:13-15

¹³ Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. ¹⁴ As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector’s booth. “Follow me,” Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.

¹⁵ While Jesus was having dinner at Levi’s house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. What did Jesus do? Made glory in His exaltation.

¹⁶ When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

“Let the humble man glory in his exaltation and let the rich man glory in his humiliation.” That’s what happened to Job.

Job 42:3-6

³ You asked, ‘Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. ⁴ Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, ‘I will question you, and you shall answer Me.’ ⁵ “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You. ⁶ Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes.”

He has begun to glory in his humiliation. God has to bring all lofty looks down. That's what it says in the book of Isaiah: "God shall bring all the lofty looks down" and what are the things He hates? Seven things He hates. First thing He hates is a haughty look, a proud look.

And what happens to these people? They begin to question the authority of God's Word but they do not begin to tremble, that is why it says in James chapter 18... "Receive meekness, but before you receive meekness, you should put away all superfluity of naughtiness and receive with meekness the engrafted Word that is able to save your souls," and He says, "Put away all evil speaking and malice... and receive, like new born babies, the pure milk of the Word of God." These are attitudes. And what is the problem with them? We will see.

Isaiah 66:2

²For all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist," Says the Lord. "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.

Let's go back to Mark chapter 11 now.

Mark 11:15

¹⁵ So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.

What was the reason they were so upset with Jesus? What made them so upset? Why did they come and questioned the authority of Jesus? What did Jesus do?

¹⁶ And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. ¹⁷ Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of thieves.' "

What was their problem? Their problem was with His teaching: "My house shall be a house of prayer and you have made it into a den of thieves." That is the essence of teaching! The essence of the teaching of Jesus "My house," You and I, are the temple of God, shall be called as a house of prayer; not just to you and I, but to the nations, but what did you make it into? A den of thieves. In other words, Jesus confronts everything in our lives that is contrary to the Word of God, and the problem here is this—deep down inside all our hearts, there is a fear, you know what that fear is? If I follow Jesus wholeheartedly, I will lose! This is the number 1 stronghold people have – If I follow Jesus wholeheartedly, I will lose! Even disciples had that question. In Matthew chapter 19, look at what they say.

Matthew 19:27

²⁷ Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?"

Always thinking, you know, "What will happen to me if I follow Jesus wholeheartedly?" That is the reason why people don't come into the ministry, why? Because they still want to have control over their lives— "I will do this and I will also do this." it's not going to happen. "If I follow Jesus wholeheartedly, I will lose," this is the number 1 fear. When Jesus begins to question all that and He drives out the questioning of "I may lose, I may lose," we get scared, we don't like that and to whom did He say that to? To the rich young ruler, right? "Forsake everything and follow." Let me tell you something: when you follow Jesus, you don't lose anything; I don't have to say this, you will experience this in your own life first thing, and it is one of the biggest lies of the enemy. The man with one talent says, "Jesus You are a hard man," – you know the gospel according to Luke in the parable of minas? The one guy who doesn't do anything with his talent says to Jesus, "You are an austere man." You know what austere is? Tight-fisted! You know, austerity measure means, 'tighten your belt,' when your income is low, you tighten your belt. I told you, the accountant in you will come out, an austere man, "You don't reap where you sow," etc., etc., he is actually saying, "Lord, You are very tight-fisted." See what Paul has to say about this,

Romans 8:31-32

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

If you are a young man, young woman sitting over here, you follow God, you will never lose! Infact, you will gain. "Whoever loses life for My sake, he gains it, but the enemy comes to steal, to kill and to destroy but I came to give you life and life abundantly and not to steal from you." It's the lie of the enemy that if you follow God wholeheartedly, you know what, you will lose.

I love this verse again, look at 1 John chapter 3.

1 John 3:1

¹ See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

You know the word for lavish is—he is not a prodigal son; he is a prodigal Father— “What is this waste? Why should you die for these people?” Lavish! He emptied the bank balance of Heaven completely.

Remember when somebody is going through real health crisis, and the father will do everything in his capacity to save his child he will break every F.D, he will empty his bank account, he will go and sell his property, doesn't matter what it is, he will sell it – “Please, save my daughter! There is nothing more precious than the life of my daughter.” He will go all out. That's exactly what Jesus did! He lavished Himself! You never ever lose with God, my dear brothers. One of the lies of the enemy is: if we follow God, we will lose. Actually, we will lose; we will lose face in this world for sure, and we are scared of that. What are you? Very difficult to say that I am a Pastor, at least for the first one year. My wife used to say, “Why are you saying, ‘I used to work in IIT?’” That was my answer. My wife used to say, “Why are you not saying that you are a pastor?” Shepherds are an abomination to the Egyptians.

I will tell you something, lot of people in the church and outside the church – “Pastor, ah?!” that is the kind of attitude they have, you also have that attitude that's why you don't want to call yourself a shepherd. But what did Joseph say? “We were shepherds and shepherds are an abomination to the Egyptians,” and that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God – because you are afraid to lose face, you see! And now of course, all my credential, I will never talk anything of those things which I have left, never! – useless. You know what Paul says, he says it's dung. If Paul says it's dung, what is mine? Worse than that – I can't even imagine, it's worse than dung, okay.

Think about that. “What manner of love Father has lavished!” He is never austere, He is never tight-fisted—that's how He died, with His hands stretched out, and how are babies born? With closed, tight fist. You put one finger there, they will hold it tight. You know, every time you give a baby a note, they will hold it tight or try to put it in their mouth. That's how they do it. But God – He wasted Himself upon us. He is not an austere man. You see, God is not an austere Man, but He is a careful Man – you have to earn His trust so that He can entrust you with riches; He has no problem giving us riches but—“I believe in Jesus, Lord, all that You have is mine”—and He also says, “Is all that you have Mine?” that's the question. When you say, “All that I have is Yours,” “Amen!” He says.

This is the greatest worry of many believers: “If I follow God, I will lose.” But let me tell you something, unless and until you don't lose, you will never gain and you know what Paul says? “All these things I count it as loss, so that I may gain.” See, Paul was a fantastic Jew, he will never even do one thing without gain, but he has gain on the right side. He was a Jew definitely at heart—“Yaha se mujhe kuch milega.” In other words, I am going to get eternal pleasures and eternal rewards, I am not going to waste my life in senseless and useless things. You will never lose with God and I am telling you, you will experience this only when you step out by faith—the hand of God.

1 John 3:1

¹ See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

They don't know Him, and what do they call Him? “You are an austere Man; very hard; very tight-fisted; very stingy.” You are stingy, maybe that's the reason why God is stingy with you, I don't know. You know there is a word in English called ‘Pusillanimous,’ it means, calculatedly you will give— “My salary is one lakh forty-five thousand twenty-five paise, 10% tithe, calculator,” that's exactly what you will give. You see, you are a calculator. You know, even banks round off onto the higher side when they have to take it from our pocket. You see insurance policy—79 rupees, 25 paise, round off. So, is it in the higher side or lower side? You see that every time, there is a calculator on the higher side, but when it comes to God, we round it off to the bare minimum possible.

It says in John's gospel, chapter 12: “They believed in Jesus but they love the approval of men than the approval that comes from God,” and therefore, Jesus says, “How can you believe if you love the approval that comes from men than the approval that comes from God?! Very difficult. But if you come to God, you will never lose. I will tell you something: you may lose your face, the people of the world may call you whatever they want to call you but they call you just because they are in the low position, simply because of that. I always keep wondering, when Potiphar's wife accused Joseph of that crime, what would have people in the house thought about Joseph? “Arey, this fellow looks

so nice and so innocent; my goodness, this fellow is such a crook,” they would have thought. He was put into the prison, even in prison – “Why are you here?” They might have heard something, but of course, he had favor. But think about it now when he becomes the prince of Egypt, what that Potiphar and Potiphar’s household would think about Joseph, it doesn’t matter. You know what the people in hell will think about Jesus, about you and I, it doesn’t matter. Pharisees in hell will still call Him the friend of sinners and tax collectors and a glutton, does it matter? No! Maybe the people in Potiphar’s household called Joseph, “Arey, that fellow is a crook,” but does it matter now? His position is so exalted that, what people say and think about him doesn’t matter.

So, it doesn’t matter the opinions of men because we are justified by court in heaven, it is God who justifies, it is Christ who died for our sins – impossible for anybody to say anything about us, what they say about us and do about us doesn’t matter. But the problem is, we all like to have a face. One time I was really frustrated about something going on and I wrote in my Bible, “Lord, vindicate me,” the answer will come for sure but not here, there. Alright, we don’t lose with God.

Ezekiel 33:30-31

³⁰ “As for you, son of man, the children of your people are talking about you beside the walls and in the doors of the houses; and they speak to one another, everyone saying to his brother, ‘Please come and hear what the word is that comes from the Lord.’ ³¹ So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain.

They like their own gain, they have calculators everywhere – “If I do this, Amma! This much I have to give, I will not give.” Sometimes, God does not make His need known to us, you know why? Because there is no use, you will run from that place.

Look at what it says:

Jeremiah 7:8-10

⁸ “Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit. ⁹ Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, ¹⁰ and then come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, ‘We are delivered to do all these abominations’?

¹¹ Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it,” says the Lord.

Therefore, the only way for us to overcome the calculator and the philosopher is by humbling ourselves before the Word of God with one attitude – you know what that attitude is?

Mark 11:18

¹⁸ And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching.

“Astonished at His teaching,” meaning – they said, “Boy, if this is the authority, this is something which you have to surrender to.” Simple! See, it doesn’t matter how painful it might look, it’s only for a season. Paul says, “The sufferings of this present world are not worth even comparing with the glory that we will receive one day,” and the sufferings which we are going through is storing for us a far more eternal weight of glory – you will never ever lose with God! You give to God; boy, you cannot even imagine how He is going to reciprocate! Only one way – “Lord, I surrender to the authority of Your Word.”

How do you surrender to the authority of the Word of God? Two ways, it says: “Believe in the Lord and you will prosper; believe in His prophets.” See, that is the reason these are very important; the attitude is not only before God, it is also before the people who preach the Word of God. That is the reason why He says, “Those who are preaching the Word of God, they should be considered with double honor, you should esteem.” Why? Because they care for your souls. These thoughts have to be very clear in our minds, otherwise we will keep on struggling in our lives. We have to surrender ourselves to the teaching implicitly. How do we do that? Romans chapter 6.

Romans 6:11, 16-17

¹¹ Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now you should also start doing accounting. You account yourselves as dead to sin but alive to God. How do we do it practically? Verse 16...

¹⁶ Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

So you have two options here: there are sins leading to death and obedience leading to righteousness, and if you want to have something leading to righteousness, something you have to do – verse 17.

¹⁷ But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

Where does doctrine lodge? In your heart and in your mind. Both has to change, right? In other words, what is controlling my life is not the sin but the doctrine to which I subscribe, that is controlling my thinking. This is what he says, "I may not feel it but I will do it; I may not feel that it is right, but I will still do it." It has got nothing to do with my feelings: facts, truth, doesn't care about your feelings, I still do it. See, the problem is—I have seen it over a period of time—many of us when you read the Word of God, you read it from the prism of your emotions and from your past experiences, and when you are looking into the Word of God—I am not saying you should not look for comfort—initially that is what happened to me: Oh, this is comforting me, God is speaking to me, but after a period of time, it was not just comfort anymore, God starts confronting me. We only like comfort, we don't like confront. Many times, "God spoke to me when I was going through a tough time," but after a while He starts confronting. Read the Word objectively, not subjectively through the prism of your emotions or your experiences.

"But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered."

How do we become slaves of righteousness? Only by obeying. How are you set free? Only by obeying. It is not just by listening. You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free only when you obey the truth. "*Lord, if it is You bid me come,*" Only when he stepped out, he began to walk on the water. When you obey it, you will know it; not when you just theorize and think it in your mind. The obedience has to lead to action, you see.

So, these two attitudes are very important: "Let the poor man glory in his exaltation, and the rich man glory in his humiliation." And say, "Lord, this is it, I surrender to the authority of Your Word in my life." There is no two ways about it.

Let's go back to 2 Corinthians chapter 10.

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds...

And how do we pull down strongholds? By taking care of the arguments and our attitudes.

Why did Lucifer go against God? Because he had an exalted position – the high thing, exalted state. And then he said, "You know what, I want to exalt myself against the throne of God." No way!

Casting down arguments and the high things that exalt above the knowledge of God. So now, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches, but let him who glories glory in this that he understands and knows me. In Telegu it's very interesting— "He has researched me and He has found me out" – and He says, "Let him glory in that."

So, that is how you capture your thoughts, saying, "Lord, my attitudes and my heart and my mind, both, I surrender it to You – imaginations and the exaltations."

So, this morning one thing we need to resolve, one resolution we can do every time we come to the Word of God— "Lord, whatever Your word says, if it is true, I will obey and I will not argue," and you will enjoy freedom.

Closing prayer

Father, we just want to thank You for this day. Father, we have so many arguments—sometimes, it is contentions in our heart, it is not those who contend with You; it is those who submit to You, and therefore, Lord, I pray that You would grant us all, the Spirit of submission like Your Son. When He came to this world, He subjected Himself to His own commands; He went down to Nazareth with His earthly parents and He was subjected to them and that's what You keep enjoining all of us that for the Lord's sake, submit to every ordinance of men for the sake of the Lord. I pray Father, that You take away from us the spirit of contention, the gainsaying of Korah, the thoughts in our life that if we give You everything, then we will lose. Lord, enable us to prove by our experience that when we have submitted to Yourself completely that through our lives, we will never lose, O Lord, on the contrary, we gain. Yes, we might go through period of testing and trial but Lord, on the authority of Your Word, we know Father, that all Your people who have submitted themselves completely to You have never lost—that's what You told Your disciples, "In this life you will have persecutions, but you will also have My presence and even in the life to come." Grant us that grace, O Lord,

to submit ourselves, the spirit of submission which is very precious in the sight of God, is what You said in Your Word, the ornament of a meek, gentle and quiet spirit – that is how holy women of old adorn themselves by submitting themselves to their husbands. Like Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him ‘Lord.’ “Whose daughter you are if you do this without any fear,” the fear of losing out, O God. Therefore, You said, O Father, “Submit yourselves to God,” without any fear, casting all your cares upon Him, the worries of losing: what will happen to my family, what will happen to my children, what will happen to my future. But we know, Lord Jesus, when we are with You, the people of this world have no future – there is only one future: it is our future with You, it is the future with God and there is afterward no future Lord, it is everlasting darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. And I pray Father, that all of us in the days to come, we will clothe ourselves with humility, we will deal with all those calculations and computation in our mind. Enable us Lord, to know that You are not an austere God but You are the God who has lavished Yourself upon us. A stronghold of losing out if we start with God, we will never lose out with You. Rahab gained her whole life and her future when she came completely out of this world and was on the side of God’s people; Ruth, she never lost, on the contrary, she became the grandmother of the Messiah because she chose, O Lord. Father, I pray that You grant us those spiritual calculators that we will know what it is truly to follow You that we will never lose with You; example after example You enjoin us that we will never lose with God. Enable us to deal those high places, enable us never to choose convenience. It may not be convenient in the flesh, but in the spirit, it is always liberating. Thank You Father! We praise You, we worship You and give You the glory. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen!

God Bless You All!