

# Bible Truths Unlocked

*In these last days*

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*The Lord Jesus*

**Explaining True Christianity said:**

*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,'  
shall enter the kingdom of heaven....*

**The Modern Apostate Church  
Exposed!**

# **Bible Truths** **Unlocked**

— *In these Last Days* —

# **Bible Truths**

## ***Unlocked***

by Mark Alexander

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## Bible Truths Unlocked

**This book is dedicated to the 'Triune God', The Father, Son and Holy Spirit,** 'Who' alone has opened my eyes to these Truths, (over my years of 'Christian Walk' with Him) and has now laid on my heart the burden to bring them out in and through this Book. I confess that I would have not known them, but for the Lord God who has revealed these truths through His Spirit. The Lord Jesus in **Matthew 11:25-27** and in **John 16:13-15** said that the things of God are hidden and only the Father can unlock them through His Son and His Spirit to us.

*Even Prophet Daniel confessed in*

**Daniel 2:22**

*"It is He who reveals deep and secret things;  
He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him."*

*The 'purpose of this book' is best described as in:*

**Ephesians 4:12-16**

*<sup>12</sup> For the equipping of the saints  
for the work of ministry,*

***for the edifying of the body of Christ,***

*<sup>13</sup> till we all come to the unity of the faith  
and of the knowledge of the Son of God,  
to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature  
**of the fullness of Christ;***

*<sup>14</sup> that we should no longer be children,  
**tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine,**  
*by the trickery of men,**

*in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,*

*<sup>15</sup> **but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things**  
into Him who is the head—Christ—<sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body,  
joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according  
to the effective working by which every part does its share,  
causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.'*

This Book comes as a **wakeup call** to us, who are (the branches) in the 'Body of Christ', to check if we are really 'Abiding' in Him (the Vine Tree) and His Teachings or are we going slowly 'Dry'.

*The Lord Jesus meant every word He said  
and only said every word He meant!*

**John 15:5-6, 8,10**

<sup>5</sup> *"I am the vine, you are the branches.*

*He who **abides** in Me, and I in him, **bears** much fruit;  
for without Me you can do nothing.*

<sup>6</sup> ***If anyone does not abide in Me,***

*he is cast out as a branch and is withered;  
and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and  
**they are burned.***

<sup>8</sup> *By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit;*

***so you will be My disciples.**<sup>10</sup> **If you keep My commandments,**  
*you will abide in My love,**

***just as I have kept My Father's commandments  
and abide in His love.***

The Lord Jesus' words are very plain and clear from the Scripture above, that there will be ones (within His Body) who will '**Abide**' in His commands and teachings and there will be ones who '**Do not**'. '**To Abide or Not to Abide**' is a God given 'free will' which continues to be in a 'Saved Believer's Life' (even after being grafted into the Vine). And the consequences to that are also laid out very clearly above, by our Lord as we just read.

Dearly beloved of Christ, It is time, we as the 'Bride of Christ', **get ready to get into the 'Ark' for its door is soon going to be shut** (As the Lord said - 'As in the Days of Noah' - Matthew 24:37; Matthew 25:10).



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# Introduction

*(A must read)*

**Bible Truths Unlocked** comes because of this deep burden that the Lord God has laid within my heart for my Christian brethren all around the world. I make no apology, in knowing that this book is not written with a view to please believers, but is **written to edify believers**. I truly believe I would not have written in such boldness, if it were not for the Lord God prompting me to do so.

I would like to say, that this book is going to be an eye opener to many (to the various 'Bible Truths' mentioned herein), and therefore it is going to be **far from a quick read**.

You also need to be aware that, if you are going to read this book without (taking time) reading the '*Bible Quotations*' mentioned, then **those 'Bible Truths'** may continue to be locked to you the reader.

In a time when the Church is under the prophesied threat of false teachings, this book comes timely, both as an 'encouragement and a caution' to:

1. **The 'simple and young in faith'** to grown into maturity.
2. **The 'mature and obedient believer'**, to continue to work out their salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12-13), pressing onto the upward call in midst of sufferings and persecutions (Philippians 3:11-15; 2 Timothy 3:12).
3. **The 'self-righteous and rebellious'** to take heed lest they are cut off.
4. **The 'nominal and complacent Christians'** that it's time to wake-up.

I want to make it clear in the beginning; '**Bible Truths Unlocked**' in no way is a judgement on any single person, Church or Denomination. For I am of the strong belief, that the 'Body of Christ' (His Bride), can be found in every Church Denomination, who represent **the remnant of obedient faithful believers** who are abiding in the commands of the Vine - Christ Jesus. But in saying



that, there are also many wolves in sheep's clothing everywhere who think (and nudging others too) that it is OK to walk the **'Broad Way'**.

We need to understand that if we confess and believe we are living in the 'Last Days', then **the Bible is very clear that the 'last days Church' will slip into Apostasy, and that is 'inevitable'** (1Timothy 4:1; 2Timothy 4:3-4 and 2 Thessalonians 2:3).

**So what is Apostasy?** It means – when the Church starts **moving away from the Truth!** The Lord has opened my eyes to see that many today in the Church Universal are blinded and **walking in the Broad Way** and their very foundations in Christ are being rocked through False Teachers.

Many Christians, leave alone not being sensitive to Apostate Church around them, are not even aware that they have to beware, (as the Bible warns making several references) **that this prophesied Apostasy will hit the Church in the Last Days.** A couple of them as mentioned below:

**1Timothy 4:1-2**

*'But the Spirit **explicitly says**  
that in later times **some will fall away**  
from the faith, **paying attention to deceitful spirits**  
**and doctrines of demons**, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared  
in their own conscience as with a branding iron.'*

**2Timothy 4:3-4**

*<sup>3</sup> For the time will come  
**when they will not endure sound doctrine;**  
but wanting to have their ears tickled,  
they will accumulate for themselves teachers  
in accordance to their own desires,  
<sup>4</sup> and **will turn away their ears from the truth**  
and will turn aside to myths.*

**I only recently realised after several years,**  
that the Lord Jesus' reference to '**many**' in **Matthew 7:13-29**,  
were within the Christendom!

**Matthew 7:13-14, 21**

<sup>13</sup> "Enter by the narrow gate;  
*for wide is the gate and broad is the way*  
that leads to destruction, **and there are many who go in by it.**

<sup>14</sup> *Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way*  
which leads to life, **and there are few who find it.**

<sup>21</sup> "*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,'*  
*shall enter the kingdom of heaven,*  
***but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.***

If you take time to carefully read the scripture portion in **Matthew 7 from verse 13 right up to verse 27 closely**, your eyes will be opened to many truths. Firstly, the ones whom the Lord spoke of in that scripture saying 'I NEVER KNEW YOU' evidently were those who seemed to be active and gifted Christian Believers doing many things for the Lord, yes in Jesus Name! – **Matthew 7:22.**

But unfortunately they lacked **three main things**:

- They failed to continue (to abide) in the Lord's 'teachings and commands' walking in their own counsel – **Matthew 7:24-27** not reflecting true discipleship (1John 3:22-24).
- They never paused to ask God what was 'His Will' in their lives – **Matthew 7:21-22.**
- They lacked the 'Fruit of the Spirit' - **Matthew 7:16**, without which the bible says we do not even know God (1 John 4:8)

All these are '**major pit falls**' many believers also walk into today.

It's a pity that 'Modern Churches' stress so much on acquiring the gifts of the Holy Spirit (either way it's a gift and cannot be acquired by the will of man, even though there are seminars how to get these gifting's). They stress on our experiences, the supernatural,

all things that the Lord played down and did not prioritise, in His ministerial life (not making a hoo haa of it, as many do today). In fact the Lord always insisted that His miracles were not to be publicised / broadcasted. He often instructed people – ‘Tell no one’. He also told His disciples, not to rejoice over the demons being subject to them, but rejoice in the things that are eternal.

**Remember the Lord Jesus was known and referred to as Teacher (Rabbi) not Healer,** teaching His followers to walk in love and good deeds (in His will) above their supernatural experiences and gifting (which by itself without the fruit, could result in spiritual arrogance and self-righteousness).

But before I go on with this Introduction (of what this book brings to the reader), I want to pause here and address a little about my last book, when the Lord spoke to me through Daniel 12:12 on the wee hours of 26<sup>th</sup> November 2008 (a year which was the beginnings of many world events and other events in God’s Calendar).

Though I believe it was the Lord Who alone woke me up that night to read through the Book of Daniel, right up to Daniel 12:12, but I confess it was my small mind that thought of 24/7/12 as a date, but rather the Lord wanting me to send out a cry and call to the Bride of Christ to have a **24x7x12 attitude** of an ever present reality of Christ Jesus imminent return. **For Isaiah 55:8-9 says, God’s ways and thoughts are truly way above my thoughts and ways.**

So I reinstate that a 24x7x12 **ever present attitude to the** reality of the Lord Christ Jesus return **is paramount in a believer’s life** for it is directly proportional to a Believers **motivation to Holiness** / Holy Living. The attitude of eagerness to His return is stressed repeatedly in the Word of God, right from the Gospels through the Epistles till Revelation.

The Lord reflected this attitude in what are the three major Christian milestones.

1. Through the prayer He taught us – ‘***Thy Kingdom come***’.
2. Through the Holy Communion ‘*For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till*

**He comes.**

3. Through the documented last words of Christ in the Book of Revelation - *‘He who testifies to these things says, **“Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!’***

**Why? Because the Lord knows that we His people** have a history of being a stiff-necked and a backsliding race. In also knowing that a little delay (40days) in Moses’s return itself from Mount Sinai, led to rebellion (and the outcome was the golden calf and other idols slowly building up around them). Similarly the Omniscient God knowing His return would be over 2000 years, **has woven this attitude of eagerness to His Imminent return in and through His Word**, knowing there would be eternal consequences for us if we are caught napping (without being prepared) as the Lord’s parable of ‘The Foolish Virgins’.

For many in the body of Christ, are increasingly exposed to the prophesied new age apostasy, which is hitting the walls of the Church in these Last Days and is growing by the day.

We are in fact commanded in His word, **not to keep silent, but to expose such teachings** that lead people to complacent living:

**Ephesians 5:6 -11 says**

***Let no one deceive you with empty words,  
for because of these things the wrath of God comes  
upon the sons of disobedience.***

*Therefore do not be partakers with them.*

*For you were once darkness, **but now** you are light in the Lord.*

**Walk as children of light**

*(for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness,  
righteousness, and truth),*

<sup>10</sup> **finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.**

<sup>11</sup> *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness,  
**but rather expose them.***

The Lord grieves in seeing there are very few bold people in the Church today who are willing to stand up against such Apostasy. Many are rather comfortable to go with the flow as long as they are found in the majority rather than standing out. Yet **Revelation 21:8**

warns us that 'cowards' will be among those who will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

The Bible records, that such type of God's people were also found even during the Lord's earthly ministerial time as we read in **John 12:42-43** <sup>42</sup> *Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue;* <sup>43</sup> *for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.*

**I believe that many after reading this book  
'Bible Truths Unlocked' will be convicted.**

I also know that some (if not many) will find themselves, of having been part some of the mentioned end time apostasies (at some time or the other). However to all such, I want to encourage by saying two things:

**Firstly** do not be ashamed to call a spade a spade and be bold to come out of those snares (before it's too late).

**Secondly** you need not get too frustrated with yourselves, in knowing that being the Last Days, these prophesied last days apostasies could have subtly rubbed on to you (over a period of time). But what is more important is, that the conviction should motivate you and me to turn from those '**broad ways**' desiring now to live obediently and holy lives which is pleasing unto the Lord God,

(for you will see what is written in this book is plain from the 'Word of God').

**So the question is**, will you be bold to stand by 'God and His Word', like Joshua and Caleb, **not fearing the peer pressure (of many) that surrounds us** in Christian Circles ?

The question really is, knowing we are in a time of the fulfilment of **Daniel 12:4** '*many shall run to and fro*', will that busyness bug hold you back **from completing this book?**

**In ending I want to appeal to each one of you, beloved of Christ, to please read this book with an open mind** and look to the Lord God alone to confirm the same. I myself was once blind to many things written in this book and it took the Lord God alone to open my

eyes to various apostasies one by one. I am also seeing that in these last days, the Lord is opening many other Christian Brethren's minds to the same.

**I also would like to mention that I am in no way bullet proof** to the snares and apostasies mentioned. I am equally susceptible to them (*which can be addictive at times*) and unless you and I guard our hearts and souls, denying ourselves, picking up the cross to **follow in Christ our Lord's footsteps daily, it's easy to get hooked on.**

**Daniel 12:10**

*Many shall be purified,  
made white, and refined,  
but the wicked shall do wickedly;  
**and none of the wicked shall understand,  
but the wise shall understand.***

**Romans 13:11 says:**

<sup>11</sup> *And do this, knowing the time,  
**that now it is high time  
to awake out of sleep;  
for now our salvation is nearer  
than when we first believed.***

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# PART 1

## APOSTASY HITTING THE CHURCH

### Chapter 1

#### **The GRACE OF GOD is being made into CHEAP GRACE!**

The topic of **GRACE** is so very big and is a **great Mystery** too. Unfortunately many of us are confused on this great Mystery on two counts:

1. **Firstly** because great things of God are not easily understood and as the Bible says it can only be spiritually appraised by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:13-14).
2. **Secondly** as the Bible also says that some speakers (untaught by the Spirit of God) in their human wisdom, have distorted scriptures that are hard to understand (2 Peter 3:14-18).

Since this subject of 'GRACE' is so widely misinterpreted and misrepresented, I urge you to slowly and diligently read the first few Chapters of 'PART 1' of this book, so that you the reader are **thoroughly equipped** as I attempt to extensively clarify, exposing any spiritual blindness which may have rubbed on and also to guard you from the ones to come.

The enemy works through his snares and schemes, constantly trying to rock the faith and foundations of the Church which is built upon the 'Rock' - Christ Jesus.



**Ephesians 2:8-9 says**

*'For **by grace** you have been saved through faith, and that **not of yourselves**; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> **not of works**, lest anyone should boast.'*

For we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Truly this 'GRACE' is indeed the unmerited favour of God upon the saved believer. And nothing can we ever do to earn such a Great Gift.

But you see, that this grace of God on our lives **after being saved now requires a responsible response from our side**. Praise the Lord that it does not stop there but moves to challenge the saved believer in the very next (subsequent) verse in **Ephesians 2:10**, now using a term '**Good Works**' which needs to follow a saved Believer.

**Ephesians 2:10**

*<sup>10</sup> For we are **His workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus for **good works**, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

So you see '**Good Works**' is crucial but also a choice in a believer's hand. But also know this for sure, that there are serious consequences of not walking in them? Let us first study that verse closely.

There is a world of difference between '**Good Works**' and '**works**'. You see the all-knowing and **sovereign God placed 'verse 10' after 'verses 8-9'** so that people make no mistake '**Good Works**' can come **only post salvation** for we are not ourselves anymore, but His workmanship.

Many Christians make that folly in thinking that after being saved a believer will automatically walk in 'Good Works'. But the bible does not say that. The bible says that after being saved, the Holy Spirit prompts us, but it is again our personal choice to be led by the Holy Spirit so as to walk in obedience to those promptings.

Please observe, it does not say in **Ephesians 2:10** that 'we have to' or 'we surely will' but it says 'we should walk in them'. **God never twists His free will (of choice) in our lives - believer or unbeliever.**

Now if you read **Ephesians 2:8-10**, again carefully, you may rightly understand what the Bible says, of the difference between, **our 'dead works' before we are saved** and our '**Good Works**' **post salvation.**

**Ephesians 2:8-10** <sup>8</sup> *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,* <sup>9</sup> ***not of works***, lest anyone should boast. <sup>10</sup> *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **for good works**, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

The same truth is brought out very beautifully, of what the right response of a 'Saved Sinner' should be in:

**Titus 2:11-12, 14**

<sup>11</sup> *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,* <sup>12</sup> ***teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts,***

*we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.*

<sup>14</sup> *who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*

Today the Modern Apostate Church unfortunately is a catalyst to the **brewing of many Foolish Virgins within the Church**, encouraging them to live in complacency, by preaching 'salvation cannot be lost' **rather than teaching the saved sinner, to deny ungodliness and worldly lust.**

You see our Christian life needs to reflect '**changed life**' and that demand is reflected throughout the New Testament Epistles urging believers to live soberly, righteously and godly, without worldly lust.

See how Apostle Paul continues to endorse the same repeatedly, in separating **'works' and 'good works'** in another scripture below from the book of Titus:

**Titus 3:4-8**

*<sup>4</sup> But when the kindness and the love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, <sup>5</sup> not by **works** of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup> whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, <sup>7</sup> that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. <sup>8</sup> This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God **should be careful to maintain good works.** These things are good and profitable to men.*

Many Christians are taking their salvation for granted, living complacent lukewarm lives and throwing their God given birth right away like Esau of the Bible did - **Hebrews 12:14-17**.

**Philippians 2:12 says**

*'Therefore, my beloved,  
**as you have always obeyed,**  
not as in my presence only,  
but now much more in my absence....'*

Notice the above Scripture says **'as you have always obeyed'** we realise that the saved believer is expected to live obediently and the Bible goes on to add **'work out your salvation with fear and trembling'**.

It's very unfortunate that this **'Grace of God' is today being understood as Cheap Grace by many and it** having no demands of obedience in a believer's life (let alone working out their salvation with fear and trembling).

**This negligence was also addressed by our very Lord Jesus' Prophetic Parable of the 'Foolish Virgins' (Matthew 25:1-12) who will be caught spiritually napping along with their spiritual unpreparedness, expressed by taking no extra oil in their flasks.**

The Apostate Church confesses that once you are saved, even if you sin or don't, all you lose is 'the joy of salvation' in this world. For in any case you are making it to heaven. That beloved of Christ is not found in the Bible and is a big lie of Satan.

**For 1John 3:6 says**

*'Whoever abides in Him does not sin.  
Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.'*

**And again 1 John 3:24 says**

*'Now he who keeps His commandments  
abides in Him, and He in him.  
**And by this we know that He abides in us,  
by the Spirit whom He has given us.'***

**The modern apostate churches are experts in brushing away:**

- The conviction of sin.
- The need for obedience.
- The holy fear of God and
- The consequences for disobedience to God's commands in a believer's life.

You will seldom hear a message on the above from them. They confuse the believer in saying 'you are in any case saved by grace not by works', which in itself is true, but only repeatedly stressing the grace part of the Lord's character, **leaving out** His Holiness. For God calls every repentant believer to express His true repentance by 'Holy living and Good Works', and a gospel which only addresses the grace of God with addressing for what the grace of God was offered for, (that is without mentioning the need to deny ungodliness) is a one sided Gospel!

**God's Compassion on sinners in no way indicates God's tolerance to continued sin in lives.** Remember, after forgiving the prostitute of her sins, The Lord Jesus told her go and sin no more. God is a loving God, but remember He is a Holy God too.

**5 things (you will notice) which are a fall out 'when a believer lives this the complacency – of 'once saved is always saved'**

1. It disarms a believer from working out his salvation with fear and trembling as the word of God instructs every true believer (**Philippians 2:12-13**).
2. It does not motivate the believer to 'Good Works / God's Will deeds as led by the Spirit (**Ephesians 2:10**).
3. It leaves the believer discouraged when trials and testings come his way, rather than being humbled unto sanctification for the very purpose the Lord had sent it for (**Romans 5: 3-5; Romans 8:35-37; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10**).
4. It creates self-sufficiency rather than a lack of 'hunger and thirst for righteousness' (Matthew 5:6) resulting in losing the love for God's Word in wanting to know more about God, His will and purposes in our life so as to please Him (**John 8:29; 2 Corinthians 5:9**).
5. And lastly, rather than being 'poor in spirit' as our Lord instructed disciples to be (**Matthew 5:3**), (and as in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27) we are then tempted to walk in arrogance in this attitude of our assured salvation rather than enduring every trial/hardship pressing on to do the will of God (**Philippians 3:12-15; Hebrews 10:35-39**).

The result of all the above is in finally becoming **withered branches**, ready to be finally cut down and thrown into fire, as the Lord Jesus' prophetically warned us in **John 15:1-11**.

**James 2:14, 19-20 best defines 'Biblical Faith':**

*What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith*

*but does not have works?*

**Can faith save him?**

**James 2:19-20**

<sup>19</sup> *You believe that there is one God. You do well.*

*Even the demons believe—and tremble!*

<sup>20</sup> *But do you want to know,*

*O foolish man,*

*that faith without works is dead?*

**And so does 1John5:4 which says:**

*For whatever is born of God overcomes the world.*

*And this is the victory that has overcome the world  
our faith.*

**Another abused misinterpretation of God's grace today, is freedom to do what you want** (rather than seeing God's will at every step) thinking since God has set us free from the bondage of sin.

**Well firstly** we need to realise at what cost this freedom comes to the saved person. **Secondly** we need to realise that we have a God who is a Just Judge, not an unjust judge. Think about it, when the world system sets a prisoner free, it does not in any way let the freed prisoner into thinking his freedom has brought along with it a green chit to get back to his old crimes. How then can we ever think a Just and Holy God (whose justice is far above our world standards) be in anyway less on His demand upon a Saved Believer. On the contrary the Lord Jesus at the **'Sermon on the Mount' tightened the Ten Commandments** on the New Testament Believer.

Jude the half-brother of our Lord, cautioned us in:

**Jude 1:4-5**

*'For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, **ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.** <sup>5</sup> But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.'*

And we know apart from Joshua and Caleb who exercised their belief in action, the rest were disqualified to enter the 'Promised Land'.

Let me however make it clear that **'Eternal Salvation'** is a guaranteed **free gift from God** through the **finished work of Jesus Christ** and no one can ever take that from a saved believer.

### **Why do I say so?**

I can best compare this with an analogy. Many manufactures today sell their products with a 'Warranty or a Guarantee'. But there is a fine print that says - *'Any misuse of the product will result in losing that warranty/guarantee'*. You see our Manufacturer the Heavenly Father Creator God has given each 'saved believer' a **guarantee of Salvation** and no one can take that away from them. From the moment we believe in our heart and confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord we are saved. That very moment we are grafted in the Vine Tree (Christ Jesus) and our names are written in the Book of Life and we are on our way to heaven.

**But after that if we live carelessly (after being saved)**, not guarding such a great gift of salvation which did not come cheap, (but has come to us with a great price) by continuing in our old ways (of un-forgiveness, bitterness, lusts, fits of anger, greed, jealousy, gossips, slander, lying and the like) without bearing fruit of overcoming trials and temptations that come our way daily, to humble and test us, so as to make us (Christ like) more than conquerors, we can lose it.

**In a day, when personal freedom is celebrated, by the world** (and unfortunately by many new age churches too), any talk of conforming our lifestyle to God's 'Will and Ways' is often viewed as a personal infringement. And anyone who speaks out, in favour of God's boundaries as laid out in His Holy Word **is termed today as a**

## **'legalist'.**

Remember I had mentioned earlier about an analogy of a manufacturer's guarantee lapsing if the product is misused. The 'scripture portion' below gives an analogy of a Soldier and an Athlete's attitude comparing that with a what a true Christian's attitude should be:-

### **2 Timothy 2:3-5, 7, 10-12**

*<sup>3</sup> You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> No one engaged in **warfare** entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may **please him who enlisted him as a soldier.** <sup>5</sup> And also if anyone competes in athletics, **he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.** <sup>7</sup> Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things. <sup>10</sup> Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. <sup>11</sup> This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. <sup>12</sup> **If we endure, We shall also reign with Him.** If we deny Him, He also will deny us.*

In the verses above we read, an **'athlete earns his crown' only if** he completes 'the race' according to the rules.

**Christian life is a battle ground**, an everyday battle to triumph (by fighting the good fight in keeping our faith) in the midst of our sufferings, all for pleasing God who enlisted us. We please Him by putting His Kingdom and His will and eternal purposes in and through us, first, before our desires.

Apostle Paul after his ministry, shares his triumph in keeping his faith in:

### **2 Timothy 4:7-8**

*<sup>7</sup> I have **fought the good fight,**  
I have finished the race,  
I have **kept the faith.***

*<sup>8</sup> Finally, there is laid up for me the **crown of righteousness,** which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not*



*to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

**As someone once said:**

*“There is no CROWN  
without a Victory and there is no VICTORY  
without a BATTLE”*

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**‘Adequately clear from various Scriptures’**

that when the Lord Jesus said **only few** are entering the Kingdom of  
God

**He meant the**

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to be in that - **FEW***

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# Chapter 2

## Is GOOD WORKS crucial for Christian Living?

### Hebrews 10:23-24 says

<sup>23</sup> Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.<sup>24</sup> And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and **good works**

When the Bible uses the term '**good works**', it is neither measured by our standards, nor by the world standards, but it is measured by **God's Standards**. In other words '**good works**' is a result of obedience to follow through God's 'Will and Command' in our everyday lives (by the prompting of the Holy Spirit).

### Romans 8:1 says

*'There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.'*

It qualifies that there is no condemnation **only for those** who do not walk anymore in their old ways (as before conversion) but now (post conversion) as led by the Holy Spirit, by **denying themselves**, picking up their cross (by the daily nudges and promptings of the Holy Spirit), to follow in **Christ Ways, however difficult it may be**.

It may be walking in ways where the Holy Spirit prompts you to walk or not to walk in. For instance forgiving a very difficult person in your life, or being kind to one who is obviously jealous of you or refraining from some worldly lust or any other way He is challenging you to walk in.

That's why the Word of God does not mince words in **Romans 8:14** 'For ***as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.***'

Many a time, what we define as 'good works' is what sounds good to us in our wisdom and perhaps also to the world around us, but that may not necessarily be the case and well may be totally opposite of God's will for us.

**Some of us may suddenly chose to take off on a mission stint to Africa, Philippines, Vietnam or some remote place in the world to work among the Poor or at a rehab for Drug addicts or Prostitute areas etc. thinking that it would be pleasing and service to God. I say, it may or may not be God's will for you and we can only know if we first take time to check with God and then wait for a confirmation from Him, before taking any such move.**

What am I trying to say? We do so much **works**, trying to change the world, but really **only Christ's return and His New Kingdom** will make this desperately depraved world into a peaceful haven. Look around you, has all the works of mankind made this a better place? On the contrary it is moving to what Christ our Lord has prophesied that in the last days peoples love will grow cold on each other and the wicked will grow in wickedness with every evil will be rampant, only growing by the day.

All other attempts in our human strength are going to be short lived and miserably fail in sorting out global issues like global warming, world peace, poverty eradication, corruption, wars and rumours of wars and the like (and our human efforts may be quite like putting Band-Aid on cut arteries). That's why the Lord taught us the first thing to pray (in His prayer) 'Thy Kingdom Come'.

We need to humbly confess that we shall never know all God's ways and thoughts for they are indeed far above our ways, **for He has eternity in mind in every situation.**

Well you may find this interesting. Once we had taken a missionary couple out for lunch and during that time of fellowship they were sharing, that there was a mission group who came to their church one Sunday morning and were showing various slide shows of how they were working in the Philippines among the Poor. Their

Mission organization had what one would call an inspiring and convincing name like 'Jesus for the Poor' or something like that. When the wife of that missionary couple asked a member of that mission team, "So how do you share Christ Jesus to these poor people?", to her surprise, she saw a puzzled look on that mission member's face (apart from that mission member becoming tongue tied) which was like... 'I do not know what are you talking about'.

Many go out as Christian medical doctors or Christian educational teachers, but miss the plot by simply only physically enriching and empowering offers without sharing the most important life changing eternal destiny of life and death. We may in and through this get the applause of many people around us but God judges the intent of every heart.

As I mentioned earlier, we need to be careful that we are not like the ones found crying out on that Day, "Lord! Lord we did this and that in your name and God forbid we hear the Lord saying as He warned us in **Luke 13:27** <sup>27</sup> *But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.'*

I know of another instance of an Evangelist who was called to take a seminar (Christian retreat) for the top doctors and staff of a well-known mission hospital. I was told, on the very first day he took the seminar, he addressed them saying "Unless you are sharing Christ with your patients, you are healing them, making them, fit to go to Hell". I was told that there was pin drop silence in the hall. You see, we need to always see the BIG PICTURE – and never miss 'The KINGDOM VIEW' as Christ always challenged people around Him.

**Proverbs 16:2 says 'All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, But the Lord weighs the spirits'** One Bible version says 'the Lord weighs the motives'.

Often we choose our work for the Lord not allowing God to choose. **We say "I want to choose the scenery of my sacrifice"**

**Proverbs 21:2-3 rightly says**

<sup>2</sup> *Every way of a man is right in his own eyes,  
But the Lord weighs the hearts.*

<sup>3</sup> *To do righteousness and justice  
is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.*

We are so caught up often in sacrificing things that seem right in our own eyes, **but what is important to God is to not our sacrifices but our obedience** to His Will (prompted by His Spirit) **which is true righteousness and justice to God.**

What does righteousness mean? It means right standing with God. And how do we get to the place of being in right standing with God? By doing His will (not ours)!

Let me give you few illustrations, from the Lord Jesus ministerial life here on earth which shows a dichotomy from our everyday thinking:

1. When a man once came to the Lord Jesus' saying, I will follow you, but said *'let me first go and bury my father'*. That may have sounded very novel and good at the face of it. It appeared as if the young man wanted to honour his father and do his duties as a responsible son. But look what the Lord had to say? *'Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God."* – **Luke 9:60**
2. Another instance is where the Lord's mother Mary and brothers had come to see Him and He was told the same. One would have imagined the Lord jumping up to His feet and stopping what he was doing right there to meet them. But the Lord Jesus continued saying *'But He answered them, saying, "Who is My mother, or My brothers?" And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother."* – **Mark 3:33-35**

3. When He saw Judas Iscariot rebuking Mary, saying that the expensive perfume from the alabaster jar could have been sold and the proceeds of it distributed to the poor rather than wasting it in washing the Lord's feet (meaning that the same job could have been done with water without wasting the expensive perfume). That again may have seemed a novel idea to many. But what was the Lord's answer to Judas? *'But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."* – **John 12:7-8**
  
4. **In John 7:1-8** we see during the feast of the Jews, His very own brothers who did not believe in Him (initially) were trying to have a dig at the Lord (their brother) by telling the Lord, that He needed not to be there hiding in secret, but to be seen publicly performing miracles if He wanted to be well known. But Jesus knowing their motives and also that it was not the right time yet, said *"My time is not yet fully come"*.
  
5. The disciples of John the Baptist came quite perplexed, and asked the Lord, saying *"Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?"* – **Matthew 9:14**. Again that appeared to be a very valid question at the face of it. One would imagine, expecting spiritual things like fasting to be the instructions of the Lord on His disciples to do regularly. But the Lord replied that they would do that when He was gone. *'And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast"'* – **Matthew 9:15**. Allow me to take a small tangent talking about a little bit on Believers Fasting. Yes, in the words of Christ Jesus, now that He the Bridegroom (is taken away from us) our Lord commands through that verse 15 above, that every true obedient Christian believer should get into a regular fast –say weekly- as the Lord would expect his words to be fulfilled in His true disciples.

We know that the Jesus our Lord fasted, also from the **book of Acts** mentions his disciples and early believers fasted regularly.

A regular **weekly fast** is what helps to keep a check on our flesh which tries to resurrect every now and then. It also is a time to recharge and refresh our spiritual inner man and **keeps us focussed to our Eternal upward call in these last days.**

However moving back to the above 5 points, we see that the Lord was often misunderstood than understood, to the point of people calling Him Beelzebub or a Demon and at times people picked up stones to throw at Him **John 8:48, 52, 59.**

**There are times in an obedient believer's life, when he or she is led by the Holy Spirit, at the cost of being misunderstood by others.** Sometimes they are accused to be over spiritual and at other times accused of lacking basic spirituality. I suggest that at those times you and I need to just take those accusations quietly rather than justifying ourselves (proving our motives) for what and why we did or are doing a certain thing.

For beloved of Christ, if people swing dung on us, perhaps the Lord wants us to go through those times like king David went through, while he was fleeing from his son Absalom who conspired against him. While fleeing he passed a place called Bahurim, where a man came out named Shimei, cursing king David continually, casting stones and throwing dust on him (2 Samuel 16:5-13). **At that time, see what king David tells** one of his army commanders Abishai who wanted to at once go up and cut the head of Shimei who was cursing David, *'If he curses and if the Lord has told him, "Curse David' then who shall say, 'Why have you done so?'*". Continuing to speak David said ***"Perhaps the Lord will look on my affliction and return good to me instead of his cursing this day"***.

We know at the end the Lord God restored David, his kingdom back and his son Absalom, who conspired against him met his terrible death and even Shimei (who mocked and cursed king David) fell trap to his own words and was killed.

There are times when the Lord allows those who hate us or are jealous of us (*unfortunately both of which you come across even in Christian circles too*) having a field day of pot shots at us,

directly or behind our backs. At those times let us not react or avenge, for our Lord is our defender and justice needs to be left into the hands of the Just and righteous God, Who will act, but in His time.

You see many a time the Lord brings those trials in our life, **to make us Christ like**, knowing we are still lacking, in what the Lord wants every obedient believer to truly be as in **Matthew 11:29** (NASV) '*Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am **gentle and humble** in heart, and you will find rest for your souls'* and only such trials helps us gain those virtues of being '**gentle and humble**'.

At times trials and persecutions comes for no sin of ours but just as co-sharers of Christ sufferings, (**1Peter 2:21**) at those times, we need to hold our ground and continue to do what we are called to, and show love, patience and tolerance through all of it, even to the point of being terribly misunderstood. The words of the Lord Jesus often give me great strength at those times (and I hope they will to you too).

**Christian life involves walking the Narrow Way and there are no short cuts.** There are times when I myself want to jump into a decision and do it my way (when the waiting has been too stretched for me). I come to a point of thinking that I rather fold up my sleeves and let me do it my way, but at those very times I hear His Spirit saying "*Be still and know that I AM GOD for I AM fighting your battles and will make all things beautiful in My Time*". The Lord then also reminds me verses like:

**Matthew 10: 24-27**

<sup>24</sup> "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. <sup>25</sup> ***It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household!***

<sup>26</sup> *Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.* <sup>27</sup> "*Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the*



ear, preach on the housetops.

<sup>28</sup> And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

### 2 Corinthians 5:9-11, 14-15

<sup>9</sup> Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.<sup>10</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.<sup>11</sup> Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.<sup>14</sup> For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;<sup>15</sup> and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

#### **If we think that God's grace and mercy in our life**

is a pointer and barometer that they we right with God and that God is well pleased with us or our work for Him –  
**I suggest we need to think again!**

Many of us, do not live up to the high call that the Lord Jesus has asked us to, thinking and confessing God will understand. We think we are right with God by thinking "Look the Lord just saved me from that calamity" or "See the Lord's gracious provision on me today".

That is because our Lord God is immense in grace, mercy, love and patience. I used to feel that way (and sometimes still tempted at times to stray away) when things go clock wise in my life, I start to kind of do my own things (not in His will), till He gently corrects me (if not at times warns me) **to check my life and not to take His Grace on my everyday life (for granted)** as an indicator of being right with God.

**Let me share with you an example.** Once a fellow believer (friends of ours) was sharing, that he and his wife were invited by his Non-

Christian friend (office colleague) home. My friend thought that it would be a good opportunity for him and his wife to witness to their family, about the wonderful testimonies of the Lord's provision in their lives and of His faithfulness and mercy in their lives. To their amazement before they could even share few testimonies, his unbeliever friend suddenly took over and was equally eager to share the favour of God in his own and his wife's lives too (though not attributing it to the One and Only Living God, from whom it came). My friend was left feeling sheepish that his Non-Christian colleague had equally if not more testimonies of God's faithfulness and mercy in their lives.

You see, we need to know as I said earlier that God's grace in our life does not indicate that we are in God's will.

**Psalm 145:9**

*<sup>9</sup> The Lord is good **to all**, And His tender mercies are over **all** His works.*

For the character of God cannot be changed. Even if we are unfaithful, He will continue to be 'faithful', because He cannot change.

**2 Timothy 2:13 says**

*'If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.'*

The scary part comes only on the day we stand before Him and will deny all those who did not walk in His will. For our God is an extremely patient God, Who is slow to anger and does not render to each one immediately what is deserving, but allows time and grace for them to change.

I remember of another instance when once I was complaining to the Lord about a particular person (unbeliever) using adjectives to describe that person, saying he was wicked, unthankful, and ungrateful and I thought the Lord would definitely understand and agree with me on that one (knowing the background of what I was going through with that person) and hoping to hear some very comforting words of agreement from the Lord. My morning meditation that day opened to **Luke 6:35-36** <sup>35</sup> *But love your*

enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. **For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.** <sup>36</sup> Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

My jaw almost dropped and I was stopped on my tracks, as I read, I could see what the Lord was really telling me through those verses was that 'If He being God Almighty is merciful to the wicked and the ungrateful, who am I to hold those things against that person.' It did not stop there, few days later the Lord raised the bar in my Christian walk by asking me to go and reconcile with that person even though I was the person who was being unnecessarily persecuted.

If we truly love the Lord Jesus, the litmus test is that we would walk in all His ways (difficult as they seem) **John 14:15. But the question is what are we really after?** What prize are we chasing? What race are you running? What race am I running?

**Look at Apostle Paul's attitude as in:**

**1 Corinthians 9:24-27**

<sup>24</sup> *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize?*

**Run in such a way that you may obtain it.**

<sup>25</sup> *And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.*

<sup>26</sup> *Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.*

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

## Chapter 3

### A Different Gospel!

Today the Gospel is being watered down by some False Teachers trying to strip it of its power. The Modern Churches stress on our Lord Jesus being full of Grace but that is only half the truth, for we need to remember the full truth is **'He is full of Grace and full of Truth too' (John 1:14) and cannot tolerate evil.**

#### **1 John 1:5-6 says**

<sup>5</sup> *This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.*

<sup>6</sup> ***If*** we say that we have fellowship with Him, ***and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.***

*Apostle Peter also brings out that truth very clearly in 1Peter 1:14-17*

<sup>14</sup> ***As obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance;*** <sup>15</sup> ***but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,*** <sup>16</sup> ***because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."*** <sup>17</sup> ***And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear.***

The Bible says in **2 Corinthians 11:1-4**, like the serpent twisted the truth of God's words to Eve, by playing down on the command of God and its consequences, similarly, these False Teachers confuse the Gospel, playing up or playing down one part to suit their messages. When a saved sinner receives the grace of God unto Salvation, not by his works but as a free gift of God as we just read earlier in **Ephesians 2:8-9**, then comes his part/role as a saved sinner as we earlier read in **Ephesians 2:10** of living in 'obedience to God's Will' and 'bearing Fruit unto Good Works'. The Lord Jesus said anyone who does not abide in His teachings and teaches others not to will both be declared as lawless ones on Judgement Day **Matthew 7:13-27** even though being professing Christians

involved in ministry.

'Salvation is through Grace' and there is no question about that. But 'Redemption' comes through '**continuing in God's will**' (Matthew 7:21; 1John 2:17; Revelation 3:2-6). Just like the Israelites were taken out/saved out of their bondages in Egypt, but God later tested them in the desert **to know their heart**.

The Bible says nevertheless with most of them God was not pleased **1 Corinthians 10:5** (apart from the two who were redeemed), for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

Yes the very same way God after saving a believer, takes the saved believer through different desert experiences, trials, testings and temptations to see if His heart is stayed in obeying His commands. God does that to all who call themselves His people from the Old and to the New Testament. He did not even spare the Lord Jesus by leading Him into the wilderness **to be tested** too as we read in **Matthew 4:1** and so He will to us too.

Apostle Paul warns believers the same, lest history repeat itself this time around with us Christians as we read in **1 Corinthians 10:1-12**, that **just a "Few" made it to the Promised Land** even after being Baptised and tasting spiritual food and drinking from the Spiritual Rock which was Christ, **a typification of Christian life post salvation**. He ends with a warning, saying we need to be careful, for those who think they stand, take heed, lest they fall.

Just before Paul opens up with 1 Corinthians 10, he ends in the previous chapter 9, saying in 1 Corinthians 9:27 that he himself did not take his salvation for granted.

#### **1Corinthians9:27**

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

Now Apostle Paul was not casting any doubts on the finished work of Christ Jesus at the Cross, when he said the above, that He himself may become disqualified, but was only retreating that Changed Life is crucial and an evidence of our true love and

devotion to God. Beloved of Christ, if that was the attitude Apostle Paul had, how much more you and I need to have the same?

Apostle Paul after having such a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus and upon whom the mantle of Jesus Christ, to reach the lost Gentile world was, did not at any time bask on the self-confidence of his salvation but in fact was conscious of the ever present reality of the possibility of being **'Disqualified'** – **1 Corinthians 9:27**, if he did not continue to work out his salvation with fear and trembling – **Philippians 2:12**.

The Lord Jesus kept stressing that the knowledge of the 'Truth' was crucial. Not as we understand 'truth' but as the Bible explains it. In **John 8:31-32** he says that the key to remain in the 'Truth' is in the continuance of 'obedience' and mind you, He did not say that to unbelievers but to Believers as you read that Scripture portion.

**The Lord Jesus says in Matthew 25:41:**

"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire ***prepared for the devil and his angels.***"

You see people do not like the idea of HELL. They say how a good God can send mankind to Hell. You see hell was not created for us but for the devil and his fallen angels. There are many things in our lives we do not like. We do not like sorrow, sickness, failure of any kind, so on and so forth, but just because we do not like the idea of them that does not mean that they do not exist and that it cannot happen to us. It is the same with the reality of Hell. But you see a Holy, Righteous and a Good God has given us a choice out of Hell.

We need to seriously stop to check if any of us have subtly fallen into believing or preaching a different Gospel of only ALL GRACE without any demands on the saved believer's life. For such a Gospel does not exist in the Bible!

**Titus 2:11-12 says**

<sup>11</sup> For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, <sup>12</sup> ***teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts***, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.

**The Word of God says in - 1 Timothy 6:14**

That you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing,

I would like to bring up a very powerful Scripture from **2 Corinthians**, which perhaps you may have skipped meditating on closely, where Apostle Paul having the same concerns **cautioned the Church then,** from not getting ensnared by some false teachers who are bringing heresies. Apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinth Church boldly addressed these teachings as:

1. **Another Jesus**
2. **Different spirit**
3. **Different gospel**

**2 Corinthians 11:2-4:**

<sup>2</sup> For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a **chaste virgin** to Christ. <sup>3</sup> But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. <sup>4</sup> For if he who comes preaches **another Jesus** whom we have not preached, or if you receive a **different spirit** which you have not received, or a **different gospel** which you have not accepted, you may well put up with it!

When I first showed this scripture to a friend of mine who is an Ex-Principle of a Bible College, he was initially amazed that such a scripture missed his eye. Another place in the New Testament which cautions the believer of a 'Different Gospel' is found in:

**Galatians 1:6-7:**

<sup>6</sup> I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, **to a different gospel,** <sup>7</sup> which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert **the gospel of Christ.**

Modern evangelism uses a lot of new phrases that at the face of it sounds not only good but makes absolute sense. One such phrase is "We do not clean the fish and catch it, but we catch the fish and clean it". What they mean is that we need to invite the people into churches preaching a Non- Offensive Gospel (what I call the half

Gospel) by not addressing any need for repentance or spiritual healing, in the name of getting many into the Church.

However the reality is, even if these phrases may make sense to us, it does not necessarily mean that's God's Way. We need to always ask (which we often fail to) "Is that the way you want me to go Lord"? For remember God's ways and thoughts are far above ours. **Any Gospel that goes out without the call of repentance is really a Different Gospel.** It is very disheartening to see the compromises the Modern Churches engage in order to get sheer numbers. The Gospel in the Bible always went out with a call to 'Repent and Believe'. If anyone fails to realise that, they are sinners before a Holy and righteous God, they are really not yet ready to either appreciate or receive the Cross of Jesus Christ. For the Gospel is a free gift given with a free choice and cannot be forced or compromised.

Our job is only to present the Gospel of Christ in its fullness and it is then up to the hearer to decide if he or she needs to receive this great offer of forgiveness for their sins. The Lord Jesus Himself said that He did not come for the righteous but for sinners, giving a connotation with it saying that only a sick need a Doctor not one who feels healthy. Either way it is not our job to clean the fish, but it's God's. **By our wanting to even paint a Goat white, it does not become a Sheep; it still remains a Goat - right? Only God can change a Goat to a Sheep.** Unfortunately the result of such non offensive preaching keeps Believers still under bondages of many unconfessed sins (un-forgiveness, immorality, anger, addictions, idolatry, jealousy etc.). It's only when we accept the Truth that we need help will we bring ourselves and our sins to the foot of the Cross. It is only when we decide **to continue to live obediently** unto the WORD of God will we be truly set free indeed, as the Lord said in **John 8:31-32**.

I often think it's high time we change the popular title **From 'Believer' to 'Obedient Believer'** For being a 'Believer' means nothing to our Lord God.

**James 2:19 says** You believe that there is one God. Good!  
Even the demons believe that and shudder.

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## Chapter 4

### **Temptation of preaching – THE HALF GOSPEL!**

Many today play up the 'Love and Grace of God' and play down subtly (by not mentioning) 'God's Holiness' part (which calls for 'OBEDIENCE'), in order to make the Gospel non-offensive. Half-truth is not the Truth!

As someone rightly said **Satan is like an expert Judo Master. When we think we have conquered one weakness, he flips us to the other side.**

**2000 years back the early church** was wrestling with the new Jewish believers slipping back to 'Salvation through the Law and Rituals' because through that they felt a sense of spiritual accomplishment /superiority.

**2000 years hence the last days Church** is slipping back into their old carnal ways by taking God's Grace for granted, thus finding again a safe haven of spiritual supremacy, and using this freedom that comes from Grace into opportunity for the flesh.

**Think about it!** Would Satan waste his time with you and me if he knows that we as saved believers cannot lose our salvation?

Or let me put it the other way, why did Paul, James, John, Peter, Jude and the Lord Himself who took so much time to keep cautioning the Church to walk in holiness, often even rebuking them, if in the end Eternity with God was for certain for a saved believer (obedient or disobedient)?

The Church world over is slowly getting **hooked on to this 'Non-Offensive Half Gospel'**. Mind you it's addictive, it feels good to the itching ears and **the carnal flesh loves to hear it**, that's why any preaching of that sort will be with halls full and Churches moving to become Mega Churches. For it should not surprise us for our Lord Jesus prophesied that many would walk down this BROAD GOSPEL ROAD!

On the other hand when the Lord Jesus' teachings came across really hard with the 'Truth':

**John 6:66-68 records**

***"From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. <sup>67</sup> Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" <sup>68</sup> But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."***

And what were the reactions of the people as a result of His Teachings? **Was it Mega Churches?** NO. On the other hand this so called soft gospel is non-offensive to its hearers, itching ears.

Apostle Paul and John were also not overly concerned of people's opinion as long as they knew that they had to speak the Truth.

Apostle Paul is **Galatians 4:16** says '*Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?*' and Apostle

**John says in 1 John 3:13**

*'Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you.'*

You know when the Lord Jesus first sent His disciples to preach the Gospel all they spoke was '*Men should repent* – **Mark 6:12'**

**Traces of this snare** (of throwing the obedience bit, out of the window of the Church) **were already seen hitting the early church;** as The Lord's Apostles addressed these boldly in:

- ❖ **Galatians 5:7-9, 13, 16, 19-24:** *<sup>7</sup> You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? <sup>8</sup> This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you. <sup>9</sup> A little leaven leavens the whole lump. <sup>13</sup> **For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. <sup>16</sup> I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. <sup>19</sup> Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, <sup>21</sup> envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; **of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.** <sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. <sup>24</sup> **And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*****
  
- ❖ **Galatians 6:7** says: *'Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.'<sup>8</sup> **For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.'** To me that verse is clear, that unless we are living lives led by the Holy Spirit we will not be reaping Eternal Life*

- ❖ **2 John1:8-9** says: <sup>8</sup> *Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.* <sup>9</sup> ***Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.*** Again what the verse speaks to me is that, if we do not continue to press on the narrow road there can be a loss of things previously worked for.
  
- ❖ And lastly Jude (the half-brother of Christ Jesus), covers this pretty much in his whole book of this last days trend in the church, which he very vehemently opposes and it will be good if you take to read them as in **Jude 1:4-5, 10-13,16-20**

If you are reading this, may I take this opportunity to stop here and ask you, 'Has there ever been a specific time in your life, when you have made that personal and distinct commitment of repenting of your old ways and wanting a **'changed life'** to your sin torn old life by taking the opportunity of inviting the Lord Jesus into your heart to make Him the Saviour?'

Of all the religions of the world, Christian Faith is the only one which encourages us to approach God with boldness, not God as a destroyer but as Abba Father. **God offers this great privilege to all who are invited** to come to His presence and fellowship directly with Him through **Jesus our Compassionate High Priest**

God's Eternal purpose has always been to reconcile the fallen man back to HIM. **God's call has always been to His people** from Genesis to Revelation, has always been a call to repent and return to HIM

If you have accepted the Lord's sacrifice for your sins on the cross, knowing that you are a sinner, for the bible says all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, would you please pause now to consider to do the same? You may be even be a Christian from birth but **that does not count unless you have made that deliberate personal choice for yourself** in asking and allowing Christ Jesus

to be the LORD of every area of your Life!

The Bible says in **Acts 4:12**

*'Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved'.*

We see many in the world using the popular phrase **"We are still searching"** but what is most unfortunate is to hear some Christians also confessing the same.

**Deuteronomy 4:29-31** says

*<sup>29</sup> But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. <sup>30</sup> When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you **in the latter days, when you turn to the Lord your God and obey His voice** <sup>31</sup> (for the Lord your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.*

I really do not see what is the search about? When the Lord Jesus Christ said in no uncertain terms as in:

**John 14:6**

*Jesus said to him,  
"I am the way,  
the truth,  
and the life.*

***No one comes to the Father  
except through Me"***

I humbly urge you with the love of God to make that commitment with the Lord Jesus in the quietness of your room **without further delay.**

**Hebrews 4:6-7** says

*<sup>6</sup> Since therefore it remains that some must enter it,  
and those to whom it was first preached*

*did not enter because of disobedience,  
7 again He designates a certain day, saying in David,  
"Today," **after such a long time, as it has been said:**  
**"Today, if you will hear His voice,**  
**Do not harden your hearts."***

There are many Christian who read Psalm 91 religiously almost every day, but at the same time want to run their life their way. They overlook the very first verse 1 in that Psalm which is a pre-condition to the blessings that follow the rest of the verses in Psalm 91.

**Psalm 91:1** *'He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High **shall abide** under the shadow of the Almighty.'* The question we need to ask ourselves is - Are we really and truly DWELLING in the will of God? **If** so, **then** the Lord's protection is assured.

Today when we speak simple '**Biblical Truths**' we see many who are more concerned about others opinions than in the '**TRUTH**' – saying "do you know that so and so was offended in what you said" as many were with the Lord Jesus, as we read in:

**Matthew 15:10-12**

<sup>10</sup> *When He had called the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear and understand: <sup>11</sup> Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man."<sup>12</sup> Then His disciples came and said to Him, "**Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?"***

Let me ask you a question, are you truly abiding in the teachings of the Lord Jesus in holy fear today? Are you boldly living God's Word regardless of people's opinions around you and exposing all False Teachings as our Lord Jesus boldly did?

*Unfortunately 2000 years hence, little is changed*  
and in all probability, you and I would be called a 'heretic' or  
'weird'  
*if we reaffirm the teachings of:*

- How Apostle James encouraged the church in **James 1:2-4**  
*<sup>2</sup> My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, <sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. <sup>4</sup> But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*
  
- How Apostle Peter edified the Church **1 Peter 4:12-19:**  
*<sup>12</sup> Beloved, **do not think it strange** concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; <sup>13</sup> but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. <sup>14</sup> ***If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.*** On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. <sup>15</sup> But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters (Today this is one common pet sin found amongst Christians of being busy bodies in others matters). <sup>16</sup> Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. <sup>17</sup> For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? <sup>18</sup> Now "***If the righteous one is scarcely saved,*** where will the ungodly and the sinner appear? <sup>19</sup> Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.*

**Ask yourself the question, when was the last you heard this kind of teachings** (mind you which was very prevalent through the early church) of the Bible? Or has it all gone out of the window of the Church?

**Today indeed we are drawing close to the Prophecy of:  
Amos 8:11**

*“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord God,  
“That I will send a famine on the land,  
Not a famine of bread,  
Nor a thirst for water,  
**But of hearing the words of the Lord.***

Today’s teaching/preaching is all about the ‘feel good factor!’ And who does not like that? My sinful flesh would love to hear that teaching, it may give me a good high when I come out of the church but leave me with no conviction of wanting a changed life for Christ my Lord.

This ‘feel good motto’ of these New Age Churches is **that from the moment you enter such churches till the moment you leave – you are entertained!**

I understand the Gospel to the unsaved is all about talking about Christ Love and forgiveness as we outreach outside the church. But Sunday after Sunday pampering sermons are given of how much Christ loves us, (irrespective of knowing if believers have lived up in obedience to the Lord’s Will that week) seldom if not never convicting the saved sinner to turn from their old ways and live godly lives.

**The prophecy of Jeremiah 23:1, 16-17 has come to pass in them:**

<sup>1</sup>*“Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!” says the LORD.*

<sup>16</sup>*Thus says the LORD of hosts:*

**“Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you.  
They make you worthless;  
They speak a vision of their own heart,**



*Not from the mouth of the LORD.*

*<sup>17</sup> They continually say to those who despise Me,  
'The LORD has said, "You shall have peace";  
And to everyone who walks according to the dictates of his own  
heart, they say, 'No evil shall come upon you.'"*

This will leave those only feeling self-righteous not convicted to raise the bar, in their lives. Such believers come out feeling anointed and anointed they are, by the snare of the spirit of error who is at work on the sons of disobedience.

Another thing I have noticed is that these preachers and teachers who preach the ALL GRACE man pleasing Gospels, themselves have very little grace. If you ever come into a deep discussion with them it won't last too long and you will see really very little of the Fruit of Love, which is supposedly their hallmark pitch. That's why Christ indicated in Matthew 7:16 you will know them by their fruit. The reason being, they lack being Christlike in 'Full of Grace and Full of Truth' and one cannot be supported without the other, it will fall.

Their pampering messages are always how God wants to bless you 24x7, repeating, only one part of the Bible saying "In blessings He will bless you and in multiplication He will multiply you" never talking about fulfilling its conditions.

So where is the Church heading towards today? Is it unfortunately towards the prophesied last days Church in:

### **2 Thessalonians 2:11-12**

*<sup>11</sup> And for this reason God will send them a strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, <sup>12</sup> that they all may be condemned **who did not believe the truth** but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

**Unless I guard my soul from listening to these messages**, I may not know when it subtly gets into my system and I may continue in singing – "I am a friend of God, I am a friend of God, He calls me friend" without meeting the conditions. The Lord Jesus said to

His disciples in **John 14:15** 'You are My friends ***if you*** do whatever I command you'

But even if we want to think we are anyway His friends it's fine, for the Lord Jesus prophesied that He called the person 'Friend' who did not have the Wedding Garments, just before he was bound hand and foot and thrown into Hell Fire( Please read **Matthew 22:11-14**). So the next time we call ourselves a friend of God **let us also remember that God shows no partiality even between friends.**

Apostle John later pre-warned believers not to listen to these false speakers or else before we even know it, this deluding false spirit will come upon us as hearers of them

**1 John2:24-25, 26, 28**

*"Therefore let that **abide** in you which you heard from the beginning. ***If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.****

<sup>25</sup> *And this is the promise that He has promised us—**eternal life.**"*

<sup>26</sup> *These things I have written to you concerning **those who try to deceive you.***

<sup>28</sup> *And now, little children, **abide in Him, that** when He appears, we may have confidence **and not be ashamed** before Him at His coming.*

In other words the warning from that verse I get is that if we start getting hooked on these teachings, a deluding spirit takes over very quickly and we would stop abiding in the Truth.

The result would be that we are left behind/outside the door knocking, at the coming of Christ Jesus. Yes if we '**abide**' in His teachings **we will indeed have His promised ETERNAL LIFE (Not Otherwise)**. Basically Apostle John in 1John2:24-25 above was very categorically reaffirming His Master's words in **John 15:1-8 (that as His branches we need to abide in His commandments bearing**

**much fruit** to prove we are His true disciples, lest we are cut and thrown to be burned).

So let's stop here and ask ourselves, searching deep within, **what Gospel are we excited to reach out - The 'SOFT Gospel' or the 'TRUE Gospel'?**

Many today in the church who have a burden to reach the gospel are being misled in their simplicity by sending their support to, those so called (the soft gospel) T.V. Crusade speakers who call themselves Evangelist, who spend the donors money in these Large Crusades to transport their choir and equipment, in booking large air-conditioned halls or making enormous open air arrangements, all to gear up the local churches to invite already saved believers and then ensnare the saved believers with their False 'Broad Road' Gospel.

**All this is often at the cost of, washing away all the hard work of a True Evangelist**, who had worked tirelessly into the streets of those villages and cities, **many without any money belts (true to their Master's command – Mark 6:8-9** *<sup>8</sup>He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in their money belts—<sup>9</sup>but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics.)* **to save those Souls.**

When the weak and weary saved believer comes for these crusade meetings, or see it broadcast over television, **he or she hears that there is no need to pick the CROSS anymore**, to follow the Lord's footsteps; and all the Lord God wants to do in this life here of theirs is to bless and multiply them. And they are taught to call all their present trials/testings/afflictions as Devil sent, making it all appear very soothing, pleasing to the ears of broken and contrite hearts, just when they are struggling to stand tall for Christ in the midst of their various trials and persecutions, tested by fire, so as a proof of their faith (1Peter 1:6-7). They are told life is all about

themselves and their wellbeing rather than our lives meant to bringing glory to God.

This beloved of Christ, I am sorry to say, is a **stark dichotomy** to our Lord's teachings on persecutions, sufferings and testings along with the teachings of His early Church disciples, Apostle Peter, Paul, James as we read a little earlier.

The early Church disciples understood what their Lord Jesus said in

**Luke 9:24**

*'For whoever desires to save his life  
**will lose it,**  
but whoever loses his life  
for My sake  
**will save it.'***

Therefore Paul edified the Church saying in 2 Thessalonians 1:4-8 that to brave sufferings as part and parcel of true Christian life.

**2 Thessalonians 1:4-8**

*<sup>4</sup> so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for **your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure,** <sup>5</sup> which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; <sup>6</sup> since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, <sup>7</sup> and **to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,** <sup>8</sup> in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

There is prophetic warning that is found in Scriptures that these false teachings would come, as we read in:

**1John 4:1**

***Beloved, do not believe every spirit,  
but test the spirits,  
whether they are of God;  
because many false prophets  
have gone out into the world.***

These False Teachers are deceptive smooth talkers and it takes a good deal of spiritual discernment to pick them up.

**There are few ways you can pick up these False Prophets and Speakers:**

1. The first way (and quickest way) to pick them up is by the yardstick our Lord Jesus gave us in Luke 6:23 'Woe to you ***when all men speak well of you***, For so did their fathers to the false prophets.' Today these big wigs Christian Speakers have such an influence around them that dare anyone talk openly against them. In fact they are only short of being worshiped and everything that comes out of their mouth is taken as gospel truth, never ever being questioned.
2. You will notice, rather than holding the flag up of the Lord God and His eternal Kingdom, they would be holding their own flag of their ministries. Many of their ministries are known by their personal names rather than Christ, lifting their personal and ministry names high. Even though Christ Jesus is himself the Gospel/The Good News (Mark 1:1). However when He started His ministry on earth Christ did not even lift His very name, but preached about 'The Kingdom of God' (Mark1:15)
3. When on stage or on Television, they are so full of themselves, advertising how they or their ministries have performed, touching people, **always gathering the lime light to themselves and their ministries.** It's a pity when the Word of God instructs us that it's no more that we live but Christ in us and that our lives are hidden in Christ. Galatians 2:20 says the 'I' in us is crucified and no longer the 'I' who lives but 'Christ' in us. Christ never brought any Glory to Himself, being very God, but brought glory to God (John 8:50). Similarly Christ Jesus did not (advertise) testify of Himself but only testified of what His Heavenly Father God

does (John 5:31-32).

4. There is always a **constant financial appeal** to give into their ministries. Now again Christ never encouraged or made any appeals of any form of giving to himself or His ministries, specially finances. In fact He instructed His disciples to not even carry the money they have of their own when they go out. For the Gospel never needed and never will need money but a faithful and bold mouth with the Spirit of God, to declare Jesus is the Christ 'The Messiah'! Rather than them asking finances for themselves and centralising the evangelism through their institution, they should be teaching and preaching to make disciples of their hearers for Christ (not of disciples for themselves) and thereby reach the world around their hearers. Christ's call was not that only through Him the ministry can expand but said 'go out unto the world and make disciples of other nations' (Matthew 28:18-20).
5. They **project their compassion on display**. Carrying a poor baby from a third world nation in your arms does not make us a minister of Christ or a reflection of true compassion, but doing the will of God and building on the teachings and commands of God and teaching others to do so too (Matthew 7:21-24, Matthew 28:20).
6. Lastly they seem to have mesmerised their disciples (called partners) or shall we say finance partners. For if anyone utters a word against their **favourite stage or T.V hero's** you would perhaps see a fuse blowing and them lashing out at you. I wonder if they would have that attitude towards Christ Jesus. As Apostle Paul and Apollos faced in the early church, Paul vehemently rebuked the believers of his time in 1 Corinthians 1:12-13, who were setting them at the same level as the Lord Jesus.

One can be easily deceived by their pampering self-pleasing talk, as they craftily distort the Truth. Why? Because the Bible explicitly says that there is **a deceiving spirit** which goes around and can come upon Believers if they are not careful to guard their hearts – Please take time to know more about those deceptions which the Bible explicitly says will come to the Church in the Last Days from Scriptures as in - **Thessalonians 2:3,11; 2 Timothy 3:1-7; 2 Timothy 4:2-4; 1John 2:26-28 and Revelation 16:14.**

Many of us Christians are simple and feel that in the name of Christian fellowship, we can fellowship with any Church and with any Christian (regardless). We are called to love all (regardless). But we are called to have fellowship only with the Brethren who walk in the Light and not in Darkness. In fact the Bible is very clear that we should have no fellowship with those who do not abide in the teachings of Christ Jesus. I sincerely request you to take time to read the Scriptures which brings out the **'Boundaries of FELLOWSHIP'** as in:

**2John 1:8-11**

*<sup>8</sup> Look to yourselves,  
that we do not lose those things we worked for,  
**but that we may receive a full reward.***

*<sup>9</sup> Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ  
does not have God.*

*He who abides in the doctrine of Christ  
has both the Father and the Son.*

*<sup>10</sup> If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine,  
do not receive him into your house nor greet him;*

*<sup>11</sup> for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.*

Also as you read **1John 1:3-7; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18** you will have more insight on this.

The question may be asked then, why has the Sovereign Lord God allowed these False Teachers and Prophets? The answer really comes in the prophetic words of **Deuteronomy 13:1-4**, which says that God has allowed these False Speakers by **even giving them the**

**power to display signs and wonders** in order to test and see if His true followers are truly committed to the Truth of His 'Word and Commands' which is a direct proportion of their love for Him - The true and living God.

**Deuteronomy 13:1-4  
(Punishment of Apostates)**

*"If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you **a sign or a wonder,***

*<sup>2</sup>and the sign or the wonder **comes to pass,** of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods'—which you have not known—'and let us serve them,'*

*<sup>3</sup>you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your*

***God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart***

*and with **all** your soul.*

*<sup>4</sup>You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him."*

We see the above scripture fulfilled today, again through many Christian Crusade and T.V. Speakers. **Their primary object is to display signs, wonders and miracles but seldom convicting their hearers** that there is a need to turn away from sin, living holy lives as the Lord Jesus commanded. Instead they lead them into beautiful illusions of the **BROAD WAY** as we see '**many**' mind you, Christians who are walking in today.

When Apostle John said in **1John 4:1** 'do not believe every spirit, **but test the spirits, whether they are of God**', I believe Apostle John was reminding us, how the Lord asked us to 'Test the True ones from the Fake ones' in **Matthew 7:15-17** the Lord Jesus said by their FRUIT of the Holy Spirit in their lives and not to get carried away



by their miracles **Matthew 7:21-23**.

**My appeal to each one of you** beloved of Christ Jesus, who are reading this, is what the Lord Jesus warned - **BEWARE OF THESE FALSE PROPHETS!**

**The Lord warned in Matthew 7:15-17 saying**

*<sup>15</sup> "**Beware of false prophets**, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. <sup>16</sup> **You will know them by their fruits**. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup> Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.*

There is so many Christian Apostasies there and it takes great discernment to see the subtle evil deception of Satan. **All you really need is**

- ❖ **The Holy Spirit**
- ❖ **And mediating on the Holy written Word (day and night)**

Beloved of Christ, it is the last hour, there are many Anti-Christ in sheep's clothing out there. Please cease seeing and being hooked on to these Christian T.V. broadcast **right away!** (*which come in the Lord God's name*). If not you will be at the cost of shrinking in shame along with them, at the Appearing of the Lord Jesus - **1 John 2:24-28**.

**The Lord Jesus again warned in Matthew 7:21-23.**

*<sup>21</sup> "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have **we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?**' <sup>23</sup> And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'*

The Lord Jesus went on to say 'True Prophets and Preachers' are the ones who will truly build on His Teachings and Commands. **Matthew 7:24** <sup>24</sup> "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock".

The Lord Jesus made it clear that **true redemption** would only happen when we turn from sin and obey His Commands as He said in:

**John 8:31-32**

*Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "**If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.** <sup>32</sup> And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

Many confess today and are quick to quote the Lord's words

*'You shall know the Truth and the Truth shall set you free'.*

But only very few know and realise, that if you really go back to the verse, from which it was taken, (as we just read) it takes continued obedience to His Word '**to be able to truly be set free**' (from various blindness and bondages).

I am told statistics say, that an alarming 70% of those who accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour **during Crusades, drop back to their old ways** and out of their faith just because they were not told that "Christian life will involve Trials" and they need to walk in obedience as the Lord Jesus instructed in **Matthew 28:20**.

Today, words like '**Eternity with God/ Eternal Kingdom**' **does not hold much charm** with many new age believers **for in their minds that edifies only a distant hope** but does not gratify the present flesh and immediate future.

Unfortunately in today's outreach and preaching **there is a Great Omission in the Great Commission.** The Lord Jesus'

Great Commission does not stop with .....

**...Matthew 28:18-19**

*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*

**But it continues** (with what we often omit to follow through) the other part of the Lord Jesus' Command...

**...Matthew 28:20**

<sup>20</sup> ***Teaching them to observe all things***  
*that I have commanded you;  
and lo, I am with you always,  
even to the end of the age." Amen.*

**Today's modern church teaching is not on 'Teaching them to obey'** but teaching them how much God loves them and how much He wants to bless them, through the pampering 'soft gospel' messages.

**Firstly**, we forget the Holy God is not only full of Grace and but a righteous and just God who is an all-consuming fire and cannot tolerate sin. **For if God is only full of grace** (like many of us think), then I would want you to ask yourself a question. **Why all the drama in God removing Adam and Eve from His Holy presence in the garden of Eden in the first place?** For, they only slipped once He could have in that case very well overlooked their sins if He was only full of Grace - Right? No - For they had to face a 'Just' and 'Holy God's' consequence to disobedience!

The Bible says that God is the same yesterday today and tomorrow and this is mentioned in the Old and New Testament.

We saw in many 'New Testament scriptures' earlier that the Lord God still demands a 'Saved Sinner' to walk in obedience of His Word. In **2 Corinthians 11:3** Paul was cautioning believers not to get deceived like Eve got with Satan, by these false speakers

who dilute God's word in saying obedience or non-obedience to God's Laws and Commandments means nothing. But it just quite the opposite of what the Bible says in:

**1 Corinthians 7:19**

*'Circumcision is nothing and un-circumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.'*

The above verse drives home the point that removal of the Law of Circumcision, in no way indicates that along with the Ritual acts, the Law and Commandments of the Lord God go out of the window too.

**Secondly**, if you think or were taught that the Lord Jesus came to remove His Holy Commandments, (confusing it with the Laws of Rituals) like '*Thou shall not steal*' or '*Thou shall not murder*' or '*Thou shall not commit adultery*' **then brother/sister, you are in serious err in understanding the God of the Bible and the Lord Jesus Christ**. For it was the Lord Jesus who on the contrary tightened the Law a few notches even tighter as we read in **Matthew 5: 21-28**. Before which the Lord said in:

**The Lord Jesus categorically said  
In Matthew 5:17-18**

<sup>17</sup> ***"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets.***

*I did not come to destroy but to fulfil.*

<sup>18</sup> *For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.*

God indeed commands the saved sinner to bear fruit in keeping with repentance, denying himself and putting aside his past sin torn and rebellious ways, unto 'Salvation for Eternity'; **not just salvation from their present earthly and economical situations**, which is unfortunately so often preached and understood today.

The reason I say the above so strongly, is because you will be surprised to know that many of such so called top spiritual leaders, elders, pastors, preachers, teachers including those in seminary

often do not take the opportunity or are truly burdened to minister the Gospel one on one to their unsaved neighbour, on a day to day basis, themselves. More so it's surprising to note, that many of them would not know how to share the gospel to an un-saved person, even if a very obvious door of opportunity is opened for them to share.

A friend of mine who was an elder of His church, came to our home and was sharing (pretty discouraged) saying that he suggested to his Pastor who had been sharing the gospel to his congregation for years (it's funny that this happens so often in churches, where all have heard the gospel many times over), that it would make sense for a change to teach/equip the congregation basic tips as how to share the Gospel. **For he said the Gospel needs to be proclaimed outside the Church and not only within the four walls of the Church** (as the Lord warned if salt remains with salt only, it would lose its saltiness). My friend told me, from that day on he was sidelined by the Pastor in the church.

The same friend went on to share another very disheartening incident, saying that on another occasion; the church committee was presented with a request from another church which did not have a baptism tank, if they could use the facilities of baptism tank in their church. That request was put on the back burner for many days. My friend who was disheartened brought that to the church committee meeting, saying "brethren how we could ignore such an important request to the church when another body of Christ needed the Baptism tank to baptise a soul who is ready?" He was told that the reason it was turned down was because the request was made at a time when it was an inconvenient hour for the church. My friend then offered to come himself to the church at that particular day and hour and open the church, fill the baptism tank, be there during the baptism service and take responsibility to close the church. To his surprise his request was turned down.

Today the prophecy in **2 Timothy 3:5** "*Having a form of godliness but denying its power*" has truly come to pass, as we see around us.

As I conclude this Chapter, reminding ourselves (if we say we truly love Jesus) the **litmus test** in what our Lord said, qualifies our true love for Christ our Lord and our God as in:

**John 14:15**  
**'If**  
**you love Me**  
*you will keep **My commandments**'*

Apostle John ratifies the same of 'who is the one' who truly really abides in the Lord as in

**1 John 3:24**  
<sup>24</sup> **Now he who keeps**  
*His commandments*  
*abides in Him, and He in him...*

**When the early Church was formed** as we read in the book of Acts, hypocrites and **hypocrisy among believers was not tolerated**. The Apostles severely rebuked all such and in fact the judgement of God during those times was immediate and severe, for example Ananias and Sapphira.

Today it is a different story; many in the Church of God are faking it. As **2 Timothy 3:5**, there will come in the last days people who will hold a form of godliness, although they have denied the power; 'The Power' of the gospel to produce changed life!

**Jeremiah 23:20-22**

<sup>20</sup> *The anger of the Lord will not turn back;  
until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart.*

***In the latter days*** you will understand it perfectly.

<sup>21</sup> ***"I have not sent these prophets,*** yet they ran. *I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.*

<sup>22</sup> *But if they had stood in My counsel, and had **caused My people to hear My words**, then **they would have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their doings.***

Today the prophecy of Prophet Jeremiah has come to pass and so has Apostle Paul's, as in **2 Timothy 4:3**; that in the last days people would gather for themselves **what their itching ears want to hear**. Two reasons; firstly few believers have the desire to read the Word and discern for themselves what God has to say to them and secondly they **rather hear what appeases their carnal hearts**. Today the new age apostasy is rampant of getting everything verified from a prophet or prophetess so that their carnal hearts are free from guilt. In Old Testament or New Testament you may notice that the people of God, often did not go to the prophets but rather, God sent prophets to them when He wanted. It was generally the evil kings of Israel who had their favourite prophets around them, prophesying what their itching ears want to hear. **With the result sadly many Christians today are in the state of 1 Corinthians 15:19 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.'**

There are many **new age Christian clichés** coming from these self-acclaimed prophets and prophetesses; some invoking unnecessary **fear** and some feeding the **greed**. Stay away from them!

The Church today is living in these prophesied times as in: **Amos 8:11** "*Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord God, "That I will send a **famine** on the land, Not a **famine** of bread, Nor a **thirst** for water, **But of hearing the words of the Lord.**"*

The onus falls on you and me dear brother and sister in Christ, to **cultivate a habit of reading God's Word** every morning and desiring to hear from Him alone. A love for God's Word does not necessarily come automatically; it needs to be cultivated. As someone said what comes first on your mind when you wake up 'gold'? or 'God'?

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## Chapter 5

### **Various New Age SNARES and APOSTASY:**

There are many types of snares and apostasy hitting the walls of the Church today and it looks like we are in the prophesied season of it. This end time prophecy being fulfilled on one hand is so discouraging to see the Apostate Church slipping into, but on the other hand the encouragement is in us knowing how close we are to the 'Return of Christ'. After reading this section of the book, you may also agree that indeed **it is high time that we 'Repent and Return'** to the 'Truth of His Word'.

The **Last Days apostasies** is quite similar to the ones which hit the nation of Israel at various intervals of times in the Old Testament, when the Israel nation use to turn from God following the ways of the pagan neighbours around them. However today modern apostasy comes across not as obvious as prophesied in **2 Timothy 3:5a** 'Having a form of godliness but denying its power'

Out of the many new age apostasies hitting the walls of the church (and is growing and spreading by the day) I have listed some of them that **we need to be aware and beware!**



❖ **Teachings, seminars, crusades on exercising the Gifts of the Holy Spirit rather than exercising on the Fruit of the Holy Spirit:**

Today many are caught up in having teachings, meetings, seminars, and rallies for the anointing of the Gifts of the Spirit. To acquire the gifts of healing, to speak in tongues or on casting out demons (well known as healing ministry, fire ministry or deliverance ministries) rather than reinforcing in the saved believers, in living lives pleasing to the Lord by God's Holy commandments. Does the Bible stress on this? So let's see what the bible teaches us:

- The Lord said once a person is saved and baptised they need to move forward from Matthew 28:19 into fulfilling **Matthew 28:20** '*Teach them to obey all that I have commanded you.*' He never said teach them how to cast demons and other miracles. Why? Because if you are obedient, these signs the Lord said will follow an obedient disciple.
- Remember the Lord's example in **Matthew 7: 21-24** (as mentioned earlier) of the one to whom the Lord said 'I NEVER KNEW YOU' apparently was top of the list in having almost all the Gifts, but lacked the Fruit of the Spirit and obedience in doing God's Will!
- We also see the Lord commanded His disciples in **Luke 10:20** '*Do not rejoice that the spirits are subject to you but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven*'.
- In **Matthew 11:20** Jesus our Lord began to denounce the very same cities where most of His miracles were performed – Why? It was because the people there, did not really repent of their ways.
- **Further the whole of the Epistles** were mainly written to edify the Church '**to reflect changed life**' by working on the Fruit of the Spirit and not only on the Gifts of the Spirit.
- **Finally we see, 1 Corinthians 13:1** that one becomes

a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal if one has all these gifts and does not have Love. In fact in the very subsequent verse 2 it says **we are nothing** if we do not have Love.

**Then why all this stress today on things which are all going to pass away?** However I also want to stop here and say that it is good to desire to have the Gifts and there is nothing wrong with that per say. But in saying that we need to also remember it is the Gift of the Spirit not a gift of man. That is why some times when we go for such meetings (many which force these gifts by brushing away the sovereignty of God and His wisdom when He feels best to impart which one of His Gift to the saved believer) we at times may get a deceiving gift that may not be from God but from demons and it may take a long time before one knows it. The question really is, can't we trust God the Giver of these Gifts to give a believer as He feels best, in His time.

In Oswald Chambers book '*My Utmost for His Highest*, in one of his extracts from the book, putting the '**God perspective**' in our lives titled 'THE WORKER'S RULING PASSION' quoting from KJV **2 Corinthians 5:9** "*Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him.*" NKJV says '*Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.*' **To please God should be 'top of our list' in every Believers life!**

Oswald Chambers in that article goes on quoting again "*Wherefore we labour....*' saying, "*It is arduous work to keep the Master's ambition in front. It means holding one's self to the high ideal, year in and year out, not being ambitious to win souls or to establish churches or to have revivals, but being ambitious only to be "accepted of HIM". It is not lack of spiritual experience which leads to failure, but lack of labouring to keep the ideal right. Once a week at least take stock before God, and whether you are keeping your life up to the standard He wishes. Apostle Paul is like a musician who does not heed the approval of the audience, if he can catch the look of approval from his Master.*"

**He further** goes on to say, "*Any ambition, which in the tiniest degree, is away from this central one, of being "approved unto God" may end in our being CASTAWAYS (as in John 15:6). Learn to discern where the ambition leads, and*

you will see why it is so necessary facing the Lord Jesus Christ. Apostle Paul says-Lest my body should make me take another line (remembering what the Lord cautioned in Matthew 7:13), I am constantly watching so that I can bring into subjection and keep it under (1 Corinthians 9:23-27).” Oswald in ending says “I have to learn to relate everything to the Master’s ambition, and to maintain it without any cessation. My worth to God in public is what I am in private. Is my master ambition to please Him and to be acceptable to HIM? Or is it something less, no matter how noble?”

❖ **The Snare of terming all trials and hindrances that come our way, as the works of Satan:**

In a day and age when we are so used to everything going clock wise, when things don’t go smoothly, we immediately fret saying ‘that it was Satan who has brought this to frustrate our plans going through, never pausing to realise that, could it have been God who hindered it for our good, to protect us or perhaps just to humble us. We read in the Old Testament about Balaam who when he got frustrated with his donkey (who kept hindering him from moving forward), wished he had a sword in his hand so that he could have killed his (poor) donkey, little realising it was ‘The Angel of the Lord’ who was hindering the donkey to move ahead lest He would have taken Balaam’s life.

**Numbers 22:31-34** <sup>31</sup> Then the Lord opened Balaam’s eyes, and he saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face.<sup>32</sup> And the Angel of the Lord said to him, “Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to stand against you, because your way is perverse before Me. <sup>33</sup> The donkey saw Me and turned aside from Me these three times. If she had not turned aside from Me, surely I would also have killed you by now, and let her live.” <sup>34</sup> And Balaam said to the Angel of the Lord, “***I have sinned, for I did not know You stood in the way against me.*** Now therefore, if it displeases You, I will turn back.”

**Most of us misquote 2 Corinthians 11:14** 'And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.' This verse is terribly misquoted by most, in not realising the context of it.

It was spoken for the ones who wilfully decided to walk in darkness as false workers. It is not definitely for the faithful and obedient getting snared as we quote it with that context in mind for others. For if we think so then anyone can be deceived any time for no wilful sin/s of theirs. Right?

**2 Corinthians 11:13-15**

*<sup>13</sup> For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.  
<sup>14</sup> And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.<sup>15</sup> Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness,  
whose end will be according to their works.*

So let's be very clear that when we quote 'verse 14' above, it should not be understood as a faithful worker being snared or ensnaring others, but it should be rightly understood as - Satan and his false workers who come with deliberate evil agendas, posing as ministers of righteousness.

Many times like the case of Balaam, we blame Satan for bringing a distraction or obstacle to ensnare us, brushing aside the reason for the same. What we really need to seek in those times asking first, is it the Lord bringing those obstacles or change of direction for our good and for a greater purpose and way (which is above our ways).

In **Acts 16:6 Luke records** 'Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.'

I feel grieved when I see many Christians talking more about the Devil and Satan's sovereignty in their lives when the fact is that the devil is not sovereign in our lives but God is. For the devil cannot do anything without the sovereign will of God ALMIGHTY. So if something right is not happening in our life, we need to first check with our Sovereign God and ask why the Lord has allowed

it, rather than living in sin of fear of the devil. As the Lord Jesus sternly warned believers to fear ONLY GOD who can take both our bodies and souls into Hell – **Matthew 10:28**.

### ❖ **Snares of Church building Projects:**

This seemingly harmless snare is today another snare fast spreading across the board (from the smallest thatched church to the biggest cathedral Church is). Church beautification, Church Restoration and Church extension (irrespective of the need for it) have indeed taken centre stage. Rather than seeing how we look before God, on building ourselves spiritually, we are busy engaged in these physical enhancements. Again I say nothing wrong if there is a felt need, but sometimes it is these very things that subtly become idols and take the attention of the Church. In the sense of pride or inter church competitiveness, (saying we will make ours bigger and better than yours) which unfortunately robs our attention from the very things that really matter, for what Christ Jesus our Lord died on the Cross for and what He has called us for.

Today church elders/council/committee and **prayer meetings have become business meetings and faithful giving is replaced with financial planning meetings**. This over indulgence of aimlessly pampering ourselves making these massive buildings to make sure the Salt remains within, results in losing our saltiness and the purpose of our call, as the Lord Jesus pre-warned us of. **We need to rather move out those God given resources to reach and outreach the lost souls**, by supporting and sending out missionaries to build God's Kingdom (rather than these long stressful and sometimes futile financial agendas).

We justify ourselves by saying a bigger Hall or bigger Church means more souls coming in. But without investing our time to go out how do we think this would work?. The early church was

obedient to Jesus command to 'Go ye out into the world from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and utter parts of the world'. They were so busy preaching and reaching the Gospel in the midst of persecution, (which prompted them to be on the move) rather than pitch their Tent.

**The early church/disciples wasted no time building bigger synagogues and churches to get in the flood of new believers? So why has that vision and mission changed now?**

It would not be complete if I miss mentioning, the futile emotional and financial drain on the clergy and the laity, from minor inner rivalry to long drawn legal battles that have entangled many churches, to one another. Not only over building and property issues, but also right from minor issues within the Church, which I do not even want to get into, for they are far too numerous to number and vary from church to church and denomination to denomination, **robbing the very ethos and call of Christ upon the Church being 'Let them know you are Christians by your love'**. Needless to say these are all Satan's ploy, (taking captive immature Christians who have no fear of God), to brew unnecessary bitterness and un-forgiveness to dampen the vision of Christ on the Church 'To make Disciples of all nations and to teach them to obey all Christ commandments'.

Beloved of Christ, don't we know and/or have the **'fear the Word of God'** which instructs us so clearly in HIS Word:

- **1 Corinthians 6:1-6** *'Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? <sup>2</sup>Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? <sup>3</sup>Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? <sup>4</sup>If then you have judgments concerning things **pertaining to this life**, do you appoint those who are*

least esteemed by the church to judge? <sup>5</sup> ***I say this to your shame.*** Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren? <sup>6</sup> ***But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers!***

- **2 Timothy 2:1,3-4** You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. <sup>3</sup>You therefore must endure hardship as a ***good soldier of Jesus Christ.*** <sup>4</sup> ***No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life,*** that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

### ❖ The snares of Church Worship Teams:

**Today true Christian worship is replaced with Christian Entertainment.** There is nothing wrong in having a good choir and musicians to compliment and stir the congregation to holy worship.

But I have seen this new age thing of 'Worship Team' has over dominated sometimes everything else in the Church and that should not be the case. The modern churches boast on their quality of excellence in their worship. They put projectors and recordings and TV monitors all over, and one wonders if you have come to worship or come to see a show of the Worship team being projected in these bigger than life screens, as a Hollywood Shoot settings with cameras going to and fro in front of you disturbing the very essence of worship.

Needless to say the immodest dressing, of some of the young women (and even men) especially, is an abomination to sacred worship far from what the bible instructs a women to dress as they come for worship – as laid down in **1Timothy 2:9-10**. In the early church every one participated in sharing the message, songs and hymns and in the breaking of bread and all this was done

humbly and in meekness done with utmost modesty and sanctity.

Today the altar of reverence is replaced by a performance stage, just short of a catwalk ramp, robbing the sanctity and attention from God.

Today's modern worship on a whole is far from what it should be as the bible instructs us in **Psalm2:11** ***'Worship the Lord with reverence and rejoice with trembling'*** (NASB)

It's a totally different story today, where people are selected into worship teams based on their talent, style of dressing, how jovial they are and how they can project themselves when they are up there, wherein it really should be based on their passion for Christ, (the motive to honour and serve Him). In garb of "dressing best for God" many come most fashionably dressed rather than modestly. **Sadly today the 'spiritual' has indeed been replaced by the 'physical'.**

I have seen some musicians who move from church to church just to get **a chance to 'perform on the centre stage' rather for than an 'attitude to worship'**. Many of these song leaders when they are on stage, show that they are so happy, cracking jokes and laughing, giving the impression that they can't contain their joy, but visit them on a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday and you'll see that there is no joy in them, **that's not true Joy**. You see there is **lot of superficiality** that has crept into the Christian Worship.

I was told that Christian Music is a very big business today especially in the U.S. The ones behind the production of these Christian Worship songs are all not necessarily Christians. At times the Script writer may be a believer but the musicians and vocalist may not necessarily be believers.

Today we have professional teams (going around) encouraging Churches to have Workshops in Training the Church to Worship. Just a thought, since when did we need to be trained how to worship God, and is it not a heart thing, between man and



God and the Spirit of God which leads us to worship?

The Lord Jesus had already rightly made this observation on **'Worship' in Matthew 15:7-9** <sup>7</sup> *Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: <sup>8</sup> 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honour Me with their lips, **But their heart is far from Me. <sup>9</sup> And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'** "*

### ❖ **The New age snare of Christian Holy Pilgrim Trips:**

Another New snare which has crept in of late and is growing is, the Holy pilgrim trips to Jerusalem! I myself would like to go there as a matter of interest (if it comes my way). But unfortunately when I hear believers saying 'We are saving our money to go for the Holy Land trip' **as if by going there they get sanctified**, it pains me.

The funny thing is when you go down there depending on what denomination and faith you are from, the stories and locations will change. If you are catholic, then they will tell you about places and stories of Mary. One person returns from such trips and gets a wood chip and says that it is part of the Lord Jesus's crucifix. I wonder how many crosses they think the Lord died on, for every visitor to get a portion of the cross.

A Hindu convert friend of mine, who was very disheartened, told me one day "I sometimes wonder why I came from my Hindu faith to see that the major things are the same in Christianity:

1. We had our Gurus in Hinduism and I see Christians have their Pastors as Gurus.
2. We had our holy pilgrim trips, and I see Christians have their holy land trips too.
3. We had our holy water from our holy rivers; and I see Christians have their holy Jordan water."

When the Samaritan woman approached the Lord Jesus in knowing he was a Jew what was the first thing the Samaritan woman remarked?

Look at the Scriptures below as in **John 4:20-21, 23-24** spoken then by the Lord Jesus:

***"You people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship"***

*"Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain **not in Jerusalem** will you worship the Father"*

*"But the hour is coming, and now is, **when the true worshipers** will worship the Father **in spirit and truth**; **for such people** the Father **seeks to be worshipers**".*

What would the Lord Jesus be thinking of us Christian Believers today? When He realised at that time itself, that Jerusalem was like a stigma for His people and was being made into an Idol and declared that in future 'TRUE WORSHIPERS' will worship God the Father in 'Spirit and Truth'. So are we Christians behaving as TRUE WORSHIPERS? Are we denying and defying what our Master and our Lord God Jesus said that 'true worshipers' ought to worship in '**Spirit and Truth**' and not in '**Jerusalem**'? As New Testament Believers rather than our faith being Spiritual are we again looking backwards at the physical again?

**You see when a snare starts it will start very seemingly harmless**, in fact it would seem good to us, making sense to most minds, as the original sin seemed to eve in the garden of Eden. When we Christians should be really looking at the '**New Jerusalem**' coming down from heaven (**Revelation 21:1-3**), we Christians are slipping backwards. We want to be second to none (as many other world faiths have their holy pilgrim trips) we Christians also want to have and do the same things as the other faiths around us have. The Israelites nation repeatedly fell into the temptation of the pagan practices of their surrounding neighbouring nations rubbing upon them, provoking God to anger.

This last day's snare has suddenly slipped into Christianity and is growing rapidly. Today leave alone the travel agents having a field day in their financial business graphs soaring high, with this flood of Christian believers wanting to make a bee line to Jerusalem, added to that Churches, prayer groups, Christian bulletin advertisements and even Pulpit announcements are all full of promoting this new bug (snare) of 'The Holy Pilgrim Trip' to Jerusalem!

Beloved of Christ, to the Lord Jesus the physical (no more) means nothing! If that is true, would He want us to engage with the physical in whatever manner with whatever noble or religious intentions? You see when His disciples were getting impressed with the physical things around them even the very Temple in Jerusalem, what did the Lord tell them?

**Matthew 24:1-2**

*'Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple.*

*<sup>2</sup> And Jesus said to them,*

***"Do you not see all these things?"***

*Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."*

**Again what does 2 Corinthians 5:15-17 tell us about our attitude on the physical?**

*<sup>15</sup> and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves,*

*but for Him who died for them and rose again.*

***<sup>16</sup> Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh.***

*Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. <sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he*

*is a new creation; **old things have passed away;***

*behold, all things have become new.*

The sad part also is, that these conversations of 'Holy Pilgrim Trip Agendas' is made in the midst of Christians who are financially constrained far from even consider such trips. Some who are barely able to make ends meet and at times some even to keep food on the table!

When this conversation goes around it makes those Christians to feel inadequate, wondering 'if that is the way to go, then why doesn't the Lord God really love me too'.

Why are these new fads and 'theories' and 'forms of godliness' coming? That's because the Church has truly come to the Last Days prophecy in **2 Timothy 3:1-9; 4:1-4** who have a form of godliness but deny His power. The question is, would the Lord repeat His words at His Second Advent '**You have made my Father's house a den of thief**'? Would the prophetic words found in Epistles be fulfilled upon some of us Believers, who are the sons of God, but disobedient sons to His Word?

**Ephesians 5:6**

<sup>6</sup> *Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things **the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.***

❖ **Last days snares of eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage:**

*The Lord Jesus very specifically prophesied in – **Matthew 24:37-39**:*

<sup>37</sup> *But **as the days of Noah** were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. <sup>38</sup> For as in the days before the flood, **they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup> and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.***

Look around us of what our world today is predominantly caught up with; that is starting from our personal world around us to the business world, our social gatherings and advertisement world?

Two things as the Lord specifically prophesied - '**eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage**' hogs the lime light today from the advertisement world to the T.V shows to Internet, to our everyday top of the list conversations. Right from Multi-cuisine to culinary arts to catering courses, graduating Master Chefs etc. '**Eating and drinking**' truly is occupying our minds and has come to become the new age god to many. The other one being is

**'Marrying'** and as the plural word rightly describes it, divorces has become like a fad or a hobby and multiple marriages have become a matter of fact.

Sad to say this is disheartening as we see this in the world around us but even more when Christians have bitten into this.

I know of a Christian couple who found each other from one of the 'Marriage Sites'. Unfortunately the husband is still struggling (when I last heard of) to come out of the snare as he continues to pose as a eligible bachelor to engage into various conversations with other single girls, for it has now become like an addiction to him.

A friend of mine was narrating that the senior Pastor of his church asked his co-pastors to stand up with their spouses for something, as they saw the co-pastors of that church, they realised that more than half of the co-pastors were divorcees. I wonder since when did God's word stop having relevance to us **1 Timothy 3:2 says** '*A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behaviour, hospitable, able to teach*'. I do not know (leave alone teach) what example we are having on the congregation. Some Christians are so excited and busy match making the moment they get a sniff if any marriage is on the rocks, making no time quickly proposing other prospects.

I can only say that the wise will **take heed and be prepared** knowing all this is a clear pointer of the Lord's imminent return, as we see the Lord's prophecy coming to pass of this as in **Matthew 24:37-39** mentioned earlier.

#### ❖ **Snares of Modern Bible Translations:**

In the last 30-40 odd years there have been so many new modern Translations of the Bible. It is obviously the work of Satan who is trying his best to water down the Word of God in the name of 'easy to read modern day English translation' robbing many biblical truths and the very power of God's Holy Word, in the process. Not only is this a clear sacrilege as per God's Word in **Revelation 22:18-19**. The sad part is when there is only a countable few who read the Word of God, many are seen now reading these watered down

versions. Unfortunately in these versions there are additions and deletions to the Original Translation which is left in the hands of (man's) the translator's interpretation of what they think the passage means rather than giving the reader the scripture as it is from the original tongue and allowing only the Holy Spirit to interpret it for the readers (as it was meant to be).

I am burdened to list some of the safe English Translated Bibles for you to stay with to the best of my understanding.

They are namely the 'King James Version', 'New King James Version', 'Revised Standard Version', 'New Revised Standard Version', 'American Standard Version', 'New American Standard Version' and if you really do want an easy to read Translation which does not alter the Word of God is the 'The Living Translation' or 'New Living Translation'. Kindly note the above are recommended ones for the English Bibles. As mentioned and as far as the other languages, if I were you; I would stick to only those Translations which come from the Authorised King James Version or New King James Version. For, I am told that the vernacular language bible translations are also getting quickly diluted in the name of bringing simpler vernacular translations.

❖ **Snares of relating Holy Biblical Scriptures with others:**

**In the name of spreading the Gospel we at times make Bridges beyond God's Boundary:** When the rich young man rejected the Word of Christ Jesus, the Lord did not go running behind him to make a bridge to somehow bring Him back, but left him with the Truth and his free will. In fact the Lord asked His Disciples also to dust their feet from those who reject the simplicity of the True Gospel.

Today in the name of reaching the Gospel to the world around and in wanting to be culturally relevant, we cross boundaries beyond which the Lord God has laid for His people. One of them is sharing a similarity between the sacred Biblical Holy Scriptures with scriptures of other Faiths. I understand the origins could have

well been from the Bible and in knowing also we all came from the Adam and Eve and stories of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would have spread far and wide. Making a small bridge to start a conversation, in my opinion is OK. But beloved of Christ, I believe there is a thin line between just a bridge to comparing apple to apple of what Satan has taken and twisted, which is like calling 'the Profane' – 'Holy'.

We need (be sensitive to the Holy Spirit) to first check with the Lord God, if He is pleased with that approach, even if it is getting the numbers for the sake of conversions. For God was and never will be tickled with numbers – He looks at faithful believers who come to Him from the Truth of the Gospel in its simplicity and worship Him in Spirit and Truth.

I have a friend who was once a very committed Christian but now has gone that way to the extent that he now has the idols and symbols of another faith displayed in his office. He says that would help him make that bridge to relate the Gospel of Christ.

You see at times at the cost of those bridges we make **ungodly things to be as godly, profane things to look as if it were Sacred and unholy** things (which are detestable to the Lord God) as though **related to Holiness**.

Take for example, there are so many Christian break away Cults and which obviously have so much similarity to our faith and the Bible (In fact it's difficult for a lay person to tell between their distorted bible and ours). But do we make a bridge telling them how similar their distorted bible is to ours? Or their distorted faith is to ours? In those cases aren't we rather bold to say how Satan has taken the Truth and distorted the Truth – **Right?** Or it is like someone relating binge drinking, which is clearly a sin, to saying it is okay as the origins are from Noah's time?

To the Lord God, 99% truth is not the Truth, however holy it may sound to be. Remember the devil deflected the truth slightly to Eve and she and Adam fell for it! We read in Leviticus that Aaron's

sons were immediately devoured by fire sent from the Lord, when they slightly changed the 'sacred fire' that was commanded, for sacrifice.

**Leviticus 10:1-3, 10-11**

*Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer **and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord**, which He had not commanded them.*

<sup>2</sup> *So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.* <sup>3</sup> *And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the Lord spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me, I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.'" So Aaron held his peace. <sup>10</sup> **that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean,** <sup>11</sup> and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord has spoken to them by the hand of Moses."*

A lot of new age things are coming up (which were not there before) and we should be very careful to walk in unknown territories without consulting the Lord (which may look as the latest Christian fad) lest we are devoured by His fire at His Appearing.

**The Bible says in Deuteronomy 7:25-26**

<sup>25</sup> *You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to the Lord your God. <sup>26</sup> Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is an accursed thing.*

**and in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18** the Bible says "...And what accord has Christ with Belial? ..." ".....And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? ....." ".....And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you....." **In other words we should stay away and not mingle the holy with the unholy.**

When Apostle Paul said in **Romans 1:16** "I am not ashamed of the Gospel for it is the POWER OF GOD" Paul meant that the



GOSPEL is the "Power" of God in its simplicity however foolish it sounds to those who were perishing!

**1 Corinthians 1:17-18 says:**

*<sup>17</sup> For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. <sup>18</sup> For the **message of the cross** is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*

Beloved of Christ, stick to the simple but powerful Gospel of Christ and you will never go wrong and you will be sure to be in the favour of our Lord God.

❖ **Snares of T. V. Churches:**

Another New Age Church is the Church from the comforts of your drawing or living room in your very homes. I am told what it means is, since life is so busy, people justify themselves by hooking up their T. V's and 'direct to Net' Flat Screens to these Christian Broadcast, choosing between speakers who speaks things to suit their itching ears.

**2 Timothy 4:3 rightly prophesied**

*'The time will come when  
they will not endure sound doctrine  
but wanting to have their **ears tickled** they  
**will accumulate for themselves teachers**  
in accordance to their own desires  
and will turn away their ears  
from the Truth and will turn aside to myths.'*

This snare results in making us Christians, islands of our own and killing the spirit of fellowship of believers, which is vital for Christian Life.

❖ **Snares of praying, praising and worshiping the Holy Spirit, leaving the Lord Jesus and the Lord God:**

Many in the modern church apply a short cut method by praying to the Holy Spirit, thinking that would be quicker and faster approach to resolve their problems. Remember any deviation from God's biblical word, is walking on thin ice.

You see all snares thus far, have made its bee line into the Church, and are mainly because of the lack of sound biblical knowledge. One result of which is seen, by separating the Holy Trinity, by only Jehovah, only Jesus Christ and now only the Holy Spirit.

The beginnings of all snares start very harmlessly, like prompting us to start praying and praising the Holy Spirit. Now let's study if that is biblical however harmless it may sound.

**The Lord Jesus said in John 16:23:**

*".....Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you **ask the Father in My name** He will give you."*

**The Lord again in John 14:14 said:**

*"If you **ask anything in My name**, I will do it."*

Nowhere in the Bible have I seen where it says '*Ask the Father in the Holy Spirit's name*'. Neither have I seen it anywhere written '*Ask the Holy Spirit anything*'. You know why? For, the moment we start asking and talking to the Holy Spirit separately, I believe that in our very mind we have already separated the Lord Jesus from His very own Spirit.

**Our alarm bells go off, when we see break away cults saying only Jehovah, so why does it not need to go off when we start tilting only to one God Head of the Trinity too?** For, the Holy Spirit is nothing but the Lord Jesus' very Spirit, which the Lord Jesus left behind for us - **Right?** The role of the HIS Holy Spirit is very clearly laid

down by the Lord Jesus Himself as said in:

**John 14:26**

But **the Helper**, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He **will teach** you all things, and **bring to your remembrance** all things that I said to you.

**John 16:12-16**

<sup>12</sup> "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. <sup>13</sup> However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will **guide you** into all truth; **for He will not speak on His own authority**, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will **tell you things to come**.<sup>14</sup> He **will glorify Me**, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. <sup>15</sup> All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that **He will take of Mine and declare it to you.**

❖ **Snares of placing Pastors/Preachers above God and His Word:**

The Lord Jesus said 'come to Me'. He never said go to so and so. If at all God needs for you to hear it from someone, He will bring that person to you, as in the case of Paul and Ananias as we see in **Acts 9**. You see that the Lord may speak to an obedient believer through several ways; it could be through one's morning bible meditation time or through a Pastor's or Preacher's sermon. **Today we Christians at times reflect the attitude of the Israelites when they were in the desert**, when the Lord God wanted to be their God and King and Priest, they did not want to confront God directly. They told to Moses that they'd rather hear from him than from God.

**Exodus 20:19** "Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; **but let not God speak with us, lest we die.**"

I am not against consulting other fellow believers that are mature in Christ. Be it a Pastor, Preacher, Priest, Bishop or any fellow

believer which is not necessarily wrong. But all I am saying is that we need to have the discernment in knowing the Omniscient all-knowing God knows us and our situation more than any man and if we seek Him, he will surely either talk to us directly from His Word or direct us in His way. There are no short cuts to put someone in a Pedestal to get a quick answer.

Many times we hear God speaking and challenging us to take a step in faith for Him. Unfortunately we fall prey to Satan's (good old ploy) voice in our head '*Did God really say that!*' (rather than trusting God) and asking 'man' who does not sometimes have a clue of our whole background so as to help us **chose God's will** in our life. Invariably the temptation would be to see what is pleasing for the person while giving the advice and that would not necessarily be the Lord God's will.

Added to that there are many wolves in sheep clothing, in these last days, we need to be weary before we are quick to run to prophets and prophetess for counsel, not knowing if that is in God's holy perfect will.

The fall out of not having the knowledge of the Bible (Word of God) which counsels us daily, gets us exposed to apostasies and things that are out of His will.

The warning of getting hooked on to heretic preaching (which has majorly dominated Christians TV Broadcast who point to taking the broad road leading to Hell and never convicting their hearers to godly holy living) is what Apostle John warned us to beware in:

**1 John 2:28**

*And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and **not be ashamed before Him at His coming.***

Prophet Jeremiah's words have truly come to pass today through such false preachers:

**Jeremiah 23:17**

*<sup>17</sup> They continually say to those, who despise Me, 'The Lord has said, "You shall have peace"; And to everyone **who walks according to the dictates of his own heart, they say, 'No evil shall come upon you.'***

Apostle Paul indicated in **1 Thessalonians 5:3** when people start confessing "**Peace and safety**" then destruction will come suddenly like labour pains upon a woman with child and they will not escape.

The Lord grieves at the state of His people today, while the prophecies of Jeremiah have come to pass:

**Jeremiah 8:7**

*<sup>7</sup> "Even the stork in the heavens knows her appointed times; and the turtledove, the swift, and the swallow observe the time of their coming. But My people do not know the judgment of the Lord.*

**Jeremiah 4:22**

*"For My people are foolish, **they have not known Me.** They are silly children, **and they have no understanding.** They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge."*

**Today, when there are so many signs of the coming wrath of God** upon the sons of disobedience, many of us Christians have no discernment of the time and season the World is in today.

The wisest thing for you and me to do would be is to set our house in order without delay, growing in the holy fear of God and getting ready for Christ Jesus' soon coming, not being foolish, carrying on in old unrepentant ways.

Let me end with a Scripture from the Old Testament to edify us as to what the Lord God expects of His people:

**2 Chronicles 15:12-15**

<sup>12</sup> Then they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers **with all their heart and with all their soul;**

<sup>13</sup> and whoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel was to be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman. <sup>14</sup> Then they took an oath before the LORD with a loud voice, with shouting and trumpets and rams' horns.

<sup>15</sup> And all Judah rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and sought Him with all their soul; and He was found by them, and the LORD gave them rest all around.

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# MEDITATING ON GOD'S WORD

*(And not on Man's)*

## Chapter 1

**Dearly beloved of Christ,** before you move on to the next PART of this Book, I would like to stop here for a moment and say; if anyone is feeling a little discouraged or convicted to any of the Truths from the Bible verses shared thus far (or what may follow in this Book) then let me share some encouragement from the verses below:

### **1John 1:7**

*<sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*

### **1John2:1-2**

*My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. <sup>2</sup> And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.*

Now moving on to the Second PART of this book, '**Meditating on God's Word and not man's word**', I want to start by saying **there should be absolutely no compromise** in any believer's daily personal meditation time in God's Awesome Word – The Bible. This is one way a believer can have true Christian discernment between the Truth and Counterfeit.



**Remember when we finally stand  
in front of this 'Great, Mighty and Just' God of ours**  
*it will not matter then - what you or I 'Thought'*  
*neither it would matter - what we were 'Taught'*  
*but all that would matter is - what is Written*  
*Amen!*

**The Jews had a much better hold on their Bible** (by the letter at least) **than us Christians today** in the aspect of knowing what is 'Written in the WORD of God - The Bible'. You see any conversations, arguments or clarifications during the Lord Jesus' earthly time here, were based on always 'What was WRITTEN' in their 'Bible'.

The Lord's Sermon on the Mount and Teachings to the people were all based on what was WRITTEN. The Lord Jesus often made references to what was written. The conversation/s between the Lord and the Pharisees or for that matter between the Lord and the Devil were based on what is WRITTEN. 'It is WRITTEN....' 'It is also WRITTEN....'!

The Lord grieves that even though He has given His WRITTEN WORD for us to read, many of us only hear His word as passed down from man. Think about it, **if it was 'only to hear' the Word of God**, God would not in the first place come down from His Heavenly Abode, upon Mount Sinai to Write with His very finger the 10 Commandments. He could have just spoken it to Moses and asked him to pass His Message down to all. No but the all-knowing God knows what His WRITTEN HOLY WORD can do when people read it.

Unfortunately today the preacher is honoured and sought after by believers, more than God's 'Holy and Awesome written Word'. The preacher is heard way more than God directly, (Who can speak to

us directly through our daily reading and meditating on the Word) Why? Firstly because we want short cuts because of sheer laziness rather than taking time out to diligently know God through the reading of Scriptures ourselves. Secondly, cause we fool our own selves or have been fooled to think that God's Word has no more direct bearing, application or relevancy to our daily lives. We think it is only a history book.

I do not know who we are fooling by thinking; that the Bible is only a documented history of things; God spoke through His prophets and later through His Son for the people for that period of time only.

The other theory is the Old Testament was for the Jews and the things spoken in the New Testament was for the Church of those times.

If that is the case, take the simple example of Prophet Isaiah's words, and see for yourself that much of what He spoke was for a fulfilment in the life of Christ our Lord. The New Testament has many of Old Testament prophecies fulfilled right from the Lord Jesus birth, to John the Baptist who was the typification of Elijah to prepare the way for the Messiah (the Lord Jesus) to the various prophecies mentioned in the four Gospels of the fulfilment of the Messiah Jesus first coming. The Lord Jesus himself at one instance acknowledged that what was written in Isaiah was being fulfilled in Him. He saw the dynamic power and relevance to Old Testament in His life as in

**Luke 4:16-21**

<sup>16</sup> *So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. <sup>17</sup> And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:*

<sup>18</sup> *"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me,  
Because He has anointed Me*

*To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken hearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;<sup>19</sup> To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”<sup>20</sup> Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him.<sup>21</sup> And He began to say to them,*  
***“Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”***

It is actually sheer arrogance on our part to say or think that ‘Scripture’ may have had a direct relevance to Christ Jesus life but does not have its relevance to be prophetic to our life! Yet on the other hand we are found so often claiming the various promises of the Old Testament for ourselves without even meeting their conditions. On the other hand, we also admit that there are many end time prophesies to be fulfilled today.

**One of the flaws which have crept in through theology today is,** insisting that every scripture be only understood to its context (I agree the good it brings with understanding it with the context too) but to think that is the only way to understand scripture is to put chains on scripture, with no room for the Spirit to speak prophetically into our current situations through a scripture for what really the Word of God is there for too.

The Lord Jesus quoted only a verse and half of the Old Testament and said that verse was being fulfilled that day. If you read that scripture the Lord Jesus quoted in **Luke 4:17-21**, from Isaiah, at the face of it, it did not connect to any context then, as prophet Isaiah spoke (for it was prophetic). You will notice that when the Lord Jesus was quoting **Isaiah 61:1-2**, the Lord did not even complete quoting Isaiah Chapter 6 verse 2 fully. Why? Because the second part of the same verse in **Isaiah 61:2 which says** ‘And the Day of the Vengeance of our God’ was not a fulfilment at the Lord Jesus ‘First Coming’ but will be fulfilled at Christ Jesus ‘Second Coming’. One day the second part of that verse will be fulfilled and my guess is that it is going to be sooner that you may think.

**You will notice, almost every prophecy in the Old Testament ironically seemed totally out of context** at the time it was spoken, to the time it was actually fulfilled (especially if you study the ones, which were fulfilled in the life of Christ). The prophet suddenly broke out of his line of thought and prophesied.

You see that is the very reason the Theological Jews missed seeing the fulfilment of those scriptures in Christ Jesus. We need to beware to not get too caught up with what theology dictates to our lives, lest history repeats with us Christians and we miss out like the theological Jews.

I believe the Lord God's Holy Word has no limits. It is timeless, it is relevant and it will continue to expound and expand itself into eternity. I also believe that, **God's word has the ability to have its own specific and unique revelation and application to be prophetic** to any specific individual, group or nation or even for the whole world, for a specific time or a given season **and that beloved of Christ is a great mystery.**

That's why it is very disheartening to see today's modern theology is slowly tilting to treat almost the whole Bible as a history book with no bearing on an individual's life. Discouraging the Laity from reading the bible and having a love for God's Holy Word.

When the Lord Jesus himself recognised the words of the prophets of the Old, that were prophetic in His very own life (being very God), we Christians at times limit His very words, (from it being prophetic to our lives (by confessing it was spoken with relevance to the people around His time and at that period of time) thus making Him and His words even less than a prophet. Unfortunately sad to say that some other faiths show more reverence to Christ Jesus our Lord in recognising Him at least as a Prophet, **it is a shame on us Christians!**

All these reasons and more come as impediments which prevent many Christians from reading their Bibles.

This is indeed the Character of God that when His people limit Him and His Holy Word, through their own wisdom and thinking, **He makes them blind and His sacred Word as sealed to all such.** The word of God says *'It is to God's honour to conceal a matter'* but the Bible also says that *'God reveals his secret council to all those who fear Him'*. God reveals His secret things through His Spirit.

**1 Corinthians 2:10-16**

<sup>10</sup> *But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit.*

***For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.***

<sup>11</sup> *For what man knows the things of a man accept the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.*<sup>12</sup> *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.*

<sup>13</sup> *These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*<sup>14</sup> ***But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.***<sup>15</sup> *But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.*<sup>16</sup> *For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.*

The usual misconception is that the 'Parables of Jesus Christ' is to make it easy for the masses to understand but that is quite the opposite to what the Lord Jesus said He spoke parables as we will read below:

**Mark 3:11**

*"And He said to them,  
To you it has been given to know the mystery  
of the kingdom of God;  
**but to those who are outside,**  
all things come in parables".*

Because of this very attitude to the WORD OF GOD it has generated complacent Christians within church. On the other hand the Bible is supposed to be one of the very first line of defence for every Christian as a 'Sword' as we read in Ephesians 6:17.

Some feel the warnings in the Bible are for the unsaved unbelievers and not for us Christians. How foolish can we get, in thinking, that an all wise God would write a set of instructions for unbelieving people who do not believe in Him and would perhaps never read the bible!

Take the example from the New Testament of John the Baptist prophetic words; I believe it was for our generation and not for then when he first spoke it.

*'Make ready the way of the Lord'*

**I believe that those words of John the Baptist's from Luke 3:3-9 were prophetic to our generation.** There are two clues that show that it was prophetic and not meant only for that generation. For there are two phrases he uses which were not fulfilled in that generation but the generation upon whom the ends of age have come:

1. **Luke 3:6** *'All flesh will see the salvation of God'*. All flesh did not see the salvation at that time. All flesh will see at the Lord Jesus' Return as a King, when every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord.
2. **Luke 3:7** *'You brood of vipers who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?'* On the contrary at that time the wrath of the people fell on the Lord Jesus.

Only at the Lord's Second Coming will truly the above two verses will be fulfilled namely 'all flesh see the salvation of God' and 'the wrath of God fall on the disobedient' (Revelation 19:11-15). As the Lord said in **John 3:36** *"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."*

In the Luke 3, John the Baptist ends in **verse 9** saying *"And even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."* **This is precisely what the Lord Jesus said in John 15:4-8** for all believers who are not bearing fruit in their life, become withered

branches ready to be cut from the Vine (Tree) and thrown into Hell fire on Judgement Day.

The Lord Jesus prayer to the Heavenly Father for this for His Disciples was **John 17:17** '*Sanctify them by Your truth. **Your word is truth.***' If we Christians are not reading the '**word**' (and making various excuses in our mind or because of sheer laziness) we will not be sanctified, because it is the '**Word**' that sanctifies us.

A Christian should not do a rushed and ritualistic reading of the Bible, but should read with a hunger to know more and more about this awesome God of the Bible. The Lord said in **Matthew 5:6** '*Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst** for righteousness, for they shall be filled.*' Today we are not filled because not many of us are truly hungry and thirsting after righteousness? And the few who do read His Word daily, unfortunately do a rush, rush job of it.

Many of us believers do not have a daily systematic **personal quite time with the Lord God**. Not only by daily devotionals or notes from a Bible Study groups, (which is good), but we need to have our own study, by systematically reading God's word from Genesis to Revelations.

It is only through that, can we come to a personal and deeper understanding and relationship with God. Seeing that in us, God will start opening His sacred Word to us as never before. God says 'Search me and you will find me'. That is the most important thing that God wants from us which is reflected throughout the Bible.

Do you know the one thing that **the Lord desires and delights in us His chosen people**? It is that we glory that we know HIM.

In **Jeremiah 9:23-24** the Lord God says:

*<sup>23</sup> Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,  
Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the  
rich man glory in his riches;*

***24 But let him who glories glory in this,  
That he understands and knows Me,***

*That I am the Lord, exercising loving kindness,  
judgment, and righteousness in the earth.*

***For in these I delight," says the Lord.***

Yet how many of us are taking time to know HIM for the very purposes the Lord calls us His Children. In spite of many verses ingrained in the Bible of the importance of God's people meditating on His Holy word and commands. Many of us feel time spent listening to Christian speakers is a time spent with God. In fact on the contrary, time spent in front of Christian Broadcast (may be our only time with God we could have had for the day), **which is unfortunately being robbed.**

You see the Lord Jesus did not have any short cuts, of knowing the Word of God. Right from childhood He grew in wisdom and knowledge and lived by it daily. **Luke 2:40** says (NASB) *The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.*

Jesus our Lord spent His wee hours of the morning with His Father and never thought that His outreach and ministry during the Day in anyway substituted His time with God. If you are thinking your ministry is time with God then let me tell you, the old Foe is only fooling you to believe so and do not be surprised that you are growing dry inside without you even realising it. If that is the case I suggest that it's time you take at least a day or two of fasting and prayer with the Lord to get back to an active time of meditation with Lord and His Holy Word, which is non-negotiable for every Christian.

Many of us go from one Christian meeting to another or we switch from one Christian channel to another hearing the Gospel. However the writer of the 'Book of Hebrews' in **Hebrews Chapter 5 and Chapter 6** was grieved that many were stuck at the milk stage in the elementary things wanting their ears to repeatedly hear that 'Jesus loves them' and that 'Jesus died for their sins', but never moving to the stage to start doing things to please the Lord. For we need to first learn to deny ourselves and then be obedient to do



His Will.

**I am led to say, that there seems to be a spirit of Hypocrisy within modern Christianity today.** Our Lord God cannot get fooled by counterfeit love, which has a form of godliness but denies its power. In fact God abhors such kind of hypocrisy. In fact the Bible instructs us to avoid mixing with such believers – **2 Timothy 3:5; 1 Corinthians 5:9-11.**

Many of us play the game along with other Co- Christians. What I mean is that many of us Christians have various hats to wear and there is unfortunately a lot of drama in Christianity. We are able to mimic and express our faith to the atmosphere of the people around us. Our corporate prayer and worship, changes to the Church Group that seems to be around us, conscious of impressing others around us rather than being conscious of pleasing God in the holy fear of Him. The Lord God warns us through His word that **He will be partner to no Hypocrisy or Partiality other than true genuine, faithful and loyal hearted Worshipers.**

**In 2 Chronicles 19:7, 9 says**

*<sup>7</sup> Now therefore, let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take care and do it, for there is **no iniquity** with the LORD our God, no partiality, nor taking of bribes.*

*<sup>9</sup> And he commanded them, saying, "Thus you shall act in the **fear of the Lord, faithfully** and with a **loyal heart:***

There were the same two kinds of God's people that we see through the Old Testament. Many of them followed the broad way going with the flow but there were few who stood their ground and did only what the Lord God was leading them to do.

The Lord Jesus also warned us to beware of the many kinds of Hypocrisy towards God – Matthew 6:1-8, 16. The bottom line is that if we do anything, which is not out of genuine love for man or God, we have really lost the plot.

Therefore the Bible says let your Love be without Hypocrisy –

**Romans 12:9** says

*'Let love be without **hypocrisy**.*

*Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.'*

**1 Peter 2:1-3** says

*Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking,<sup>2</sup> as newborn babes, **desire the pure milk of the word**, that you may grow thereby,<sup>3</sup> if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*

Dearly beloved of Christ, if we truly love God, we need to seek Him wholeheartedly and the best way to, is through seeking Him in His Word – as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. I believe the time we spend on His Word has a relation to how much we love God.

Many theories and heresies are going around today, that beloved of Christ it is all the more vital to read and meditate on God's word ourselves. I believe the maximum conversions to break away Christian Cults are from **Christians who lack biblical knowledge and are often soft targets of such new age heresies, theories and Cults.**

Apostle John fore-warned this through his prophetic words in:

**1 John 2:24-28**

<sup>24</sup> *Therefore let that abide in you*

***which you heard from the beginning.***

*If what you heard from the beginning abides in you,*  
*you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.*

<sup>25</sup> *And this is the promise that He has promised us; **eternal life.***

<sup>26</sup> *These things I have written to you concerning*  
*those who try to deceive you.*

<sup>27</sup> *But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in*  
*you, **and you do not need that anyone teach you;***

***but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things,***  
*and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you,*  
*you will abide in Him.*

<sup>28</sup> *And now, little children,*

***abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.***

**Five things come clear** what we just read in **1 John 2:24-28** and to sum up:

1. **That there is a vital need for believers to hold on to their first love and faith**, when they first came to faith, by responding to the call of God in their hearts, through genuine faith and on that one hope of eternity with God, which took precedence above everything else in their hearts then.
2. **To not flirt with every new theory/doctrine/ teaching** that comes your way which pampers and puffs you up rather than it challenging you from God's Word to lead changed lives.
3. **To hold on to the Truth** of the Gospel, not the counterfeit.
4. **To know that the Holy Spirit is all sufficient to be our teacher.** The Lord Jesus said that the Holy Spirit will guide you into all the Truth and did not say man will guide you to all the Truth (John 16:13)
5. **To be warned of that unless we continue to abide in the Truth** of His Holy Word, we may be caught by surprise at His Appearing.

Apostle Paul in **Galatians 1:11-12** says: <sup>11</sup> *But I make known to you brethren that **the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.*** <sup>12</sup> *For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

**In John 8:34-35  
the Lord said:**

*Jesus answered them,*

*"Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. **And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever.**"*

This particular verse cannot be clearer that a saved sinner needs to then walk in holiness! Today it's sad to say some of us

Christians do not know basic bible truths and still are stuck in various bondages (of addictions, lust, fits of anger, in forgiveness, greed and the like) because we are truly not yet set free.

Today many of us do not know the TRUTH. Why? Cause we do not have a systematic and diligent Bible meditation life.

You see **John 8:36** says '*Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.*' The name '**Jesus**' means '**Saves His people from their sins**' - **Matthew 1:21**. And in no way the name 'Jesus' suggests that 'One Who is accommodating to sin' and neither means 'the One who overlooks sin'.

Today many believers pray for physical healing and deliverance (good) but how many pray for spiritual healing to be set free from the habitual sins in their lives which is paramount to the Lord God and was the very purpose the Lord Jesus came for as we read in:

**Matthew 1:21**

*And she will bring forth a Son,  
and you shall call His name Jesus,  
**for He will save His people from their sins.**"*

The question is, 'are we free from our sin torn lives?' And do we know how we can be set 'Free' from the flesh which tries to keep resurrecting? The Lord Jesus said in John 8:31 that we can only truly be set free **if we continue to abide in Christ's words**. Yes we know the bible says that Jesus is the WORD (John 1:1-3). So the answer is simple that is by reading God's Word daily and then continuing to walk in them.

The Bible is the only Book that every time you open it you meet its Author. The Bible would remain to be like any other history book until you yourself decide to meet with its Author. AND THAT CHOICE IS YOURS AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE.

**The bible is indeed an impeccable and infinite history book, wherein even the worst critic has not been able to question its authenticity.** To top it all, the whole human race has acknowledged its timeline (BC/AD), irrespective of religion or faith. It is unbiased, untampered, and flawless. Above all it is God breathed inspired Word, whose sacred writings are able to give one the wisdom that leads to eternal salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Taking another aspect of the difference in the nitty-gritties of the four Gospels, we see which **in no way negates the major events and truths** which are in common agreement between the four Gospels. In fact they bring credibility to the bible, that neither person who was recording history was staging something or trying to bring a common agreement in its details. Similarly the sins and shortfalls of the heroes of the bibles were not camouflaged or erased from being documented. But rather they were all written in all **'Truth'** (inspired by the Holy Spirit).

**James 1:21** says  
*'...receive with meekness  
**the implanted word,**  
which is able to save your souls.'*

The ploy of Satan is, to keep God's children impotent (*leaving us without the implanted Word of God*) by hindering the reading of God's Word, to keep us ignorant. His hindrances can start with seemingly harmless steps, like leaving our bibles back at home, when we take off for a short break with family and friends, thus slightly deflecting our regular consistent morning bible mediation built over time.

**When we grow weak in God's Word**, Satan then comes and uses the very same scripture, to deflect us from walking in the Narrow Road and tempt us as believers into taking the Broad Road, as he did with the first Adam and tried doing with the second Adam- our very Lord Jesus. But you see our Lord overcame those temptations because of His sustained and rich knowledge of Scripture.

If you become a Christian and do not read your very Holy Book; the Bible **daily**, then may I ask you a question. What do you expect will change you? Won't you continue to be like any other good Non-Christian in the world without knowing and then abiding by the Commands of the Lord in His Word which **leads to Changed Life?**

The reason many of us resist Changed Life even after becoming a Christian is simply because our flesh has a tendency to cling on to the old fallen nature. **We are all well aware in our spirit that God's Holy Word has the Power to Change our Life** and therefore unfortunately realising it may interfere with our very lives, keep it in the back burner (sampling perhaps a wee bit occasionally to wet our taste buds). The experience of seeking God's Word diligently and daily indeed reverses our Life. It changes direction to a 'New Way and Attitude' to everyday Life. Lose contact with the Bible and the old wild weeds start growing back so quickly choking the good tares, eventually slipping us backwards (than forwards), leaving us to again depend on our own goodness and strengths.

The tendency is to shut ourselves from hearing God's Voice. However every time you read the Bible, one of the 'Four Things' is bound to happen: Either God's Word would **'Comfort and Encourage'** you or the Word may challenge you to a **'Command'** which the Lord is opening your eyes to obey or it may **'Convict and Warn'** you or there simply could be a **'Truth'** being revealed to apply to your Life. Resist the Word and you will be left again wallowing alone in miry clay of your problems, frustrated with many unanswered questions.

**Psalm 1** is and will remain to be '**Number 1**' in a Christians Life.

**Psalm 1:1-6**

***Blessed is the man***

*Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;*

***<sup>2</sup> But his delight is in the law of the Lord,***

***And in His law he meditates day and night.***

*<sup>3</sup> He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper. <sup>4</sup> The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away. <sup>5</sup> Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. <sup>6</sup> For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.*

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# Chapter 2

## Pit Falls of ignorance to God's Word!

Scripture says that God's Word is able to save our souls unto Salvation:

### James 1:21-22

<sup>21</sup> *Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness,  
and receive with meekness*

***the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.***

<sup>22</sup> *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving  
yourselves.*

### 1 Peter 2:1-2 (NASB)

**2** *Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy  
and envy and all slander,*

<sup>2</sup> *like newborn babies, **long for the pure milk of the word,**  
so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation*

You see ignorance of God's Word makes us susceptible to man-made Christian Traditions. To give you an idea what chaos can happen when man's word and understanding is added to Christianity. Taking the example of the Christmas season and seeing how it's bearings came from and relating it to the Bible. It may surprise you as I list them below:

1. Firstly there no mention in the bible of the early Church celebrating the day of the Lord's birth, well known as Christmas today.
2. The Birth of Christ Jesus on the day 25 and the month December is questionable (Luke 1:26).



3. There is no mention of '3 Kings' anywhere, they were wise men alright but there is no mention of them being 'kings' or them being 'three' either – Matthew 2:1.
4. The wise men did not visit the Lord Jesus on that day the Shepherd's did, (in the manger), but it was after Mary and Joseph shifted into a house and the Lord Jesus was by then not a babe at that time – Matthew 2:11.

Christmas to most today is a time for Carols, Santa Claus, Flying Reindeer and Mistletoes. The birth of Jesus Christ takes a back seat to these mythological practices and packed shopping malls driven by greed.

We say Jesus is the reason for the season, but is He? Episcopal priest Earl Count relates historical connections between the exchanging of gifts on the 12 days of Christmas and customs originating in ancient pagan Babylon.

Familiar to early Christians was the Saturnalia and ancient Roman festival celebrated during December in honour of Saturn, the god of agriculture. The Roman Saturnalia included drunkenness, debauchery and other practices diametrically opposed to the teachings of Christ. That's why slowly CHRIST- Mas was replaced by X Mas as many call it today with an intention of crossing out CHRIST from the Mas of celebration. In a way it is right, for the Lord was never meant to be part of this mythological festival.

Over time Christians also absorbed German Scandinavian pagan customs of decorating of evergreen trees and the hanging of mistletoe for Christmas.

Throughout its history Christmas has inspired drunken parties, modern holiday packages and convincing children to harass their parents to buy toys and so worshipping Christ becomes bottom of the list, if it is at all He in the list for the very few.

With Santa Claus sponsored by departmental stores, half prices sales, TV commercials, Christmas has become more

about the accountant's bottom line than worshipping God.

**The question may then be, how can we put Jesus Christ into the Christmas season? The answer is plain – He was never part of it to begin with.**

And let me spare you now with the celebration of Easter and man's addition of Easter Bunnies and Easter Eggs.

**You see temptation to add extras to our understanding of God's Word by adding our standard of righteousness to His word can become at times a sacrilege.** The God anointed King Saul, tried to do that and lost his kingdom to the shepherd boy David (1 Samuel 13:8-14).

The Lord Jesus addressed some who questioned Him, on certain clarifications of scripture, said that their premise of scripture itself was faulty, (leave alone the question on it.)

#### **Mark 12:23-25**

*<sup>23</sup> Therefore, in the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife." <sup>24</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "**Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God?** <sup>25</sup> For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.*

We see that some were caught in the same folly in the early Church too after Christ ascension which:

#### **Apostle Paul addresses in Romans 10:1-3**

*Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.<sup>2</sup> For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, **but not according to knowledge.***

*<sup>3</sup> For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, **and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.***

**Apostle Peter addresses in 2 Peter 3:16-17:**

*<sup>16</sup> as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. <sup>17</sup> You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked.*

There is a general temptation when a scripture is not understood to bring out our own interpretation which today is a result of so many various man-made doctrines, denominations and theories within Christendom. Also scripture cannot be institutionalised as a course.

For Scripture needs to be spiritually discerned and no amount of teachers can do it for you or for me for it needs the Holy Spirit to teach and expound it – **1 John 2:25-26.**

**And that is the chaos today, by institutionalising Scripture. For when that happens Scripture tends to lose its power when it's taught through man rather than through the Holy Spirit which it was originally and always meant to be.**

Unfortunately many graduate out of theology with heaps of head knowledge - Logos but with very little Reema (Logos being the written Scripture and Reema being the revelation knowledge of Scripture).

Young budding missionaries, who come first to these seminary schools with fire for the Lord, but just as unfortunate, I am told (and have known many) some leave the faith or some just get used to the pattern to play the game. Often the seminaries institutionalize the spirit in the budding missionaries, dampening if not totally killing the movement of the Holy Spirit's role of being constantly in tune with the Holy Spirit which is vital for righteous living (Romans 8:14).

Theological Institutions gathered momentum just before the Lord Jesus 'First Coming' by churning out religious Pharisees and Sadducees. There were no Seminary Colleges from the time the Law was given to Moses, through the time of David to Solomon or till the Prophets of the Old. It's funny that the Theological Colleges today have rapidly grown and are growing at the Threshold of the Lord Jesus 'Second Coming' and unfortunately the title of a Pastor has become a stamp of acceptance/approval of spiritual superiority, which need not necessarily be so.

Beloved of Christ, we need to wake up to the fact that there were no '**Christian Theological colleges**' during the whole period of the persecuted early church which grew in spirit and power of the Holy Spirit.

**Just as it did not take theology graduates then, but chosen Fishermen, to know only by the power of God that Jesus was the Christ! (Matthew 16: 13-17).** On the other hand the Theologians of that time (with all their head knowledge), rejected Jesus being their Messiah, for what they learnt in seminary did not simply stack up in their little human minds, to the claims that the Lord Jesus was making.

Let me sum up my thoughts on this. I have no issues with Bible Colleges per say (in fact there were some good ones where great men of God like Oswald Chambers lectured) as long as they are viewed as just another humble offshoot in the ministry of Christ, to equip, build and guide budding preachers. However I personally feel it is not necessarily for Evangelist to need seminary, but only a bold heart and eager mouth to proclaim the Gospel.

Apostle Paul said in:

**Galatians 2:6**

*<sup>6</sup> But from those who seemed to be something whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favouritism to no man—  
for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me.*

Paul confessed that His knowledge of God came from the Lord God Himself

**Galatians 1:12**

*<sup>11</sup> But I make known to you, brethren,  
that the gospel which was preached by me  
is not according to man.*

*<sup>12</sup> For I neither received it from man,  
nor was I taught it,  
but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

We need to realise that joining these Bible colleges **in no way should be construed as a spiritual dominance or superiority (institutionalised as a certificate which overpowers/undermines the Holy Spirit's work)** Unfortunately what many (if not most) Bible Colleges have come to be projected and understood as.

I just want to end this Chapter by talking about 'Spiritual Mentors' that many of us have. I believe it grieves God when Christians continue to have 'Spiritual Mentors' all their life. It may be fine when we are young in the Lord but as the Lord takes us to Maturity in our Christian walk we need to be then led by the Holy Spirit.

We need to realise that even a righteous Prophet of God can be wrong at times as we read the case in **1 Chronicles 17:1-4** for after all he is only man at the end of it. King David at different intervals in his life had Prophets sent by God to him with a word from the Lord God. From Prophet Samuel to Prophet Nathan to Prophet Gad, but except for those times, at most other times king David use to inquire of the Lord before he did this or that in his life.

Dearly beloved of Christ, if any of you who are mature still have spiritual mentors that you see and bounce things off as your favourite Guru and who you may run to or refer all your small to big doubts (just because of sheer laziness or impatience for waiting on the Lord to get an answer) in-spite of your years with the Lord then you need to be careful if those Mentors are subtly substituting God's place in your life. If that is the case, like I said earlier, it would be terribly grieving the Lord God. **Romans 8:14** says '*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*' It

does not say 'that as many as led by a spiritual mentors are the sons of God' – Right?

Some of us may not have any spiritual mentors, good! But check if we are grieving God on the other hand, by basking on subtle self-glory of being some ones favourite 'Spiritual Guru'? By failing to encourage that brother or sister in Christ, to seek Him alone and giving God the glory in all things. As John the Baptist told his disciples, 'let me decrease and He increase' encouraging his disciples (Peter, Andrew, James and John) to leave him and follow Christ Jesus the Good Shepard.

**Matthew 23:8-12**

<sup>8</sup> But you do **not be called** 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. <sup>9</sup> Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. <sup>10</sup> And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ.

<sup>11</sup> But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.

<sup>12</sup> And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

# Chapter 3

## 'BUSYNESS' hinders Spiritual Growth!

### **Daniel 12:4**

*"But you, Daniel,*

*shut up the words, and seal the book*

*until the time of the end;*

*many shall run to and fro,*

*and knowledge shall increase. "*

As I touch on this topic, it pains me, to see so many caught up in *running to and fro* with this prophesied '**end time snare**' of being busy.

The *many* mentioned in **Daniel 12:4**, I believe, was not meant for God's people to be caught up with. Put it this way, like the "**many**" mentioned by the Lord Jesus, who would take the '**Broad Road**' was not for the 'True Obedient Disciples'.

This is one of the worst subtle snares crippling our spiritual life and is growing which is hindering the progress of building God's Kingdom. Sad to say along with the world, God's people, are unaware of this snare, and added to that some subtly boast, in them being so busy! (like we see some of the unsaved of the world today boasting in).

**Being busy can be spiritually very damaging.** Today unfortunately I see even retired Christians who get themselves yoked into busyness with some thing or the other, rather than taking this God given season as a beautiful opportunity of being still, to hear from God reflect on things of God and to serve Him where the calls.

**The Lord God at times gives us a spiritual retreat** (His ways are above ours) by a temporal job loss or a decline in business, could be even an illness, all to work a greater purpose of eternity in our lives. Many confess, in the end of that season, that it was so spiritually strengthening and the result was that they drew really close to the Lord God.

Unfortunately during such times there are some on the other hand, who whine and grumble restlessly and shake out those beautiful opportunities of just being still and with Him. Instead they jump back into some other wander lust, no sooner they are out of it.

I have heard, many a times God wants to speak to someone to slow down to listen to Him, if that believer is refusing to, at times He out of His Fatherly love, puts brakes to their busy frenzy by His various ways so as to get **a believers total attention as He speaks and ministers to them One on one.**

In the Lord Jesus' Parable of the 'Great Supper' **the people who missed out** getting into the '**SUPPER**' were the ones **who were caught up with life's busy demands.** Rather than being ready and prepared for the most important Invitation of the 'Great Supper' they missed out with other things in the world taking priority for them and getting in the way.

The Lord Jesus said that those people were not worthy for the 'GREAT SUPPER'.

**Luke 14:16-20**

*<sup>16</sup> Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, <sup>17</sup> and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.'*



<sup>18</sup> *But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have **bought a piece of ground**, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.'* <sup>19</sup> *And another said, 'I have **bought five yoke of oxen**, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.'* <sup>20</sup> *Still another said, '**I have married a wife**, and therefore I cannot come.'*

**The arch enemy of spiritual growth is 'busyness'**, which is generally a result of worldliness (getting caught up with the rush, rush! of daily work chores and social or may be even through so called philanthropic agendas) all at the cost of neglecting our personal quiet time and walk with God. Quality time spent in the quietness of meditating in His word and being still enough to hear His voice and will in our lives cannot and should never be replaced, however novel the cause may seem. When one is busy, one's mind is busy, **becoming insensitive to checks and balances for our spiritual growth**, prompted by the Holy Spirit.

Even though the Lord Jesus had only those three crucial years of His great and awesome ministry for the whole world, He did not fail in taking deliberate steps of time out with His Heavenly Father, from wee hours of the morning, to times through the night, to times of prayer and fasting. Yes, the Lord Jesus never let His very ministry come in between His time with His Father God.

**Busyness is a state of spiritual drunkardness and comes in various snares**, like worries of the world, dissipations, and even through excessive ministerial activity.

With today everything being available which is just at the press of a button we need to all the more make those deliberate attempts to put brakes in our busy lives. It could be by drastically cutting on Social Gatherings times /times on with the TV/times on the COMPUTER/ (even if the above are Christian related), even to the point of being selective to the numerous social invitations or for that matter invitations to share the Word of God.

Starting from the Prophets to the Heroes of Faith of the Old to the Lord Jesus, to Apostle Paul to Apostle John, they **had their most strengthening and effective times when they had their quite times** with God, in the Desert times, times in prison or in remote Islands. Apostle Paul's and Apostle John's Epistles and Letters **were predominantly written during such quite times** which had reached so many churches then and continues to now, all because of such quiet and still times. Often only when you are still, do you hear the most from God!

The Lord Jesus said His coming will be like a **'Thief'** and this warning goes to **all those who are caught up in busyness of life**, not taking time of WAITING and WATCHING their lives. There are predominantly four places in the Bible that says that the Lord's return will be like a 'Thief' - **Matthew 24:23, 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10** and **Revelation 3:3**. Many of us unfortunately err in thinking that the Lord Jesus will come as a thief to His committed disciples too. But that is not True and not reflected in the Bible. For the Lord Jesus will come as Bridegroom to them and not as a thief to the prepared Christian. It is only to those Christians who are spiritually asleep and in spiritual complacency, Christ coming will come to them as a sudden surprise like a Thief.

This is adequately clear in the Word of God (but still many continue to confess He will come as a 'Thief' to us). In a way perhaps yes, for those who confess that, they well may unfortunately experience His coming as a Thief for themselves.

You will see from the Scriptures that follow, that a true committed Christian **will not** be caught by surprise. Let's study the Scripture below so that we take out that cloud from our thinking for good:

**Starting from Matthew 24:37-39 the Lord said**

"But as the days of Noah were,  
so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

<sup>38</sup> For as in the days before the flood,  
they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage,

until the day that Noah entered the ark,  
<sup>39</sup> and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so  
also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”

We know that Noah was not part of ‘They and Them’ as we who are “In Christ”. Verses 42-44 also amply clarifies that we need to be on alert and we do not allow our house to be broken into by a Thief.

**In 1 Thessalonians 5:4-5 we see it says**

*“But you, brethren, are not in darkness,  
so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.*

*<sup>5</sup> You are all sons of light and sons of the day.  
We are not of the night nor of darkness.”*

The above does not need any explanation for God’s word is plain and simple which says, all believers who are walking in the light will not be caught unawares, as the Lord’s coming will be to many.

**Moving on to 2 Peter 3:3-7**

*“Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days,  
walking according to their own lusts, <sup>4</sup> and saying, “Where is the  
promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things  
continue as they were from the beginning of creation.”*

*<sup>5</sup> For this they wilfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens  
were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the  
water, <sup>6</sup> by which the world that then existed perished, being  
flooded with water. <sup>7</sup> But the heavens and the earth which are now  
preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of  
judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”*

Obedient believers are not part of those referred as “they wilfully forget” and it refers to the ungodly. For Noah was not part of that sudden tragedy and he knew precisely from God, the time of the flood, that is - Seven days before the Flood came – **Genesis 7:4.**

Moving on to the last Scripture which says the Lord's coming  
**would be as a Thief,  
but only for 'the un-prepared'  
as we read in Revelation 3:3**

<sup>3</sup> *Remember therefore how you have received and heard;  
hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch,  
I will come upon you as a thief,  
and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.*

Now please study that verse very carefully in the Spirit and you will see a great revelation coming out through it. Let me take you through that. Firstly remember when a revelation comes out, it is actually very plain too (strangely and mysterious as God's Holy Word is). That one letter 'IF' brings out the Truth. It says 'Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.'

**Revelation 3:3** comes to us in simple grammar and there is no rocket science to it. Now understanding it in the positive\_ '**IF I WILL WATCH**' '.....' allow me to fill in the blanks for you '**He will come as a Bridegroom (and not as a Thief) and I will know the hour**' as 'Noah' knew the time just before the flood came – **Genesis 7:4**. Come on! Please let us think a while – Christ is our Bridegroom and not like a Thief to us who are obedient! Right?

**The Lord's Parable of Ten Virgins – Matthew 25:1-11**, further seals the matter, making that adequately clear from that 'Prophetical Parable' that to the Five Wise Virgins, He came as a Bridegroom, they saw Him, the Door was opened for them to go in and the door were shut behind them.

But to the Five Foolish Virgins the Lord came like a Thief, **as one would not see when the Thief is coming and going.**

The Lord was very clear with the parable of the Ten Virgins. You see all the ten Virgins were believers, all proclaimed to love the Lord by showing that they were waiting for Him. But the only difference was that some prepared with 'Good Works' (represented by the oil they took in their flask's) and others just waited with what they already had (in the arrogance of their assurance of salvation).

The Lord Jesus called the first 'Wise' and the second 'Foolish'.

**Matthew 25:11-12**

<sup>11</sup> "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying,

**'Lord, Lord, open to us!'**

<sup>12</sup> But he answered and said,

'Assuredly, I say to you,  
I do not know you.'

*As in the Days of Noah!* The Five Foolish Virgins (of the Church) will be left out banging for the DOOR, to be opened saying 'Lord! Lord! Open up for us!' – **Matthew 25:11-12** (as they might have on the door of the ARK, during the Flood saying, NOAH! NOAH! OPEN THE DOOR NOAH! Noah 'NOW' we 'BELIEVE YOU') – BUT NEVER TO BE OPENED AGAIN!

**Yes the Door was shut!** It was shut on the 5 Foolish Virgins as it was shut on the unrighteous people during Noah's time.

**Genesis 7:1, 7, 15-16**

*Then the Lord said to Noah,*

*"Come into the ark, you and all your household,  
because I have seen that you are righteous before Me  
in this generation.*

<sup>7</sup> *So Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives,  
went into the ark because of the waters of the flood.*

<sup>15</sup> *And they went into the ark to Noah,*

*two by two, of all flesh in which is the breath of life.*

<sup>16</sup> *So those that entered, male and female of all flesh,  
went in as God had commanded him;*

***and the Lord shut him in.***

**Matthew 25:10**

<sup>10</sup> *And while they went to buy,  
the bridegroom came,  
and those who were ready  
went in with him to the wedding;  
**and the door was shut.***

The Lord Jesus also warned one day the Door will be shut on us through the Parable of Ten Virgins and in fact made a specific reference that His Return will be like in the days of Noah as in:

**Matthew 24:37-39**

<sup>37</sup> *But as the days of Noah were,  
so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.  
<sup>38</sup> For as in the days before the flood,  
they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage,  
until the day that Noah entered the ark,  
<sup>39</sup> and did not know  
until the flood came and took them all away,  
**so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.***

Unless we are watchful we will be taken by surprise 'like in the days of Noah'. I need to say this that many Christians are waiting to see some dramatic turn of events before they turn whole hog to the Lord Jesus, but no! it is not going to be like that. Unfortunately when the drama they are looking for unfolds it will be too late, 'like a thief at night' who comes and goes before they can even realise.

**Beloved of Christ the WAY is 'Extremely NARROW' and there are only VERY FEW FAITHFUL** who are entering the eternal heavenly Kingdom– Not my words but the Lord Jesus'.

**Luke 13:24**

*"Strive to enter through the  
**narrow gate,**  
for many, I say to you,  
**will seek to enter**  
and will not be able.*

However today is our chance to strive to enter, especially if we are 'lukewarm in our relationship with Christ', **to open the Door of our hearts for Christ Jesus to come** into our lives and rule over us as 'Master and King' - WHILE HE IS KNOCKING - **before it's too late** and it becomes His turn to shut the Door on us. The Lord gives out that prophetical call to the last days Church, to all His people, in **Revelation 3:15-22**.

The Lord Jesus himself forewarned in **Luke 21, that a state of busyness would come as a snare which in the last days, on all.**

### Golden Prophetic WORDS of CHRIST our LORD

#### **Luke21:34-36 (N5AB)**

<sup>34</sup> *"Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be **weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness** and the **worries of life**, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap;*  
<sup>35</sup> *for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth.* <sup>36</sup> *But keep on the **alert** at all times, **praying** that you may have strength **to escape** all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."*

- Many of us are today **weighed down with dissipation of life.**
- Many of us are today **weighed down with drunkenness of life.**
- Many of us are today **weighed down with the worries of life.**

To many, Life has so much more to offer and as many confess 'My life is just beginning'. The World today has so much to offer to live life to the fullest with ample distractions and attractions. Truly Christ prophetically words has come to pass when He warned put it "*Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be **weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness .....of life***"

The Lord Jesus brings out some other very powerful Truths from **Luke 21** narrate the prophetic words of the Lord Jesus and it comes so timely to the Church today. The only way to counter it is by **'watching** – that is being alert to the snares of being caught up with the things of everyday life' and **'praying** - to not get caught in it' and able to escape to be found worthy to be able to stand before Him at His glorious Appearing.

*The Lord Jesus warned in*

**Luke 21:34-36**

<sup>34</sup> "But **take heed** to yourselves,  
lest your hearts be weighed down  
with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life,  
and that Day come on you unexpectedly.

<sup>35</sup> For it will come as a snare on all  
those who dwell on the face of the whole earth.

<sup>36</sup> **Watch** therefore,  
**and pray always**  
that you may be counted worthy to escape  
all these things that will come to pass  
and **to stand before the Son of Man.**"

- **Watch** – Watch my life, guard my life, guard my thoughts and practice righteousness as 1 John 3:7 says. Watch for those who are coming in wolves clothing and pointing to deny Christ by denying His commands. Watch that I continue to read God's word and then continue to live it. A big part of Watching is also watching of the fulfilment of 'signs' of His imminent return.
- **Pray** – Praying that the Lord will give me strength daily. To deny my flesh, deny my will, deny my desires, deny my wisdom and pick up the cross of His will, by growing in His Word in gentleness, kindness and humility as Christ who has called me to learn from Him – Matthew 11:29.



'Praying always' meaning at all times in all occasions, seeking His grace and guidance more so in today's crooked and perverse world, to be able to stand tall for Jesus our Lord. Praying that God gives us the strength to be an overcomer not causality to the system, culture and peer pressure that surrounds us.

Today unless you and I fulfil all the above cautions and commands of the Lord Jesus especially (<sup>36</sup> ***Watch therefore, and pray always***) the drunkardness and dissipation of daily snares and worries of life will subtly overtake us. We would be at the risk of being left outside banging the Door saying, Lord! Lord! open the Door for us! Think about it, if such was not necessary for a believer would the Lord Jesus wait His time giving out this warning?

The Day of His Return is soon coming and its coming will be sudden, like a trap – like a Thief to many. For it says the snares will come upon all – that is you and me – all who live on the face of the earth. The question really rests on - How serious are we going to take those words of Christ Jesus? And are we are going to take the all wise God's way out – by **'Praying and staying Alert'** for the Lord to guard our souls. Or are we going to bury our heads in the sand pretending we never heard or knew those words of Christ and instead cling on to this glittering World enjoying every moment of it?

The Lord Jesus through the whole Chapter of **Luke 21** has opened to us Believers one of the greatest end time prophecies. But towards the end of the Chapter the Lord showed us that as vital as Prophecy is to the Church, **one's personal spiritual preparedness is far greater than just understanding divine prophecies.**

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## Chapter 4

### **'WAITING' on God – is vital and very spiritually strengthening!**

Great people of God through the Bible were strengthened only during times of waiting on the Lord. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Prophets of the old, Paul, John etc. are examples of some such great people who drew their strength of just waiting and being still. Our very Lord Jesus waited patiently for thirty years before starting His ministry (never questioning His Heavenly Father saying that "My time is running out").

**Today how many have the time to inquire and then wait on the Lord to take those minor and major decisions?** That seems unfortunately too old fashioned, yet negligence of this has become the result of great pits falls in our spiritual life. And even the few who wait, often give the Lord a deadline.

You may read and be strengthened by what the Bible instructs every Believer as in **Romans 12:12; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Ephesians 6:18; 1Peter 1:13; 1 Peter 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8**. All these are commands on every obedient believer. Yet how many know and follow it through. That's why God's Word in the Bible rightly says '*My people perish because of lack of knowledge*'.

Apart from the above Scripture, verses below may encourage you that the Lord wants you and me **to be still so as to be able to hear from God**

- **Proverbs 8:34** *'Blessed is the man who listens to me, Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at the posts of my doors.'*
- **Isaiah 30:15** <sup>15</sup> *'For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: "In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." But you would not'*
- **Isaiah 40:31** <sup>31</sup> *But **those who wait on the Lord** shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.*
- **Matthew 11:28-29** <sup>28</sup> *Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, **and I will give you rest.*** <sup>29</sup> *Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, **and you will find rest for your souls.***

Today are you and I willing to wait His time? When the Bible says 'He makes things beautiful in His time (not ours)', we at times mess it up and land up without the best, just because we did not wait His time.

Let's not apply our wisdom and go for what looks good in our eyes when we come to cross roads. That was the first folly of mankind as we read in the book of Genesis.

**Genesis 3:6**

*So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that **it was pleasant to the eyes**, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.*

**Proverbs 16:25 says:** *'There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.'*

When the nearby neighbouring Gibeonites saw that Israel was a mighty army more mightier than them, the bible says they acted craftily with a plan to send some of their people to Joshua to pose as if they were from a distant land by wearing torn clothes, worn out sandals and carrying old wineskins, to pretend that they had travelled from a far of country. Joshua and all Israel fell for their story and believed what their eyes saw.

**Joshua 9:14-16** <sup>14</sup>*Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; **but they did not ask counsel of the Lord**.* <sup>15</sup>*So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them.* <sup>16</sup>*And it happened at the end of three days, after they had made a covenant with them that they heard that they were their neighbours who dwelt near them."*

The reason I have just taken those three biblical scriptures above from Genesis, Proverbs and Joshua, is to show us that **we as children of God need to always check with God before we take major or minor decisions to the Lord**, be it choosing our career options, our life partner, our homes, our transfers, even in inviting visiting pastors to our church (without first checking their doctrine), choosing our ministry, to the shows we see, the games we play, the music we hear, the friends we have, and so on, (*any of which mind you, could be the reason of the beginning, of a downward spiral in our Christian lives*).

**Waiting on the Lord is so vital in our Christian walk**, (though being challenging). The Lord God grieves that many of His people today,

do not know the importance of waiting and inquiring of Him.

**Isaiah 40:30-31**

*<sup>30</sup> Even the youths shall faint and be weary,  
And the young men shall utterly fall,*

*<sup>31</sup> **But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength;**  
They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not  
be weary, They shall walk and not faint.*

You see the bible says, God has a plan for each one of us, a plan to prosper us and not to harm us but to give us a hope and a future. But God's plans for us are never short sighted as we are. He always has the factor of Eternity and His kingdom in mind.

I was thinking, if the Lord Jesus had told the Father in the garden of Gethsemane saying, "Father, 'Your Will seems a bit too difficult and I also feel that if I stay back and spread the Gospel a little more which has just started gaining its momentum and whilst I do that I can train my Disciples and equip them a little more as they still are infants to go to face the world. Therefore please let my Will and not 'Your Will' be done". In the process of saying that, if the Lord Jesus did not go to the Cross, can you imagine what would have happened? Eternal death would have continued upon the whole mankind through the first Adam. God's salvation plan for the world would have closed forever and you and I would be burning in hell saying if only the Lord Jesus did the Father's Will and not His.

**Yet we dare think** that we would get away and stand on that Day before Christ, **having failed in doing HIS PREORDAINED 'Will and Plan'** for our lives (Ephesians 2:10; Psalms 139:15-16). Trying to appeal to God (having failed) saying "Lord! Lord! I did this and that in your name which I thought in my wisdom it made perfect sense at that time". Christ who was very God struggled and wrestled with doing God's Will, yet humbled Himself in doing His Father's Will,

as an example for us.

**Isaiah 30:21 says**

*'Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "**This is the way, walk in it,**" Whenever you turn to the right hand Or whenever you turn to the left.'*

Apostle Paul qualified Isaiah 30:21 in **Romans 8:14** *'For as many as are **led by the Spirit** of God, these are sons of God.'*

Unless your life and my life, is being led by the Spirit, we may be in for a big surprise, at the end of our life – **Matthew 7:21-24**.

**The Lord Jesus rightly prophesied  
in Luke 18:8**

*"I tell you that He will avenge them speedily.  
Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes,  
**will He really find**  
**faith**  
**on the earth?"***

Be aware that, **mere head knowledge of the Bible** does not automatically result in the formation of **Christian character**.

**2 Peter 1: 10** says we need to '**practice**' what we learn from scripture and **verse 11** says *'For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ'*. Because as **James 2:14 and 17** says that faith without works (practice) is dead and that faith by itself cannot save us.

As I conclude the 'Second Part' of this Book – '**Meditating on God's Word – Not Man's**' I want us Christians to remember that in the annals of Church history, the dark era which essentially refers to **a time when God's Word was chained to the pulpit**. It was only

when the Scripture was given the rightful place, reformation broke out and people were set free from the shackles of formal religion.

Beloved of Christ, today it's a different story; today we have the freedom of reading God's Holy awesome Word.

So as we conclude this section **can I urge you** (in Christian love), to start from today reading your Holy Bible, systematically (year after year) meditating on it (*Day and Night*) **from Genesis to Revelation** – till Christ appearing or till you go to be with the Lord?

As someone said, it takes at least **one hour** of daily meditating on God's Word, to keep our old sinful flesh from resurrecting.

If you are having trouble establishing a time with God, I suggest that you can at least start with even five minutes (for starters) and you will see for yourself where that leads you. I believe that the Lord God will want you to start by **spending five minutes in reading His Word systematically daily, rather than no time at all.**

*May the Word of Christ  
dwell in you richly  
in all wisdom!*





# TRIALS AND SUFFERINGS

*(In a Believer's Life)*

## Chapter 1

Prophesying about the Lord Jesus  
'The Messiah'

**Isaiah 53:3** says:

<sup>3</sup> He is

***despised and rejected***

*by men,*

a ***Man of sorrows***

and ***acquainted with grief.***

*And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him;*

*He was despised,*

*and we did not esteem Him.*

What generally comes to the mind of a common believer, when we think of the attributes of our Lord Jesus? *Prince of Peace, Redeemer, Our Rock, Our Shield, Almighty God, Good Shepherd*, but seldom does the attribute of a '**Suffering Servant**' come to our mind. **Isaiah 53:3** brings some of the attributes of the 'Suffering Servant' as we just read above.

The subject 'Christian Sufferings and Christian Persecutions' is not only neglected but unfortunately has been distorted, misinterpreted and misrepresented by many in both the laity and clergy.

I suggest you stop to take a deep breath before you embark on this very important section of the book. The Bible says:

*Yes, and all who desire to live godly  
in Christ Jesus  
will suffer persecution'*  
**2 Timothy 3:12**

It does not say, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus 'may suffer', but it says 'will suffer'.

The Lord Jesus said in:

**Matthew 11:29**  
*Take My yoke upon you  
and learn from Me,  
for I am **gentle** (**humble** NASB)  
and **lowly** (**meek** NASB) in heart,  
and you will **find rest for your souls**.*

It only recently dawned on me that when the Lord Jesus said 'learn from Me' and then spoke about His two attributes, I came to realise then that all the trials that the Lord God allows in a believer's life is predominantly to bring them to have those 'Two Attributes' of Christ namely '**gentle/humbleness**' and '**lowly/meekness**'. To put it in a nutshell, that beloved of Christ is the true meaning of being – CHRISTLIKE!

To grow in humility and meekness is top of the list for the Lord in a saved believer's life and at the end of it, as Christ promised we will 'find rest for our souls', provided if we are found with them – Matthew 11:29.

It is through these very sufferings, trials and testings that we get refined, spotless, blameless and prepared and **fit to be His legitimate children into Eternity – 'Find rest for our souls'**. The will

of God for every believer is to take his/her heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh, to humble us and make us Christ like.

The book of Hebrews brings out, **the amazing humility of Christ** and shows us how our very Lord himself learned obedience

**Hebrews 5:8-9:**

*<sup>8</sup> Though He was a Son,  
**yet He learned obedience**  
by the things  
**which He suffered.***

*<sup>9</sup> And having been perfected, He became  
the author of eternal salvation to  
**all who obey Him***

Apostle Peter again brings up **Christ sufferings as an example for us** to follow as we read in

**2 Peter 2:3:**

*'For to this you were called,  
because Christ also suffered for us,  
**leaving us an example,**  
that you should follow His steps.'*

Dearly beloved of Christ, what more can one say, God's word is very plain and clear as what we have read above. It's time we stop and examine ourselves as the Word of God encourages us to do in **2 Corinthians 13:5**, asking us if we are really IN CHRIST. Let's search within if we have truly understood the Word of God for us in our lives?

Today many misinterpret the power of scripture and **make it carnal and earthly**. As the disciples did when the Lord Jesus told them – "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees." Because food was top on the list then, they thought among themselves that the Lord was talking about perhaps

the bread that they forgot to bring with them. The Lord then rebuked them asking them to increase their faith and said to understand His Words not with their carnal minds, but that He was talking of them to beware of the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matthew 16:5-12). **Often we misinterpret the 'Power of Scripture' from our carnal perspective and we need to have a paradigm shift to the 'God perspective' of Holy Scripture.**

Take another example of the meaning of 'Healing' which is again one of the most commonly misinterpreted scripture of modern Christianity. Overlooking God's top most desire of it predominantly being spiritual, the stress is today on the physical healing. You will see many so called 'Motivational Speakers' are always stressing on the physical than the spiritual. Even if they make it sound spiritual, they would connote it eventually to your physical well-being and prosperity. **How often do we hear a message on faith to be healed from our sins?**

We need to remember that the **Bible is more spiritual** than physical, **Eternal than temporal!**

*(Yes when we reach our eternal glory there will be no more sorrow, weeping, pain, sickness and even no more death. There will be physical and spiritual blessings in all its fullness)*

**2 Corinthians 4:16-18 says:**

<sup>16</sup> *Therefore we do not lose heart.*

*Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.*

<sup>17</sup> *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment,*

*is working for us a far more exceeding and **eternal weight of glory,***

<sup>18</sup> *while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.*

***For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.***

It is the Lord God's desire that a believer dies to sin and is healed

spiritually, to live righteously for Him, even if it takes momentary affliction to produce that exceeding eternal glory in a believer's life.

Another verse which is not understood in its fullness is:

**1 Peter 2:24-25:**

*<sup>24</sup> Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree,  
that we, having died to sins,  
**might live for righteousness**  
by whose stripes **you were healed**.*

*<sup>25</sup> For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to  
the Shepherd and Overseer (Guardian) **of your souls**.*

Think about it, that **'by His stripes'** He came to heal us from our sins that we **'might live righteously'** as the Bible says. He did not come with an aim to give us perfect bodies, right?

That's why the Lord Jesus told us not to be overly alarmed of the ones who can physically harm the body but rather be careful of souls from perishing - **Matthew 10:28**.

The last few verses we just read give us the right perspective and the strength to face challenges and trials in our life and puts our perspective to suffering in the right order.

I want to stop here and say that we need to know that **'Christian Suffering' is different from 'Christian Persecution'**. 'Christian Persecution' is when a believer stands up for God's 'Word and Will' in their life regardless of what people say, think or do to them. Christian Trial - is when a believer is tested by God and the intention of this testings is to bring out a believer refined, humbler and Christ like.

Both 'Christian suffering' and 'Christian Persecution' **need a spirit of overcoming** on the part of the believer and as the Bible puts it, **'fighting the good fight'**. Sadly as I said, many become casualties rather than overcomers. We become bitter and discouraged in

our faith rather than mature and stronger in faith.

The Lord Jesus addressed this (giving an analogy), saying that the winds and floods of life will slam against the walls of our house but the 'Wise' who are rooted in Christ Word and acting on His Word will be rock steady. On the other hand the 'Foolish' who hears the Word but does not walk or live by the Word of God, will be like sinking sand, when such trials and sufferings come their way –

**Matthew 7:24-28**

Indeed 'persecutions' and 'trials' painful as they are, bring brokenness which is an essential ingredient as we come before our Lord and God, Who says in His Word in **Psalm 51:17 that a broken and a contrite heart He will not despise.**

You see God allows brokenness in our lives in knowing that only brokenness leads a believer to totally surrender to Him. This is also what keeps our flesh from getting hardened with pride.

Sad to say, many of us are so quick to confess that it is Satan who has brought a certain suffering in our lives, not acknowledging the all-powerful Sovereignty of God over our lives.

Instead we need to seek HIM first, asking, "*why did the good Lord God allow this in my life*" or "*what is He trying to tell or teach me through this trial, persecution or difficult experience in my life?*" For, the Lord to remove a trial or a thorn in our flesh or whatever it be, can be overnight if not immediate.

Remember even the Lord Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by God.

**Matthew 4:1 says**

*Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit  
into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.*

When Job was tested, he expressed his gratitude that he was worthy to be tested as we read in:

**Job 7:17-18 Job said:** <sup>7</sup> "What is man, that You should exalt him, that You should set Your heart on him, <sup>18</sup> That You should visit him every morning. And test him every moment?

In many cases if not in most, it is the Lord Who allows sufferings and persecutions in a believer's life, not only to discipline his people (as a loving earthly father would to his legitimate children) but also to test our love, obedience and faithfulness and to refine us like gold and silver. Not my thoughts but as we gather from the Word of God as in:

**Romans 5:3-5 which says**

<sup>3</sup> *And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup> and perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup> Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

The Bible cannot be clearer in the aspect that **godly tribulation and persecutions being part of spiritual sanctification**. I sometimes seriously think which Bible do some of us read, who disagree with this (that is if they are reading the Bible).

**1 Peter 4:12-16 says**

<sup>12</sup> *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; <sup>13</sup> **but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.** <sup>14</sup> If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. <sup>15</sup> But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. <sup>16</sup> **Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not***

*be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.*

So let me ask you, **where is you treasure today?** Is it in the Physical (around you which is soon passing away) or in the things of Eternal? Are you often seen doing His will or yours?

The WAY TO HEAVEN IS INDEED NARROW and at times, it can be like a tight rope walk. But the question is, - Is it worth it? Well, I believe it's worth every bit, when we reach the other side.

**1 Corinthians 2:9**

*°But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,  
Nor have entered into the heart of man  
The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*

The above verse says God has prepared great things *for those who love Him* and the test of "those who love Him" is in their fulfilment of - **John 14:15**. The rest will be at the risk of being cast way as Illegitimate Children.

Are you discouraged in God denying or delaying in answering your request/s today? **Remember God may deny your request but will never disappoint your Trust in Him.**

See the encouragement we get from the following Scriptures, seeing Apostle Paul's attitude to continue to press on to the upward call in the midst of his trials:

**2 Corinthians 7:10**

*"For godly sorrow  
**produces repentance  
leading to salvation,  
not to be regretted;**  
but the sorrow of the world  
produces death."*

**2 Corinthians 12:10 says:**

*<sup>10</sup>Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities,  
in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses,*



*for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

**2 Corinthians 1:3-5,7**

*<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. <sup>5</sup> For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. <sup>7</sup> And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation.*

We need to encourage and remind ourselves strengthened by those verses and also always keeping in mind that the return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ will put an end to all these earthly sufferings and therefore (as the bible says) we eagerly await His return (unfortunately a soon fading attitude with many in today's Church).

Apostle Paul towards the end of His ministry in **2 Timothy 4:7-8** talks of a crown of righteousness waiting not only for him because he had fought the good fight in the midst of his trials, but said it was also for all who have eagerly waited for Christ Jesus' Return.

**2 Timothy 4:7-8**

*<sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race,  
I have kept the faith.*

*<sup>8</sup> Finally, there is laid up for me  
the crown of righteousness,  
which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day,  
and not to me only  
but also to all who have **loved His appearing.***

**Our attitude** towards our Messiah's imminent return will determine our attitude to the present suffering, our priorities our vision, and our motivation to holy living (with hope and without being discouraged).

**Hebrews 12:1-3 says:**

*'Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,<sup>2</sup> looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, **who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross,**  
despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.<sup>3</sup> For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls'*

**And 2 Corinthians 4:7-9 says**

*'But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.  
<sup>8</sup> We are hard-pressed on every side, **yet not crushed;**  
we are perplexed, **but not in despair;**  
<sup>9</sup> persecuted, **but not forsaken;**  
struck down, **but not destroyed'***

What I can learn from the above scriptures is, an obedient Christian may go through situations where he/she is hard pressed, perplexed, persecuted and struck down yet the assurance is that they will not be crushed, in despair, forsaken and not destroyed through all this, for God is Faithful.

Beloved of Christ let me end with a very encouraging Scripture from

**Psalms 34:17**

*Many are the afflictions of the righteous,  
But the Lord delivers him  
out of them all.*



# Chapter 2

## Chosen Vessels of God -PICK UP the CROSS!

**1 Peter 2:21** says  
*'For to this you were called,  
because Christ also suffered for us,  
leaving us an example,  
**that you should follow His steps.'***

When such Scripture verses comes our way, do we say "that those Scriptures do not apply to me and I am not in the 'you' and 'us' of that verse"?

If that is the case then we need to be aware that, it is only the ones who reckon in the 'you and us' of that verse, who are entering the Kingdom of Heaven and the rest are at the cost of missing the bus. **Why do I say that?** Because there is no negotiating with God's word which says in

**1John 5:3**  
*For this is the love of God,  
that we keep His commandments.  
And His commandments  
are not burdensome'.*

**Yes Chosen Vessels – Pick up the Cross and it is not burdensome!**

**Acts 14:22 says**

*Strengthening the souls of the disciples,  
exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying,  
“**We must through many tribulations  
enter the kingdom of God.**”*

Look at Apostle Paul’s faith, even after being stoned and dragged out of the city (Acts 14:19-21), not disheartened in faith, he went out to strengthen and encourage the believers to continue in the Faith. Amazing isn’t it?

Today how often do we hear a message like Apostle Paul encouraging believers, that through many sufferings we enter the Kingdom of God? Up to fifty years back yes, but today.....?

**The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 11:32**

*‘But when we are judged,  
we are chastened by the Lord,  
**that we may not be condemned with the world.’***

When we go through trials and things are going hard and just not falling in place, we need to really first search within seeking the Sovereign God asking Him two things:

1. Lord, is there is any sin in my life that you are chastening me for?
2. Or, Lord is this a trial to test me to raise the bar of my faith, to humble me to Your likeness?

King David often opened himself to God - not hiding himself from God and letting nothing coming in the way between him and Eternity:

**Psalms 139:23-24**

<sup>23</sup> *Search me, O God, and know my heart;  
Try me, and know my anxieties*  
<sup>24</sup> *And see if there is any wicked way in me,  
**And lead me in the way everlasting.’***

**The Eternal Kingdom** was top of the list in David's life and he did not want to miss that at any cost. He would have learnt lessons through the life of Israel and did not want to jeopardise that at any cost. He knew that what God thought of him was more important than what people thought of him.

What is your attitude to His Eternal Kingdom today? In fact the New Testament warns Saved Believers (with Esau's example), not to take their Salvation lightly, who now have their eternal salvation as their birth right given to them as we read in the Book of Hebrews:

**Hebrews 12:14-17:**

*<sup>14</sup> Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:<sup>15</sup> looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; <sup>16</sup> lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birth right. <sup>17</sup> For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.*

The Lord Jesus never forced His 'Discipleship' but laid down the criteria for people to choose. He never puts the cross on our shoulders but expects the obedient and faithful servant to 'Pick up their cross'

**Luke 9:23**

*<sup>23</sup> Then He said to them all,  
**"If anyone desires to come after Me,**  
let him deny himself,  
and **take up his cross daily,**  
and follow Me.*

The Lord then went on to say that those who claim to be true followers and obedient believers **would let go of their lives and entrust it into His hands** (on the contrary we are so good the other

way round, in grasping life with both our hands) as He works His **eternal purposes** in our life.

**Luke 9:24-25**

*<sup>24</sup> For whoever desires to save his life  
**will lose it,**  
but whoever loses his life for My sake  
**will save it.***

*<sup>25</sup> For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world,  
and is himself destroyed or lost?*

**The non-negotiable call** of the Lord Jesus upon every true and faithful Christian as in **Luke 9:23-24:**

- **“let him deny himself”** – No one who is unwilling to deny himself can really legitimately claim to be a true disciple and follower of Jesus Christ.
- **“Take up his cross”** – This reveals the extent of self-denial to the point of death if necessary. It means that a committed follower should be willing not to hold back anything for the love of the Lord.
- **“Loses his life...will save it”** – This at the face of it seems a bit confusing if not paradoxical, but it reveals a very important warning from our Lord, that those who pursue a life of comforts and general acceptance by the world around, will be at the risk of losing eternal life. But on the other hand those who are willing to give up their life for the sake of Christ Jesus and the Gospel will eventually find eternal life for themselves (**Luke 6:22-26; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 John 3:13**).

Today what is the state of the world? The world is running after riches and power, but sadly today the Christians are looking up to them and following their footsteps.

They see the pagans enjoying their wealth, living sinful lives, and nothing really going wrong with their lives. But God who is just, allows at times a pagan to carry on the ways of their like, knowing that he or she will be eventually thrown into a place where the fire is not quenched and the worm does not die. The classic example for

us would be the Lord Jesus' parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

Are you and I Christians also willing to trade riches and name at that cost? So the question really is, that is our love for money over the love for God. The bible says the love of money is the root of all evil. The Lord Jesus wants every true Christian to see and cling on to our 'Eternal Kingdom', through the parable of the man who sold everything he had to buy the field that had the treasure.

**Very soon the world is going to witness the fulfilment of** Prophet Zephaniah's prophecy as in **Zephaniah** and the Lord Jesus' last prophetic recorded words in **Revelation**

#### **Zephaniah 1:7,12-18**

*<sup>7</sup> Be silent in the presence of the Lord God; **For the day of the Lord is at hand**, For the Lord has prepared a sacrifice; He has invited His guests.<sup>12</sup> "And it shall come to pass at that time That I will search Jerusalem with lamps, And punish the men who are settled in complacency, who say in their heart, 'The Lord will not do good, Nor will He do evil.'"<sup>13</sup> Therefore their goods shall become booty, and their houses a desolation. They shall **build houses**, but not inhabit them; They shall **plant vineyards**, but not drink their wine." <sup>14</sup> The great day of the Lord is near; It is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the Lord is bitter; there the mighty men shall cry out.*

*<sup>15</sup> **That day is a day of wrath**, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation, A day of darkness and gloominess, **A day of clouds** and thick darkness, <sup>16</sup> **A day of trumpet and alarm** against the fortified cities And against the high towers. <sup>17</sup> "I will bring distress upon men, And they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord; Their blood shall be poured out like dust, And their flesh like refuse." <sup>18</sup> Neither their **silver nor their gold** shall be able to deliver them In the day of the Lord's wrath; But the whole land shall be devoured By the fire of His jealousy, For He will make speedy riddance Of all those who dwell in the land (Earth).*



**Zephaniah 2:3**

<sup>3</sup> *Seek the Lord, all you meek of the earth, who have upheld His justice. **Seek righteousness, seek humility.** It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the Lord's anger.*

Think about it, if the Lord Jesus who owned the whole universe, came down and lived as an ordinary man and at times did not have a place to lay his head and went through fields to pluck grain for food, we need to check whom are we really following. For we cannot mince words as recorded in

**1 John 2:15-17 says**

<sup>15</sup> *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.***

<sup>16</sup> *For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—  
is not of the Father but is of the world.*

<sup>17</sup> *And the world is passing away, and the lust of it;  
**but he who does the will of God abides forever.***

Do we have the same attitude the Lord Jesus said we should have as the one in His Parable:

**Matthew 13:44**

*“Again, the kingdom of heaven is **like treasure** hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; **and for joy over it** he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field”.*

Christ should be centre stage of our lives today and now. We often forget our very goal post of Christian life (a command too) that is First SEEKING HIS KINGDOM AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS as Christ commanded every believer in **Matthew 6:33** '*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*'

Instead we Christians ignore that command and get so caught up in the everyday things that the pagans are running after (**Matthew 6:32** '*For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly*

*Father knows that you need all these things').*

Today unfortunately many Christians are trying their best to secure their future, building their own kingdom at any cost rather than God's. God is not averse to blessing people; don't get me wrong. The prodigal's son's Father was a very wealthy man, **but if** gaining wealth and pleasure for ourselves like the prodigal son **becomes our sole motto and ambition** then we have understood Christian life upside down. The Bible warns us as in:

**James 5:1-3, 5**

*Come now, you rich,*

*weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you! <sup>2</sup> Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. <sup>3</sup> Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. **You have heaped up treasure in the last days.***

*<sup>5</sup> **You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury;** you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter.*

The prodigal son, is the perfect example of God's grace. When you picture the Lord Jesus' parable of the prodigal son in your mind, do you see an utterly repentant spirit or do you see an arrogant spirit saying my daddy, my papa, who forgave me will be okay with me continuing in unrepentance and unconfessed sins of his/her old ways? The answer is NO! We can never ever picture that prodigal son slipping back to his old ways ever again. **The prodigal son once walked in darkness** but when realisation came to him, I believe he then would have walked the rest of his life, finding out what was pleasing to his father (in every way), **every day**.

**Ephesians 5:8-10 says**

*<sup>8</sup> For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.*

***Walk as children of light***

*<sup>9</sup> (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),*

<sup>10</sup> *finding out* what is acceptable to the Lord.

Prophet Haggai rebuked those running after worldly pursuits abandoning God's will for their lives

**Haggai:3-5**

*Then the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying,  
"Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your panelled houses,  
and this temple to lie in ruins?"*

<sup>5</sup> *Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts:*

***Consider your ways!***

The Father heart of God is always waiting with open arms to the whole world, if we repent and realise that God is calling us to Holy and righteous living. Yes God in His love brings us like the prodigal son, to that point of repentance through situations and circumstances.

The Grace of God should overwhelm us to have changed lives and to live the rest of our lives to please God in everything we do. As Ephesians 5:10 says "<sup>10</sup> *finding out* what is acceptable to the Lord."

The Lord Jesus lived that way –

**John 8:29**

*"And He who sent Me is with Me.*

*The Father has not left Me alone,*

***for I always do those things that please Him."***

Apostle Paul lived that way –

**Galatians 1:10**

*"For do I now persuade men, or God?*

*Or do I seek to please men?*

*For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ."*

And finally, the Bible commands every obedient Believer to live that way too:

**2 Corinthians 5:9**

*'Therefore we make it our aim,  
whether present or absent,  
to be well pleasing to Him.'*

**1 Peter 1:14-17**

<sup>14</sup> *As obedient children,  
not conforming yourselves to the former lusts,  
as in your ignorance;<sup>15</sup> but as He who called you is holy,  
you also be holy in all your conduct,  
<sup>16</sup> because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."  
<sup>17</sup> And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges  
according to each one's work,  
conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear.*

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# Chapter 3

## What does FIRE BAPTISM truly mean?

There is a general misconception and misinterpretation of the phrase 'Fire Baptism' by few.

John the Baptist spoke to his disciples about Jesus the Messiah in

**Matthew 10:11 saying:**

*I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the **Holy Spirit and fire.***

So what is being baptised by the Holy Spirit and Fire? Few think of 'Fire Baptism' as speaking in tongues. But that is unfortunately (with all due respect) an err in our understanding the Word of God which you will see in the Scriptures that follow.

But before I say anything further I would like to clarify few things:

1. I have no doubt that the Gift of Tongues is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in a believers life and is mentioned very clearly in the Bible (**1 Corinthians 12:4-11**).
2. Secondly (as I said earlier) the gifts of God cannot be distributed by man or be earned by man and as the word explains it, it is a 'gift' from God, Who gives it to whomever He desires to (**1 Corinthians 12:28-29**).
3. Thirdly all believers do not necessarily speak in tongues as the Bible is very clear on that too (**1 Corinthians 12:30**). Further it in no way determines a person's spiritual superiority over another in anyway (**1 Corinthians 12:31**).

4. Lastly any gift does not in any way guarantee one's salvation (**Matthew 7:21-23**) rather we need the fruit of the Spirit to continue to abide in the Vine which is paramount in a believer's life (**1 Corinthians 13:1-13**).

Moving on to 'Fire Baptism' the Lord Jesus never referred to this as the gift of Tongues. As you read the three scriptures below wherein the Lord Jesus made references to the words 'Baptism' and 'Fire' it will put a lot of confusion to rest.

The Lord Jesus said in

**Mark 9:49**

*"For everyone will be seasoned with fire,  
and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt."*

**Mark 10:38-39**

<sup>38</sup> *But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and **be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?**"* <sup>39</sup> *They said to Him, "We are able." So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink **the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with** you will be baptized.*

**Luke 12:49-51**

<sup>49</sup> *"I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!"* <sup>50</sup> ***But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am, till it is accomplished!"***

Christ referred to 'Fire' as the next level in sharing in His sufferings for the Lord God's sake. The 'Cup' that the Lord Jesus was referring to was nothing but the Cross. Every Disciple (true to His word) eventually tasted the sufferings of the Cross in their own way.

Let me end with this scripture found in

**Philippians 1:29**

*'For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ  
not only to believe in him,  
**but also to suffer for him'***



# FOOLISH VIRGINS

## Chapter 1

### RELIGIOUS Christian's v's FAITHFUL Christians

Dearly beloved of Christ, before I start this 'Fourth and Final Part' of the book (before 'Conclusion'), **I want to pause here and say** that if some of you are feeling that this book is one sided, talking only about the various warnings and consequences as a result of disobedience to the Lord God's Holy Word (commands and laws) as laid down in the Bible and it does not cover the blessings which the Bible is full of too, it is primary because of three reasons:

- Firstly, the Lord Jesus did not instruct us to teach His blessings (which is evident from His very death and resurrection for us sinners) but rather **instructs us to teach obedience** to His commands, as in Matthew 28:20 '*Teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you*'. For when you obey, the blessings will flow in automatically (you will not miss out, just because you have not claimed it, as some new age teachings ask us to do). Again coming to think about it, **will God hold back a blessing, just because you do not know it**. What you and I really need to know more than anything else is the commands as laid out in the Bible, for fulfilling them will determine our Eternity as the Lord Jesus warned the Church in **Revelation 2:26** and not in knowing the blessings, which is perfect example of putting the Cart before the Horse.



- Secondly, we Christians do not have to be taught about the numerous **blessings of God** as narrated in the Bible. We are so good in claiming the promises of the Bible but seldom fulfilling the conditions of 'if's' and 'but's' in the bible to gain those blessings and promises.
- And lastly, as I earlier mentioned that I am getting a sense in my spirit (as we see the kingdom of God at hand tying up with all what the prophets of the old and with what the Lord Jesus had said about the last days) that **we are in the season of the fulfilment of the Lord's prophetic words** as in Mark 1:15 "*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. **Repent**, and believe in the gospel.*" I believe these words are prophetic words of our Lord Jesus specific for the end times, as a call upon every true Christian believer to start getting their garments cleaned and ready **as 'Wise Virgins'** just before their Bridegroom and Master, Christ Jesus' Return. – Revelation 3:1-6.

The Lord Jesus in His parable of 'Ten Virgins' quoting five were 'Wise' and five were 'Foolish Virgins' said in:

**Matthew 25:1-2, 8-12**

*"Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup> Now **five of them were wise, and five were foolish.** <sup>8</sup> And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' <sup>10</sup> And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, **and those who were ready went in** with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.*

<sup>11</sup> *"Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, '**Lord, Lord, open to us!**' <sup>12</sup> But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'"*

So was the Lord Jesus meaning that there would be 'Wise and 'Foolish' within His Church? **Read more!**

The Lord Jesus in another parable explains who is like a 'Wise Man' and who is like a 'Foolish Man' in:

**Matthew 7:24-25**

<sup>24</sup> "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to **a wise man** who built his house on the rock."

<sup>25</sup> "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, **will be like a foolish man** who built his house on the sand"

What is Jesus our Lord warning us through those Parables? Isn't it plain, that anyone who knows the Lord's Word and commandments and does not follow them are going to find themselves very foolish, at the cost of the Door being shut on their face for Eternity.

As the Lord Jesus said, **'My sheep hear My voice and they follow Me and I know them'**.

Some of us can be very good Believers **but terrible Followers/Disciples**. The Lord Jesus' command in **Matthew 28:19** was - 'Go therefore and make disciples'. Yes the call was to make disciples not believers. Unfortunately many today in the Church there are sadly many **Believers rather than Disciples**. Why? For how many of us today fulfil the Lord's qualifications to be His true disciples as in Luke 9:44?

**Luke 9:44**

*Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.*

**Think about it!** Who do you think were the audience when the Lord Jesus spoke the scripture below?

Luke 13:24-25

*"Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. <sup>25</sup> When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from"*

You see the Lord Jesus was indeed addressing these words to a believer - 'STRIVE TO ENTER'. You see words from the Bible like 'Strive' 'Persevere' 'Overcome' 'Fight the good fight' 'Resist the devil' 'Firm in your Faith' **are all words for the obedient wise believer.**

I noticed the 'Rich young man' who came to the Lord Jesus, actually had some amazing qualities which many of us are still far from.

Further, he had a desire of seeking eternal life. More than any personal need he came to the Lord Jesus to ask the most important question saying "**Good Teacher what shall I do to inherit eternal life**" (Mark 10:17). Mind you he had a lot of wealth but still he had the heart and desire to ask of eternal things (do we have that attitude and priority?). Secondly he fulfilled almost all the major commandments (Mark 10:19-20), do we? In Mark 10:21 we read that the Lord Jesus felt a love for him (seeing that he was a sincere man) **yet pointed out the only one and only idol in his life**, that was coming between him and the Lord - the love for money.

Isn't it so similar with us today, we not only love the Lord God and do so many things to please Him but are not willing to give up/deny the thing/s that the Lord has been asking us to commit or to give up for Him which have become as idols in our life (and it need not be necessarily money).

We are often saddened like that rich man felt (Mark 10:22) when we hear the Holy Spirit speaking to us to give up something for God, that we hold so dearly to our heart. We go about living our lukewarm lives for the Lord, clinging on to the fleeting things of life, this perishing world has to offer, all of which will come as a stench to us on that great and terrible Day of the Lord when we stand before Him, as we realise it's too late when we hear Him calling us FOOLISH! Still we want to burry our head in the sand, like an Ostrich and say, 'No it cannot happen to me'. That's why the Lord's prophetic word to the Church was - WAKE UP! (Please take time to read the following scriptures in - **Zephaniah 1:11-18;**

**Revelation 2:4-7; Revelation 3:11, 15-17).**

The Lord rightly said 'Narrow is the way' to enter the kingdom of God and only 'Few' are entering. Today as I said and I say it again, many of us in the Church are believers indeed, but are we truly followers of Christ Jesus?

As the Lord Jesus himself said, looking at the people who came to follow Him in Mark 10:24

***'How hard it is to enter the kingdom of God'***

Are you thinking those words of the Lord Jesus are not for you, for you are a born again believer? If so, does being a born again mean that the Lord's words like "Difficult" "Narrow" "Hard" and other words the Lord spoke like "Deny yourself" and "Pick up your cross daily" does not really apply to a born again? If not, then who is the Lord Jesus' words applicable to? And are you saying because you are saved, your faith need to have any good works and is that faith is going to save you?

Remember what we read about what the bible said about 'good works' post salvation in **James 2:14, 17** - <sup>14</sup> *What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?* ' <sup>17</sup> *Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

Just before the flood, Noah preached the Word for years, to the people in the land but they did not heed to the Word of God. One day the Flood did come and the Door was shut by God.

If our Christian life is not being lived with fire for the Lord but rather with half foot in the world and half in the Word, there are serious consequences to that complacency.

As I read somewhere, Christians can't expect spiritual growth without stress. Spiritual growth only occurs when we're ready to follow a Master who commands that we radically re-examine the

assumptions of our former ways and attitude to life.

Many Christians unfortunately still walk about in their old ways, like strayed sheep, having their pet sins and old life styles which they do not want to let go of. The question is, do we really want growth? And if not, are we willing to face the righteous Judge who will pay every man according to his deeds? - **Matthew 16:27**.

This even reminds me of Christians who **'express their love for God by exterior sacrifices'** by running from one Gospel meeting to another, from one fellowship meeting to another, from one bible study to another from one crusade to another, listening to one speaker or other, (which is good in itself) but never coming to bring themselves to subjugation with their sins to the foot of the cross and allowing God to change them through daily obedient submission to His Word. For the Lord Jesus's prophecy is fulfilled in them as in:

**Matthew 13:14-15**

*<sup>14</sup> And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; <sup>15</sup> For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, **So that I should heal them.**'*

Prophet Samuel rebuked king Saul in doing things which looked good and noble but failed to obey the Lord's Commands and the result was it costed him his kingdom -

**1 Samuel 15:22-23**

*<sup>22</sup> So Samuel said: "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord? **Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice**, And to heed than the fat of rams. <sup>23</sup> For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king."*

To the Lord God our **'Sacrifices mean nothing'**  
if we Lack Obedience.

**1 Samuel 13:13**

*'And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. For now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever.'*

**Proverbs 21:3**

*To do righteousness and justice  
Is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.*

So let me stop here and ask you what is the thing or things that the Spirit of God is asking you to be obedient to today? And are you being obedient to it? We Christians are experts in having half our foot in the things of the world and other half of our foot in the things of God. But the Lord said in **Revelation 3** that we are neither hot nor cold and He feels like vomiting us out of His mouth.

**Isaiah 1:18-20 says**

<sup>18</sup> *"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the Lord,  
"Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow;  
Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.*

<sup>19</sup> ***If you are willing and obedient,  
You shall eat the good of the land;***

<sup>20</sup> *But if you refuse and rebel,  
You shall be devoured by the sword";  
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.*

**2 Peter 2:20-22 says**

<sup>20</sup> *For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. <sup>21</sup> ***For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.*** <sup>22</sup> *But it has happened to them according to the true proverb:**

"A dog returns to his own vomit,"  
and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."

**Jesus said in Matthew 6:21-25**

*"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and mammon.**"*

Unfortunately many Christians don't realise there is a big dichotomy between the World View and the WORD View. The World view and the KINGDOM view are poles apart.

Many Christians are in a very pitiable situation today

**As Corinthians 15:19 says:**

*'If in this life only we have hope in Christ,  
**we are of all men the most pitiable.'***

**The Lord Jesus said in Luke 9:24**

*'For **whoever desires to save his life will lose it,**  
but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.'*

Sometimes we think Jesus was giving just a beautiful discourse (**or lullaby**) and we often ignore the serious consequences of disobedience to every word that came out of the mouth of the Lord. It has the power of both life and death in them. We should not get confused because of the gentle way He presented them, but realise that it has eternal consequences as He said '**whoever desires to save his life will lose it**'. What the Lord is saying is, if we desire to save our earthly life here we will lose Life Eternal, but if we are willing to lose our earthly life for His sake here, by walking in the NARROW WAYS, then He says, we will gain Life Eternal! Either we **accept His words now or reject it and face the music on that Day into eternity**.

**The people during Noah's days** were caught up in the pleasures and vices of the world (Lot grieved seeing the same around his nation of Sodom and Gomorrah). Scripture in the New Testament also cautions the Church not to be caught up in the pleasures of the

world, through the words of the Lord Jesus, who said that just before 'His Return' such things will come upon the world.

The Lord Jesus warned in **Matthew 24:37-39**

<sup>37</sup> But **as the days of Noah** were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. <sup>38</sup> For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, **until the day** that Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup> and did not know **until the flood came** and took them all away, **so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.**

The reason Lord Jesus takes Noah's **example is only to warn us Christians**, that God's grace does not in any way negate God's standards and demand for holiness in our lives (the misconception many Christians have today)

Below is a very **powerful end time scripture** of what our attitude (high call) should be in these end times as in

### **1 Corinthians 7:29-31**

<sup>29</sup> **But this I say, brethren,  
the time is short,**

*so that from now on even those who have wives  
should be as though they had none,*

<sup>30</sup> *those who weep as though they did not weep,  
those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice,*

*those who buy*

*as though they did not possess,*

<sup>31</sup> *and those who use this world  
as not misusing it.*

***For the form of this world is passing away.'***

What God's Word is saying from the scripture we just read is that in these end times, let's not get overly immersed, passionate in the everyday things of the world, not making much of each other or the things in the world, but to live soberly and alert to the snares around us, by working out our salvation with fear and trembling, to



be found worthy on that great Day which is soon approaching.

**I end with the prophetic words found in**

**Hosea 14:9 says:**

*'Who is wise?*

*Let him understand these things.*

*Who is prudent?*

*Let him know them.*

*For the ways of the Lord are right;*

***The righteous walk in them,***

*But transgressors stumble in them.'*

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# Chapter 2

## SUNDAY AND NOMINAL CHRISTIANS:

If Christians fall in the category, of just being religious Christians, merely holding the flag of the religion, the Bible says that such faith will not save them from the eternal condemnation which God has reserved for the rest of the disobedient in the world.

Today what pains the Lord God is, not so much that we have denominations, but that the Christians in each denomination think that theirs is the only denomination which is making it to heaven. **What is most disheartening is the spiritual superiority amongst denominations** looking down at each other, only because of an absence or an over presence of a doctrine that they are stuck on or averse to.

There is nothing wrong (rather it is very important) to be part of a church predominantly, but to think it is 'MY CHURCH' rather than a 'Church Universal' which is part of the body of Christ, is a concern. Yes there may be some doctrines and traditions which may govern a church, but it is fine as long as it does not override the Written Word/Bible. In the end of it, I believe the Lord God will see the heart of each individual from different denominations, who are truly committed and obeying His commandments daily, and will raise such up on the Last Day.

Though I may be a member of a Church in the city (to which I am committed), I make it a point once in a while to visit other churches and to engage with the body of Christ from different Church denominations, so that I do not become dogmatic to the church I go to. Similarly I make it a point to have friends from various denominations in knowing that we are all part of the body of Christ.

Yes there are cult churches which we all know of and we need to keep far away from them. But having said that, I am as comfortable worshiping in an **Baptist, Uniting, AOG, Presbyterian, Pentecost or Brethren or any such Church Denomination** in the body of Christ. The Lord Jesus' prayer (**in His foresight**) was for us believers to be one, just as He and His Father are One, without any denominational tags.

**Yes the Church is - the Body of Christ, as long as that individual in that Church or Denomination 'believes or teaches' the following:**

- **That the Bible is the inspired, infallible and authoritative Word of God** and comprised of both the Old Testament and the New Testaments (Matthew 5:18). The Bible is God-breathed without error or omission, and is the complete and final authority for faith and practice. (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- **That God is One and the only True Living God, the Creator of all** (Deuteronomy 4:35; 6:4; 32:39; Isaiah 45:14; 46:9; John 1:1-3; John 10:30; 1 Cor8:4-5), who has revealed Himself through - The Holy Trinity - in three distinct Persons—The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:4-6; 1 John 5:7).
- **That they believe in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.** He is God incarnate who came down in human form, the expressed image of the Father, who without ceasing to be God, became man in order that He might demonstrate who God is and provide the means of salvation for humanity (Matthew 1:21; John 1:1-3,18; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15; ). That the Lord Jesus Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit and was born of the virgin Mary; that He was truly fully God and truly fully man; that He lived a perfect, sinless life (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23), died on the cross for all humanity (1 John 2:2) as a substitutionary sacrifice (Isaiah 53:5-6) and His death is sufficient to provide salvation for all who receive Him as Saviour (John 1:12; Acts 4:12; Acts 16:31); that our justification is grounded in the shedding of His blood not by our works but by the grace of God through the finished work of Jesus Christ at the cross (Romans 5:8-9; Ephesians 2:8-9); and

that He rose from the dead (Matthew 28:6; 1 Peter 1:3) and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father (Matthew 26:64, Mark 14:62; Romans 8:34) and is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels and repay every man according to his deeds (Matthew 16:27).

- **That The Holy Spirit is the third deity of God**, Who is our comforter and is all sufficient to teach and guide us into all truth (John 14:26; John 16:13,15; Galatians 1:11-12; 1 John 2:27). The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus Christ and takes from the Lord Jesus Christ and discloses it to us. That the Holy Spirit guides each saved obedient believer to the manifestation of various ministries for common good and distributes spiritual gifts for the same (1 Corinthians 12:1-11).
- **The Church is the Body of Christ** (no particular denomination), is a spiritual organism made up of all believers of this present age (1 Corinthians 12:12-14; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 1:22-23, 4:4, 5:25-27), who believe in the ordinances of believers through water baptism as a testimony to Christ and identification with Him, and the Lord's Supper as a remembrance of Christ's death and shed blood and return of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42, 18:8; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).
- **That Christians have an obligation as per God's command to witness the Gospel** and the truths of God's Word. The gospel of the grace of God is to be preached to the entire world and we all who are disciples of God are part of that great commission which includes teaching them to obey all that the Lord Jesus has commanded (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20).
- **That all true believers should not only believe but earnestly and eagerly desire the return of Jesus Christ** (Titus 2:13; 2 Timothy 4:8), whose coming is imminent (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 22:17,20) and they need to work out their salvation of Grace, with fear and trembling rooted and guided in His Will by His Word, abiding in Him, by the daily meditation/reading of His word the Bible ( Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1-3; Matthew 7:21-27; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27;

Philippians 2:12-13,15-16; Philippians 3:11-15; 2 Timothy 4:7; James 2:14,24; Revelation 3:2-6).

**To the Lord Jesus, a mark of a Christian is one who truly “hungers and thirsts after His righteousness”** (Matthew 5:6). For the Lord said, gaining the whole world means nothing if in the end we lose our soul. To seek first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness above all the rest, is true Christianity. It is not a denominational thing, but it’s a personal decision and attitude of each individual believer. That’s why at the gathering of saints (Rapture as is generally known) as I believe and even as many have seen and testified through dreams and visions, of many “caught up” “gathered” at the Lord’s coming from different churches and many being left behind from the very same churches.

We see the root of all this, is because we Christians are failing to practice to walk in righteousness. The book of Hebrews says, some of us Christians are so fond of our feeding bottles, we do not move on from elementary teachings like, how we were first saved, how Christ died for us, about our baptism experience etc. **but never willing to move to maturity in living obedient lives to the Word and then teaching others to.** It says, unless we decide to live obediently, (seeking God at every step and then walking in them) we would lack discernment, for spiritual discernment is a gift of God, only for the ones who live obedient and righteous lives.

#### **Hebrews 5:11-14**

*<sup>11</sup> of whom we have much to say and hard to explain, **since you have become dull of hearing.** <sup>12</sup> For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to **teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God;** and **you have come to need milk and not solid food.** <sup>13</sup> For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of **righteousness,** for he is a babe. <sup>14</sup> But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use **have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.** (NASB says - But solid food is for the **mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.)***

**And Hebrews 6:2 says**

*Therefore, leaving the discussion of the **elementary principles of Christ**, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, <sup>2</sup> of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.*

Unless we Christians learn to practice righteousness (**putting into practice all that we have learnt**), we Christians will slowly grow dull lacking basic Christian discernment.

The Lord Jesus in **Matthew 13:15** prophesied

*'For the hearts of this people have grown dull.....  
Lest they should understand with their hearts **and turn**,  
so that I should **heal** them.'*

What was the Lord meaning, when He used the word 'turn'? As the psalmist says the heart is desperately wicked. We have so many areas in our lives which needs **healing** and a complete **turnaround**.

And how do we understand when the Lord used the word **'heal'**? Was the Lord concerned of people not yet healed physically, when He used that word **'heal'** or was He referring to **'spiritual healing'**?

**Many times we Christians get mixed up with discernment and judgement** and with the result saying that we should not judge, they accept anything that has a Christian Tag to it. Some Churches and prayer groups also invite anyone to share in their Churches and meetings without taking time to check their doctrine.

You see many of **God's Truths are locked** and only opened to the ones who practice obedience (**John 8:31-32**). The moment you obey, the flash of light of His word and His wisdom comes in. Christian life is about being in right standing with God, at all times, by walking in obedience. Turn away from obedience, and darkness is at work and as the Lord Jesus put it in **Matthew 13:15** leading our hearts to start growing dull and our ears to start becoming hard of

hearing from Him, resulting in death waiting (eternal death) round the corner.

The Lord Jesus giving the '**Parable of the Sower**' said that to the good ground He opens His mysteries and to the hard ground He shuts them up.

**Mark 4:8-9**

*<sup>8</sup> But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty and some a hundred." <sup>9</sup> And He said to them, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"*

*<sup>11</sup> And He said to them, "To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, <sup>12</sup> so that 'Seeing they may see and not perceive, And hearing they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, And their sins be forgiven them.'"*

The '**Sermon on the Mount**' had everything reversed to the 'World View' which the carnal mind would not want. God's Word always referred to those whose hearts are in the riches of the World as fools with serious consequences.

**Luke 12:20-21**

*<sup>20</sup> But God said to him, 'Fool!*

*This night your soul will be required of you;  
then whose will those things be which you have provided?'*

*<sup>21</sup> "So is he who lays up treasure for himself,  
and is not rich toward God*

**James 5:1-3**

*"Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you! <sup>2</sup> Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. <sup>3</sup> Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days.*

*<sup>5</sup> You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury;  
you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter."*

Christ Who owned the whole universe denied himself from using His powers to have the comforts of this world. This is not to say that the Lord does not bless his people and meet their financial or physical needs. But the essence is where is really our treasure today? Is it on things that God blesses us with or is it on Christ Who is our Prize?

So where is your treasure today? Is it in your wealth, your looks, your knowledge, your goodness, your career, your friends, your children? The Lord said where your treasure is, there your heart will be.

**Matthew 25:31-34**

*<sup>31</sup> "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before Him, and*

***He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.***

*<sup>33</sup> And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup> Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:*

**Matthew 3:12**

*"His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."*



# Chapter 3

## LEADERSHIP of 'Titles and Names' (*that exalt*) V's SERVANT Leadership

### The Lord instructed in Mark 11:42-45 That His disciples should have this attitude:

<sup>42</sup> But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup> Yet it shall not be so among you;  
but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant.

<sup>44</sup> And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all.

<sup>45</sup> For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. "Let's get that clear that 'Christian leadership is actually servant hood'.

**Shame on us** Leaders, who think highly of ourselves when Christ the very God who was the exact representation and the image of God (**Hebrews1:3**) humbled himself, came to serve rather than to be served, something too much to be even grasped.

The Lord Jesus warned us of 'Titles and Names' (as we read below) that puff us up, which is unfortunately so prevalent in today's Christendom:

### Matthew 23:6-12 saying

<sup>6</sup> They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, <sup>7</sup> greetings in the marketplaces,  
**and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.'**

<sup>8</sup> But you, do not be called 'Rabbi';  
for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.  
<sup>9</sup> Do not call anyone on earth your father;

for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.

<sup>10</sup> *And do not be called teachers;*  
for One is your Teacher, the Christ.

<sup>11</sup> ***But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.***

<sup>12</sup> *And whoever exalts himself will be humbled,*  
*and he who humbles himself will be exalted.*

**The temptation of titles looms high** over Christian leadership, wanting to be known as a Pastor, Bishop, Prophet and the like, for that subtle thrill of recognition from man. Unfortunately some go into seminary **only** to get those man-given and man recognised titles. Note how Paul, James, Peter, and Jude introduced themselves in the Epistles - **A bond- servant of God!**

Many preachers and pastors are so hung up on their titles and names. I see many Pastors and Preachers praising themselves of how their messages were loved here and there (by all men) where ever they have been. Sadly it is so similar (though they will not admit it) to the Pharisees during the Lord's time on earth.

**2 Corinthians 10:18 says**

'For not he who commends himself is approved,  
but whom the Lord commends.'

You and I should never strive to become the first, for if we do so we would be the last, for the Lord Jesus' words cannot and will not be in error and will surely come to pass. Let me leave you with this thought - Who are we looking to measure up to today - man or God?

**The Lord Jesus said in:**

**Luke 13:30**

*'And indeed there are last who will be first,  
**and there are first who will be last.'***

And again in **Matthew 23:11-12**

<sup>11</sup> *But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.*

<sup>12</sup> ***And whoever exalts himself will be humbled,***  
*and he who humbles himself will be exalted.*

Let's always remember that having come to Christ, it is Christ's identity in us and not our identity that matters anymore.

**Colossians 3:1-4 says:**

*If then you were raised with Christ,  
seek those things which are above,  
where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.*

<sup>2</sup> *Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*

<sup>3</sup> ***For you died,  
and your life is hidden  
with Christ in God.***

<sup>4</sup> *When Christ who is our life appears,  
then you also will appear with Him in glory.*

Unfortunately on the other hand these 'Names and Titles' come from man-made Institutions. **Coming to think of it, did the Lord Jesus wanted it this way?** Just to illustrate an example. Someone whom I had known for a long time, when I first saw him at seminary, he was humble and timid. Today he is now a Pastor of a Church and it is different story. I had recently to do some co-ordination with him and his other close friend who was also apparently a Pastor too. It was a bit hard and also confusing as I was addressing them by their first names in having known them that way, when they kept addressing each other with the prefix's of 'Pastor so and so was saying' and 'like Pastor so and so just said'. Why are we so conscious of these Titles with all this drama in the Christian prefixes, especially between three friends?

I remember once when I visited a church, the husband and wife who were both Pastors of the church, were addressing each other to the congregation with the 'Pastor' Prefix, rather than calling each other by their names as they would call each other in their homes. There is nothing wrong in being called a 'Pastor' but all I am saying from a Pastor's point of view, and let's be honest to agree that those Titles should not become a subtle snare of pride which it unfortunately does at times to few.

It's a pity when we know, there is a separate calling for being a Pastor (not like many understand 'pastor' as) and a separate calling for an evangelist and a separate calling for a teacher. But the Bible never insinuates that one is anyway spiritually higher or lower than the other as the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 23:11 for the Lord said in Matthew 23:8 'But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.' And elsewhere in scripture it says that we are all the priesthood of believers.

The Book of Philipians brings home that point as in:

**Philippians 2:3-7**

*<sup>3</sup> Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind **let each esteem others better than himself.** <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. <sup>5</sup> Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> **who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,** <sup>7</sup> but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.*

The other thing which has **become a fad today is Pastors and Preachers displaying their Pictures** (if possible their wife's pictures too). You will see them in bulletins, meditation sheets, banners, New Year's calendars, posters, you name it. I say again, shame on us. Can you imagine our Lord Jesus going around with big cut outs or banners of His sketches all around, everywhere he went in the villages and towns so that people can remember His physical face?

**We seem to forget the elementary Truth of Scriptures.** Sorry to say, as I mentioned earlier, I sometimes wonder what Bible are these pastors, preachers and evangelist reading, apart from reading what they want to read to get their three point applause messages.

For the Bible instructs us that we need to be careful in not having our mortal physical selves being recognised anymore.

**2 Corinthians 5:15-17**

<sup>15</sup> *and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.*

<sup>16</sup> *Therefore, from now on, we **regard** ('recognise') **no one according to the flesh**. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. <sup>17</sup> *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; **old things have passed away**; behold, all things have become new.'**

Often we hear speakers speak more about themselves than about Christ. We know more about themselves than about the God of the Bible. I see today many so full of themselves than the power of God within them. But in this subtle boasting and subtle attempts to steal a little bit of God's glory for themselves; you can tell that all they need **is a WOW** from you and that would make their day for sure.

However see the difference in Apostle Paul who said in:

**2 Corinthians 4:5:**

*"For we do not preach ourselves,  
but Christ Jesus the Lord,  
and ourselves as your bondservants for Jesus' sake."*

**1 Corinthians 1:17-18**

<sup>17</sup> *For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, **not with wisdom of words**,  
lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.*

<sup>18</sup> *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*

We are so carried away by these glib speakers and preachers **wisdom of words** saying "wow what a message, he delivered; his voice modulation was so good". Apostle Paul however said, he came to them with the Truth of Word of God which could not be

merely comprehended with human wisdom, but only through spiritual wisdom.

Another new age common thing you will notice with these preachers and even believers is that they have a tendency to **borrow words from each other**, not only the **'common Christianise jargons and phrases'** but also at times funnily their accent if not their sense of dressing too. They ape each other's words, phrases, style. Jeremiah correctly prophesied in

**Jeremiah 23:30** (NLT)

*"Therefore," says the Lord, "I am against these prophets **who steal messages from each other** and claim they are from me."*

Taking another example from the book of **1 Kings 22, where Prophet Micaiah was alone against four hundred false prophets**, when he was called to bring the word of God to the two kings of Israel and Judah. He was told on the way that the false prophets were prophesying pleasing things to the kings and that he needed to fall in line in uniformity with their words. But prophet Micaiah stood his ground and said He would speak only what the Lord told him even if it did not please the king. Let me bring up that scripture portion:

**1 Kings 22:12-14**

*<sup>12</sup> And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, "Go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper, for the Lord will deliver it into the king's hand." <sup>13</sup> Then the messenger who had gone to call Micaiah spoke to him, saying, "Now listen, the words of the prophets*

*with **one accord** encourage the king.*

***Please, let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak encouragement."***

*<sup>14</sup> And Micaiah said, "As the Lord lives, whatever the Lord says to me, that I will speak."*

Does not this (speaking only encouraging words) sound familiar in today's modern preaching? Paul confessed that any of man's attempt to put any style, to prop up the simplicity of the powerful message of the cross (the Gospel) would take away the power of God working in and through it.

### 1 Corinthians 2:1-7

And I, brethren, when I came to you, *did not come with **excellence of speech*** or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. <sup>2</sup> For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. <sup>3</sup> *I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.* <sup>4</sup> **And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words** of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, <sup>5</sup> that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. <sup>6</sup> *However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, **yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.*** <sup>7</sup> But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory.

These 'Motivational Speakers' (who as we read above, having '**excellence of speech**' – are great orators) have no issues of hogging some of the lime light and sacred glory of God. They would rather relish a bit more limelight or through their globetrotting preaching (rather than staying within their local community evangelising and outreaching and building their congregation to do so).

These so called Christian speakers are so good and self-captivating, that they often beat the secular management gurus, in **personality building** seminars, hands down. The Word of God in **Colossians 3:3** teaches us saying that '***For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.***' Yes, it should really be no more that I who live but Christ who lives in me, which should be the right attitude of every Servant of Christ. For it is not about us it is about Christ and completing His unfinished work to reach out the Gospel, knowing that time is running out. For we have got the greatest gift of salvation and in exchange a little persecution, suffering or even feeling low at times is OK. Why? Because very soon as **Colossians 3:4** says '*When Christ who is our life **appears, then** you also will appear with Him in glory.*'

These preachers will pamper you their audience around their stretched out one point messages (you will notice they hardly go in depth into God's Word keeping you at bay, in that milk stage, touching only on elementary teachings). It is all about entertaining each other. It's like '*I will entertain you and in return either you **applause or respond, by good hearty laughs to my slap stick jokes***'

all unfortunately delivered from the sacred pulpit of God to His congregation who have come to worship God and to listen to His Holy sacred Word.

The word of God intrust us to be serious about the things of God. Why? For two reasons:

1. The Lord God sent us His only begotten Son for a very serious work and the cost of that work was at a very serious price (His unimaginable painful crucifixion) **all because of His serious love for us**. Did that seriousness stop with Christ? NO! But it continued with the early Disciples and should still till date.
2. Secondly in knowing that time is running out, as we see last days prophecy unfold around us in the world, thousands of people dying on account of growing communal violence, natural calamities, wars and many more scores of people dying spiritually into eternal separation with God, just because they did not hear the Gospel. Will we make light of all this and added to that ignore God's Word which commands us in **Luke 6:25** '*...Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep*' and as in **1 Peter 4:7** which says '*But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers*'. We are indeed coming to the brink of the Lord's prophesied wrath upon the face of the World and this is definitely not the time for fun and entertainment, beloved of Christ especially within the Church.

These Churches are generally known as '**Entertainment Churches**' and are packed and are leading many the '**broad way**' - why? Because our Lord Jesus Prophesied it would in **Matthew 7:13-14** <sup>13</sup> '*Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.* <sup>14</sup> *Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.* Yes it's only the Remnant among believers who are going to find it - **1 Corinthians 10:1-11**. As we see the



great fall away happening in Churches before our very eyes, The Lord Jesus' prophetic words come as a reminder to us as in **Matthew 24:13** *'But he who endures to the end shall be saved.'*

These Entertainment Churches are very popular and have become like a status symbol to many in the congregation, who boast that they belong to such and such Mega Church. A large portion of the congregation sadly consist of Christians who either do not know the Word of God well, but have a form of godliness by carrying their Bibles and swinging the arms high during worship or it also consists of the few who know the 'Word' but do not practice righteousness.

As I mentioned earlier today's modern Church wants to be entertained with witty jokes or tearful stories. Tell them about what the 'commandments God calls them to do' and they do not want to hear anything of that. **The mission of Christ upon the Church** (where many preachers and pastors are going amiss) **is to feed the Sheep and not to entertain the Goats.** The Lord's commission as repeatedly mentioned in this book was – Teaching them to obey all that I have commanded' – Matthew 28:20.

As I mentioned earlier **how often would you get messages** from these pulpits preachers, **mentioning of what really should be our part in response to such a Great Salvation.**

Messages which talk about, conviction of sin in light of God's Word, mediating on God's word and then obedience to those commands in His Word, the importance of seeking only the Will of God, the attitude of a saved believer to the Lord Jesus' Return so on and so forth, is seldom if not never heard from such preachers? The early Apostles of Christ were well aware of traces which had crept into the Church and you its references are through the Epistles. Apostle John warned that we will be at the risk to shrink along with such preachers when **Christ appears**, if we are part of such Apostate Churches and Fellowships – **1 John 2:24-28.**

The words of our Lord Jesus come as a sharp warning and reminder to each one of us to check our lives before we are caught saying Lord! Lord! on that Day and Him denying knowing us.

**The Lord Jesus said in**

**Luke 6:26**

*'Woe to you when all men speak well of you,  
For so did their fathers to the false prophets.'*

On the contrary we read in **Acts 14:14-17** Apostle Paul and Barnabas tore their clothes when the people were giving them the glory rather than the living God to Whom alone belongs all the glory.

Today's modern church boasts about its spiritual adequacy rather than their inadequacy. Yet the words of our Lord Jesus stressed that the inadequacy in a believer's life reflected scope for growth.

In the Sermon on the Mount the Lord said in **Matthew 5:3**

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven"*

**Take the Lord's Parable of the two people who came to worship God**

in the synagogue, one a Tax Collector and one a Pharisee. The 'Tax Collector' expressed his inadequacy to God and the 'Pharisee' boasted of how he had all the boxes ticked. The Lord Jesus said the Tax Collector went home more justified than the Pharisee.

The Lord when referred to as good teacher, himself denied those praises, by saying *'there was no one good'*. The Lord also cautioned his disciples (as we read earlier) not to rejoice or have a high on seeing the gifts of the Spirit displayed in their lives, in casting out demons by the power of the Holy Spirit, but told them to rejoice that their names are written in heaven.

Apostle Paul urges the church saying in **1 Thessalonians 4:11** **'That you also aspire to lead a quiet life'**. Apostle Peter conveyed the same in **1 Peter 1:4** says *'The end of things are near **therefore be sober minded** for the purpose of prayer'*.

Apostle Paul said His dependence was on the Holy Spirit and not on big names:

**Galatians 2:6**

*'But from those who seemed to be something; whatever they were, it makes no difference to me;  
God shows personal favouritism to no man;  
**for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me.'***

You will see **the humility and the attitude that the early disciples had**, who rebuked the people as carnal when the people started lifting up and differentiating between disciples as their favourite speakers as we read below:

**1 Corinthians 3:1-11, 18-23**

*And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to **babes in Christ.** <sup>2</sup> **I fed you with milk and not with solid food;** for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; <sup>3</sup> for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? <sup>4</sup> For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?*

<sup>5</sup> **Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos,**

*but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? <sup>6</sup> I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. <sup>7</sup> So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters,  
**but God who gives the increase.***

<sup>8</sup> Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labour.

<sup>9</sup> For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. <sup>10</sup> According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.

<sup>11</sup> For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

<sup>18</sup> **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.**

<sup>19</sup> For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is

written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness"; <sup>20</sup> and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile." <sup>21</sup> Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: <sup>22</sup> whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours.  
<sup>23</sup> ***And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.***

If you are hearing people say good things too often, then you need to please check your life with the Lord. You need to ask yourself a question. Are you greater than your Teacher and Master Christ Jesus? You need to remind yourself of your Master's words above to check for yourself if we really belong to His household and kingdom?

Let's do the '**Litmus Test**' as to which category we are found in, relating our lives to the Scripture below and judge for ourselves where do we stand with His Word!

And again in **Luke 6:22-26** the LORD says:

<sup>22</sup> ***Blessed are you when men hate you,  
And when they exclude you,  
And revile you, and cast out your name as evil,  
For the Son of Man's sake.***

<sup>23</sup> *Rejoice in that day and leap for joy!  
For indeed your reward is great in heaven,  
For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.*

<sup>24</sup> *"But woe to you who are rich,  
For you have received your consolation.*

<sup>25</sup> *Woe to you who are full,  
For you shall hunger.*

*Woe to you who laugh now,  
For you shall mourn and weep.*

<sup>26</sup> ***Woe to you when all men speak well of you,  
For so did their fathers to the false prophets.***

**1Peter 2:4-5 says**

<sup>4</sup> *As you come to him,  
**the living Stone rejected by humans  
but chosen by God and precious to him***  
<sup>5</sup> *you also, like living stones,  
are being built into a spiritual house  
to be a holy priesthood,  
offering spiritual sacrifices  
acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

The Word of God comes clear from that portion of **1Peter 2:4-5**, which makes us to think, that **if our Lord Jesus was rejected by men** yet precious to God, we who call ourselves His disciples, do not want to be rejected by men but be honoured by every man (trying to win the praises of men). Are we trying to be greater than our Master?

**Remember the words of Lord Jesus as in:  
Matthew 10:24-25**

<sup>24</sup> *"A disciple is not above his teacher,  
nor a servant above his master.*  
<sup>25</sup> ***It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher,  
and a servant like his master.***  
*If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub,  
how much more will they call those of His household!*

# Chapter 4

## Foolish Virgins keep the 'GOOD NEWS' to themselves!

Dearly beloved of Christ, this important section of the book, talks about the foolish, who keep the 'Good News of the Gospel' to themselves (buried) but the wise multiply it around them. The call and burden to share the Good News/ The Gospel is a **ministry** that every truly saved believer should carry. You see God's Word commands saved believers **to be ambassadors of reconciliation** in this lost world.

### 2 Corinthians 5:18-21:

***17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,** he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.<sup>18</sup> Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, **and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,**<sup>19</sup> that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.<sup>20</sup> **Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.**<sup>21</sup> For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

The Scripture above starts with ***Therefore, if anyone is in Christ.*** If you and I claim that we are IN CHRIST then the bible says as we read above, that God ***has given us the ministry of reconciliation*** and therefore ***now then, we are ambassadors for Christ!***

If we claim to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus then the mantle of the Lord's Great Commission falls on every disciple, to make fellow disciples and so on and so forth - Matthew 28:18-20. The Great

Commission of Christ Jesus was not for a select few, but it was for every true disciple of His, present and future. Neither was it substituted by supporting full time missionaries.

Apostle Paul said it should be foremost and top of the list, in everything we do, even in our eating and drinking.

### **1 Corinthians 10:31-33**

*<sup>31</sup> Therefore, **whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.**<sup>32</sup> Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, <sup>33</sup> just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, **that they may be saved.***

Paul did everything **that they may be saved**, are we? We Christians are experts in sharing Christ among each other, (we spend hours talking about the Lord's goodness amongst ourselves – good) but when we go out to the market places or our work places we become like tongue tied and ashamed (let alone to share the gospel) to even be known as Christians in our circles.

### **Apostle Paul said in Romans 1:16**

*'For **I am not ashamed of the gospel** of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.'*

The Lord Jesus said '*If anyone wishes to come after Me, **he must deny himself***'. We cannot be disciples of the Lord if we do not qualify in the first stage of Jesus our Master's command to – DENY ONESELF. **Sharing the Gospel is one of the first litmus tests of 'self-denial'**. It also in a way checks if we are fulfilling the very first two uppermost commandments of **Matthew 22:37-38** of loving our Lord with all our heart and loving our neighbour as ourselves. For think about it, in sharing the Gospel, it fulfils both those commandments.

Leave alone we Christians 'denying ourselves' for Christ sake, **we do not want to 'deny ourselves from anything in this world!'**

Apostle Paul referring to these believers says in **1 Corinthians 3:1-3**:  
*And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to*

spiritual people **but as to carnal**, as to babes in Christ. <sup>2</sup> I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; <sup>3</sup> **for you are still carnal**. For where there are **envy, strife, and divisions** among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?

Sometimes we desire to do many things for the Lord but when it really comes to 'denying ourselves' accomplishing what God wants in our life for Him, we miserably fail Him. That's why as I said earlier, there is a world of a difference between doing things for God and asking the Lord God what He will have us do for Him. **BIG DIFFERENCE!**

We are experts in hearing the gospel and perhaps take a lot of time and energy in attending and being trained in seminars 'How to share the Gospel' but unfortunately still feel inadequate and unequipped.

Taking Paul's example again, no sooner Apostle Paul was saved by the grace and received the call of the Lord Jesus' on His life, he did not wait but shared the gospel everywhere. Initially he said that he shared only to what he knew '*Jesus Christ was crucified for your sins*' and he did that to as many as he was led to. He went on say that even though his message was so simple; the power of the Holy Spirit took over him so that his faith did not rest on him but on the power of Holy Spirit who works unto salvation in the lives of people whom we testify to. Let me bring two Scriptures to you:

#### **Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5**

*And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. <sup>2</sup> For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. <sup>3</sup> I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. <sup>4</sup> **And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,** <sup>5</sup> that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*

Allow me to pause here and take time to share (few things to



keep in mind while sharing the Gospel) only because this subject of Christian Evangelism is so close to my heart.

You see whenever you start to share the Gospel, know that heaven is backing you and remember it is not in your excellence of speech or your wisdom but just your simple obedience to the Lord's command to want to share and He will do the rest, as you employ your loosened tongue. Always remember the Lord **God seldom calls the equipped but often equips the called.**

**Sharing of your Faith should be contagious,** for our faith is not what God has given us for our own benefit. The sharing of our faith in the beginning may be hard, but let me encourage you that Proverbs says 'The fear of man is the snare of the enemy'. In other words when you plan to go out to share the gospel, the enemy may bring "WHAT IF" thoughts in your mind. But remember as the Lord Jesus says the very hair on your head is all numbered and not even a hair can fall without God's will. Lord Jesus' said that His mandate was to preach the Gospel –

**Mark 1:38**

*<sup>38</sup> But He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, **because for this purpose I have come forth.**"*

If we claim that we are His disciples how can our call be any different from Whom we call our Master?

For starters, one way of sharing your faith, is by simply sharing with **everyone** around you that you are a 'follower/disciple of Jesus Christ' (and never be ashamed in confessing that). As often as you can and whenever you can, create a bridge with the ones who want to know more. **'Everyone' includes,** right from your neighbour sitting beside you on your way to work, to your everyday grocery store teller, to your work place or school mate etc.

A Chinese brother in Christ who loves the Lord dearly, was sharing with me recently that when the Lord first moved him to share the Gospel, he went into the shopping malls of Australia to

share the Gospel. He started engaging with various Chinese people in the shopping malls. One day he heard the Lord speaking to him through the **John 3:16** scripture, reminding him through that scripture, it is not written 'God so loved the Chinese' but it is written 'God so loved the World'. He said, from that day on he went on to share the 'Good News' boldly **with everyone**.

We should not miss any opportunity to go bold when the door is being opened by the Lord to share the Gospel to others. Many mix it up in conveniently thinking and saying 'I will live my life and let everyone around see that I love Jesus'. **Hello! Who are we fooling? There is a big difference** in reaching out to the world for Christ and always hanging out with the world.

**James 4:4** says that just being a friend to the world is enmity with God. How would they know Christ unless you and I open our mouth and are bold to proclaim consciously the gospel to them.

#### **Romans 10:13-14**

*For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."*

<sup>14</sup> *How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?*

***And how shall they hear without a preacher?***

<sup>15</sup> *And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, **Who bring glad tidings of good things!"***

**You see there are no secret Christians or secret Agents in Christianity.** By going out for a Rock show concert or to the Cinemas or hanging out in Social networking sites and being one with the world **without confessing your faith that you belong to Christ**, is not only far from good and proper but rather unbecoming for Christians whom **God calls to be set apart**. The downfall of Israelites was when they repeatedly mingled with the other nations and soon the ways of the world around them became theirs.

The Lord Jesus did not cut Himself from society, but He was inwardly disconnected all the time. Our Lord never allowed anything to interfere with His consecration and therefore sanctification. **His sole purpose to move among society was to witness**; and mind you His witness was clear with no apologies as He gave out His Father's message "*Repent for the Kingdom of God is at Hand*" (**Mark 1:15**). We cannot be in company, listening to secular music and dirty jokes going around and expect to be sanctified by God. The Levites were told to consecrate themselves before entering into the temple. Like the Levites we have a responsibility ourselves to be consecrated (**Psalms 1:1**). Without consecrating yourself do not expect God to sanctify you. Consecration, I repeat is our part (**2 Peter 3:14**). Then the Lord God will sanctify us and our body which is the Temple of the Lord.

To give another example some of us, see secular movies in the fallacy that some movies make us more sensitive towards others. We go and cry oodles of tears over a fictitious movie or television soap operas, thinking what sensitive people we are. But when we get back from that fantasy world to real life, it takes only a small matter for us to trigger our fuse and/or to take an unforgiving stand towards an offender. All that those movies really do to us I have realised is, making us become more sensitive and touchy to ourselves rather than to our neighbour.

**Many Christians don't know that God's Word instructs every true believer to be set apart from unbelievers**, as a peculiar nation. True Christianity calls for us to be in the world but not the world in us. God's call upon His people to be set apart is not only mentioned in the Old Testament but very much in the New Testament several times as we also read in:

**2 Corinthians 6:14-18**

***14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.***

*For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness?*

*And what communion has light with darkness?*

*15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple*

of God with idols? *For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people."*<sup>17</sup> **Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord.** Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you."<sup>18</sup> "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."

Moses knew that he being a Hebrew even though he grew up in the lap of luxury of Pharaoh's house, needed to break away and be separated unto his people the Israel nation, rather than (Scripture says) **'enjoying the passing pleasures of sin or treasures of Egypt'**.

**Hebrews 11:24-27 says**

<sup>24</sup> *By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, <sup>25</sup> choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God **than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,** <sup>26</sup> esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches **than the treasures in Egypt;** for he looked to the reward. <sup>27</sup> **By faith he forsook Egypt,** not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.*

So how seriously do we take the Word of God in the Bible, as we just read above? Like I earlier said, there is a big difference in reaching out to the world for Christ and always hanging out with the world. This I speak to those who say they are truly born again. I have also seen many Christian believers burning their fingers (realising years later) when they get yoked together in marriage or business or any other partnership with unbelievers.

Today the prophecy has come to pass of *'Holding a form of godliness although they have denied its Power'*. Denying the power of what? Denying the power of God's Word from being applied and lived in our very lives! **The power of Faith is only when we live out what we have heard.**

**Today we have stopped hearing the TRUTHS of the BIBLE** and we need to at times blame ourselves before blaming it on where we are being fed from. We know that if these teachings come back to the Church we will know the TRUTH and the TRUTH will set us free

and bring us back to the Lord causing a Revival. Not Revival as the Modern Church thinks Revival is but, true Revival is 'To Repent and Return' to obeying the Truths of the Bible.

The Word of God comes very strongly in **James 4:4-5**:

*<sup>4</sup> Adulterers and adulteresses! **Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?** Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. <sup>5</sup> Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?*

Thinking that the Grace of the Lord will understand and overlook our disobedience to His Holy Word, is a classic case of throwing, both the baby and the bath water out of the window.

**We Christians get so entangled with the affairs of the world** using our energies in wanting to make the world a better place and thinking we are doing a service to God (the general world view), unfortunately so different from God's ways and thoughts and commands (the Word view) - **2 Timothy 2:1-4. Hebrews 11:13** says that the people of faith in the bible, gained approval from God, by confessing that they were 'strangers and exiles' in this world.

Beloved of Christ, make no mistake, it is only by walking in God's Holy Word and commands (learning from the Lord Jesus' example) that truly transforms us to be the sensitive people that He wants us to be.

Either we are IN CHRIST or OUT of CHRIST the choice is ours. **'IN CHRIST' means abiding in all His Words and Teachings – Matthew 28:20.**

When John the Baptist went out, he did not go to the Gentiles but he went to the lost 'Sheep' which had strayed away, to tell them that to repent for the 'Axe is on the root of every Tree which does not produce Fruit' in keeping with true repentance. The True Gospel calls every believer to take regularly, stock of their lives and repenting from any sins they have committed. I am sure if we

have been saved we would have repented as sinners when we came to the Light (Perhaps at that Altar Call). The question we need to ask ourselves is, have we in anyway slowly slipped back?

The Lord Jesus who is greater than any prophet in the Bible, being very God, prophesied that the Church needs to 'Repent and come back to its First Love' – in the prophetic book of **Revelation 2:2-5** (lest they be cut off).

There is a Christian friend of mine who I know, loves the Lord Jesus dearly. However he had never shared that he was a Christian through his whole tenure in his previous work place (praise the Lord that he now does). Although his life was exemplary there, unfortunately his colleagues would have never known that the Lord Jesus was the reason behind his success, so as to give Christ Jesus the glory whenever he succeeded and that perhaps would lead them to even want to follow Christ.

I believe that is what the Lord Jesus meant when He said '*let your light so shine among men, that they would see your good works and give glory to your heavenly Father*'.

We often pray for missionaries and mission organization along with supporting them with tithes and offerings for their fearless and tireless work of outreach in villages and far flung, tribal areas (good), but isn't the mission field around us in our very own 'Neighbourhood' and 'Market Places' too?

**Think about it**, say for instance if any of the missionaries we support turns around one day and says to us "*I have been blessed from this sudden wealth that that has come my way by the Lord God. So this time around, I who want to support you to outreach in your work place and Market place around you and I would be backing you up with my prayers*". What would you say to him? Would you tell him, "*When do you want me to start*"? Or would you come up with all kinds of excuses, as to why you can't do it.

I want to also make a mention to those of us who are indeed sharing the Gospel, to keep in mind, that your and our sharing alone does not make you or me obedient disciples, but what makes you and me obedient disciples is by **obeying all** that the Lord has commanded.

**A true obedient believer needs to be blameless in every area of their life showing high integrity levels at all times.** You and I cannot be sharing the gospel and have fingers pointing at us (bring a bad name to the faith you bear).

You can't share the Gospel and be failing as a Father, Mother, Husband, Wife, Son Daughter, Employer of Employee. For example, having say fits of anger at home or/and at work or be sunk in some lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes or pride of life or into some bad habits or addictions.

Again you cannot be sharing the gospel thinking you are one up with God and yet have bitterness, lusts, jealousy or un-forgiveness towards a neighbour or a fellow Christian Brother. To be an obedient disciple is not only to share the gospel (which is non-negotiable) but always remembering that the Great commission is a command upon every obedient disciple of Jesus Christ, with which comes a greater command and responsibility, (which is part of the great commission) as the Lord said - 'To **'Observe all things that I have commanded you'**.

**Matthew 28:19-20**

*<sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> Teaching them to **observe all things that I have commanded you**; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

Unfortunately today which were once very strong Christian Western countries, the Churches in these countries are going under the hammer (being auctioned) by the day - Why? Primarily because, we have ourselves failed to keep our Lord Jesus' words which says '**observe all things that I have commanded you**' (Matthew 19:20)

that is in sharing the Gospel in all its fullness, to the next Generation!

Remember the 'Four Gospels' in the Bible will remain to be on our Shelves until you and I (as someone said) who are the 'Fifth Gospel' go out in boldness and with Love of Christ to share the Gospel to our perishing neighbours.

One last thing I want to mention is that **there is a growing fallacy** among few new age Christians that we need to use "our wisdom" with a study of 'cross cultural relevance' and perhaps a study of 'Christian apologetics' to get that edge in sharing the Gospel. We use words like; we should be very "sensitive and intelligent" to share the Gospel. I want to say here 'yes and no'. **No!** Because if we are going to think like the world way, that it is our applied equipped intelligence and wisdom that grants our success, we are terribly mistaken; for it is Satan's ploy to distract us as we rest on our wisdom which only leads to seldom and selective sharing. And Yes, because there is wisdom and power, as the Bible says, **that the gospel is the power of God** (*Romans 1:16*) and not the power of man. All God needs is, a humble but bold spirit with a willing tongue employed; empowered by the Author of our very own salvation and directed by the power of Holy Spirit. **Think about it!** – The all wise Lord Jesus did not select/commission intelligent and wise men but rather chose, what the world would call, foolish illiterate fisher men, who later on went and shook the whole world.

Let me leave you with a Scripture portion to meditate on:

### **1 Corinthians 1:26-29**

*26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.*



# Chapter 5

## Is the Church napping today?

The Church today is indeed (as someone said) **'like Samson sleeping on Delilah's lap'**!

When the Lord Jesus said 'Obey ALL that I have commanded you' He meant ALL! For He meant what He said and said ONLY what He meant. You see there is no bargaining with God's Holy Word and neither higgling and haggling over it. Either we are **in Christ** or not. Either we are abiding in His Teachings or not.

The Lord said very clearly in

**John 14:23-24**

<sup>23</sup> *Jesus answered and said to him,  
"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word;  
and My Father will love him,  
and We will come to him and make Our home with him.*

<sup>24</sup> ***He who does not love Me  
does not keep My words;***  
*and the word which you hear is not Mine  
but the Father's who sent Me.*

Now someone may say how it is possible to OBEY ALL the Lord's teachings. Well, have we not heard that 'All things are possible with God'? And have we not heard that it is written that 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me'?

If you are saying I know that the Bible says to OBEY ALL things, but still how does it work? Well the answer is in **John 14:26** where the Lord Jesus says that He is leaving the Holy Spirit back for this very reason that the His very Spirit will remind us of all His Teachings.

**John 14:26**

*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit,  
whom the Father will send in My name,  
He will teach you all things,  
and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*

So you see we are without excuse, if we are disobedient to the Spirits promptings and plainly that we really do not love God, as per Christ's definition in **John 14:23-24**.

**Many of Christians today like to waddle in shallow waters**, in their own comfort zones. That is really living shallow Christian lives or in other words 'Shallow Christianity'. But the Lord always disturbs our status quo and if we are sensitive and heed; we will obey His Word. As Apostle Peter did saying, 'If you say Lord I will cast the net down'. It is only when we obey God, God does His work in an amazing way, that we can only stand and gasp in awe (as Peter was, at the haul of fish). But the question still lies, 'are we willing to let our nets down as Christ challenges us too?'

I want to share what is '**Shallow Christianity**' with a small example. It is disheartening to see today's Christians are so occupied passing and forwarding emails of base level everyday issues or solutions all for this soon perishing world rather than being bold soldiers of Christ by forwarding eternal things that would last. **Sharing the Gospel of Christ Jesus should always take centre stage of our lives**. But sadly on the other hand many of us Christians today are **overly conscious** of being non-offensive, politically correct and overly occupied of pleasing the world around us than pleasing God.

Take a look at the early Church. You see Apostle Peter, Paul, John, James and the other Disciples of Christ, in the midst of persecutions never ceased from preaching the Gospel, to which account thankfully you and I are Christians today. So why has that fire died down today and this vision is only in the hands of few

Christians. Aren't we all called to continue to share in the same Mission if we are truly a disciple of Jesus Christ? If the early Disciples were conscious to be politically correct, well they would have stopped sharing the Gospel for they were flogged and asked by the officials not to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. No, but no sooner they were beaten they came out in the city squares and continued to boldly proclaim.

If you think your **salvation is assured regardless** of your 'Shallow Christianity', then you need to think again, as your read words of a loving but serious God, Christ Jesus in:

**Revelation 3:15-22.**

*<sup>15</sup> "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.*

*<sup>16</sup> **So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.***

*<sup>17</sup> Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—<sup>18</sup> I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. <sup>19</sup> As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. **Therefore be zealous and repent.** <sup>20</sup> Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. <sup>21</sup> To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. <sup>22</sup> "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."'''*

**1 John 3:7 says**

*'Little children, **let no one deceive you.** He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.'*

**Are you and am I practicing righteousness?**

The Bible is very clear that Believers should practise righteousness!

You see the word "practice" is a verb and a doing action and it is voluntarily and not a compulsion. Neither is it periods of sudden freak impulsions. But it's a sustained choice not to sin and walk in holiness. When our lives are not practicing righteousness we are unrighteous. Simple – there is no rocket science to that.

As someone said, today's saint is yesterday's sinner and today's sinner could have been yesterday's saint. It depends on the daily choices we make. That's why the Lord Jesus commanded this to everyone who wants to be His followers that they need to practice righteousness daily. His words makes that abundantly clear in:

**Luke 9:23**

*'Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross **daily**, and follow Me'*

I want to ask all such who feel otherwise, are we implying that **Christ Jesus teachings in Matthew 5**, is not applicable to a saved Believer? Or are we saying a so called 'regenerated Christian' has no consequences as laid out by Christ by being guilty of Hell fire, if he/she calls his/her brother/sister '**you fool**' or '**looks at someone lustfully**' and has no true repentance of such sins but continues to live in unconfessed sin wilfully?

There is no hint or suggestion anywhere in the Bible which gives a Christian a blanket of assured salvation regardless of his or her daily Walk.

**Galatians 6:7-9 says**

*<sup>7</sup> Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*

*<sup>8</sup> For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. <sup>9</sup> And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.*

We need to **wake up** and not make our God a lawless and partial God. Many of us often commit this **great folly** by imagining God and His Character to be by our standards, that which does not exist in the Bible. We make God to be who we think He should be, without knowing Him through the reading of the Bible (because of the ignorance of knowing the Word) and that in a way is an idol in itself that we make for ourselves this Idol of self-righteousness. The Idol that comes about by what we think of good and bad rather than God's standards of what is WRITTEN! This is direct result of our sinful mind and contamination by the world view which is not found in Word view. We say things like 'I do not think God will do that' 'I think God wants us to do that' giving a standard to God out of our figment of sinful self-righteousness imagination.

The Israelites did the same by making a golden calf, (**contaminated with the World View**) in their view of God, from being in Egypt, where they lived and just came out of. Apostle Paul warned the Christians of the same in **Romans 12:1-2, 21** and so did Apostle John in **1 John 2:15-18**.

It's time we repent and wake up! **2Peter 3:11-18** cautions us of some people who make God to be like a lawless god in thinking, God has no demands in our lives (contrary to the God of the Bible, Who expects a saved obedient believer to live Holy, Blameless and Spotless lives).

**Some of us are under the fallacy that a Saved Sinner can never fall, or can never continue in sin.** We need to read the Epistles which were addressed to the saints of God, where Apostle Paul come hard on them (apart from encouraging those who are walking with the Lord) saying some of the things done by the believers in the church were even shameful to mention and such sins were not even found among unbelievers.

**2 Peter 3:11-18**

*<sup>11</sup> Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, **what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,** <sup>14</sup> Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, **be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless***

Christ Jesus will come as the righteous (not impartial) Judge in all His glory, Who will come, to repay each one according to their deeds - **Matthew 16:27**.

'Holy Living' should precede one's Conversion Experience. **Romans 11 bring a stern warning on napping Christians.** It says that if God who did not spare the natural branches (The Chosen Jewish Race) because of their disobedience, will not spare us (Gentile Christians) believers either, being a wild olive, who are grafted in later if we too disobey. Please carefully read this Scripture below, so that we are not arrogant in the goodness of our thinking regarding salvation and repeat the same folly as the Israel nation did.

**Romans 11:17-22**

*<sup>17</sup> And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, <sup>18</sup> do not boast against the branches.*

*But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. <sup>19</sup> You will say then,*

*"Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in."*

*<sup>20</sup> Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear.*

*<sup>21</sup> **For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.***

*<sup>22</sup> Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness,*

***if you continue**  
in His goodness.*

***Otherwise you also will be cut off.***

You see as we read above, Apostle Paul in **Romans 11** was reiterating exactly the same thing that the Lord Jesus said in **John 15:1-6** that if after being grafted into Him we do not continue to bear fruit through our Changed life/holy living, we **will cut off and throw into the fire**.

The Lord Jesus makes it very clear several times in the book of Revelation (**Revelation 2:4-5; 2:7; 3:1-5**) that if we do not continue to live an overcoming life He will remove our lampstand from its

place, our privilege to eat from the Tree of Life and our names from the Book of Life.

**1 Peter 4:17-19**

*'For the time has come*

***for judgment to begin at the house of God;***

*and if it begins with us first,*

***what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?***

*Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved,*

*Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?"*

***Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God***  
***commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.***

*He who has an ear, let him hear,  
what the Spirit says to the Churches*

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# Chapter 6

## Infant Baptism v's Believers Baptism

I want to stop here and ask all those who have truly made the Lord Jesus as the Lord and Saviour of their lives saying "I have decided to follow the Lord Jesus; no turning back" (those who have eventually come serious with God) then, may I ask you have you ever considered 'Water Baptism'? May I then challenge all such to fulfil what the Bible commands, by **showing that expression of commitment to follow the Lord's Ways; by entering the waters of Baptism** (if you have not yet).

Not doing it thinking you will have an edge over others, but because you are appealing to God to help you follow that commitment in walking the straight and Narrow Path. Apostle Peter brought out the need for Baptism very beautifully in:

### **1 Peter 3:21**

*'Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you  
not the removal of dirt from the flesh,  
but an appeal to God for a good conscience  
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ'*

In other words we baptise to make a pledge to God to walk in His ways, Christ being our strength.



Dearly beloved of Christ I want you to know this, that even if your parents have christened you as a babe, sorry to say, it has not fulfilled 'Water Baptism' **as per the Bible**, but it being rather an act/mark of dedication by your parents on behalf of you the christened baby, in confessing before the church to bring the child up in Christian Faith. For the Bible explicitly says '**Repent and be baptised**' or '**Believe and be Baptised**'.

For as an infant you did not and could have the sense to "believe in the Lord Jesus" who died for your sins and neither would you have the sense to know "repentance" of being a sinner and the need to be saved by the Blood of Jesus. The Bible is clear that Baptism should follow 'Belief and Repentance' and not precede 'Belief and Repentance'. Like I said before, there is no negotiating with God's Word, either during our time here or when we stand before Him.

Ok, let's first get to the grass roots of this. Think about it! Why have almost all Christian Denominations acknowledged that some type of 'Water Baptism' is important for every Christian (Adult or Infant)? Only because it's **clearly a command upon every Believer** and every denomination has recognized that. For the Chief Shepherd and Master of our Faith Himself fulfilled that righteousness setting us an example to follow.

#### **Matthew 3:13-15**

*<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. <sup>14</sup> And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" <sup>15</sup> But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus **it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness.**" Then he allowed Him.*

'Water Baptism' is what the **Lord had commanded** every true Disciple **to do as He did** as we read in – **Matthew 28:19**. Christening an Infant does not make that Child a "Believer/Disciple". For Christian Faith does not come from birth or is it inherited like any other religion; neither is true Christianity like an Institute membership which is passed down from the father to the children. Each generation needs to choose to be a follower/disciple of

Jesus or it just becomes like another religious tag which will not bring Eternal Salvation.

Think awhile - A Disciple is one who chooses to become a Disciple. For let us be very clear that it is a personal, conscience and deliberate step one makes (at one stage of their life) in allowing Christ Jesus to be the LORD of **every area** of their Life.

That's why the song which is usually sung soon after a believer comes out of the waters of Baptism is '*I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back*'.

**Water Baptism was in the Lord God's sovereign and flawless 'Will and Plan' for His people** who are called by His name and needs to be taken very seriously.

When the Lord laid for His disciples and followers to follow His example, He also meant for you and me to follow Him through the 'Waters of Baptism' as His early followers did. There is no suggestion after the first Disciples that the next to follow and their generations after that the same is carried through with Baptising their infants and so on and so forth. Sadly though, Baptism has become through 'Infant Baptism', a Christian Tradition and ritualism which was never meant to be. It was not for your or my Christian Parents to fulfil that act for you and me, but as His followers to follow it through in their **free will**. Just like all things in the New Testament '**Baptism' also needs to come about through free will**.

Some people are convicted (by the gentle nudging of the Holy Spirit of God) to obey in the waters of Baptism, but later unfortunately Christian peer pressure gets them thinking what their denomination would have to say. I want to ask all such, is the Word of God over us or do our denominational peer pressures and traditions take precedence?

We need to get a little challenged by seeing the boldness of New Christian converts who have come from other faiths and enter

into the waters of Believers Baptism in the midst of lot of opposition. It is indeed a shame for us who are born in Christian families hesitating long after the Spirit of God has convicted us to take this expression of faith, thus being rebellious to Holy Spirit's promptings remaining comfortably nestled within our denominational tags.

**Today we 'Uncircumcised Gentiles' would not have been Christians** If Apostle Peter was bogged down by his fellow Christian peer pressure despite his great revelation through the vision he saw on the terrace that the Lord challenged him, that the Door of the Grace of God through Jesus Christ, now being opened to the Gentile World.

**Acts 11:1-4**

*"Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. <sup>2</sup> And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him <sup>3</sup> saying, "**You went in to uncircumcised men** and ate with them!" <sup>4</sup> But Peter explained it to them in order from the beginning, saying...."*

Taking another example, of how we Christians would not have been blessed today, to have our Bible translated in our own languages (apart from the original tongue of Hebrew and Greek) if William Tyndale would have buckled under Christian peer pressure, after the Church had forbidden him from translating the Bible. In fact he was martyred, (put on the stake and burned) all because he was bold and dared to do what the Spirit of God was pressing upon him to do. And what about Martin Luther who dared to protest (in the midst of severe peer pressure) on seeing the faith of the then Christian (Orthodox Clergy) did not match to what was written in the Bible. I can go on with several other examples of various heroes of faith, but the question is, **when the Lord brings a Truth from His Holy Word, are you and I going to be obedient to do it or argue and resist it?** If we are going to resist, it is because we

have placed our denomination views over His Written Word?

Sometimes it is far easier for a new convert (as a repentant sinner) to come with the simplicity of their faith to the Lord Jesus, to accept the commands and demands (on Baptism) as laid in the Bible than those of us who are born in Christian families and have been part of the Church, due to engrained traditions/ritualism.

This is so very similar to what Luke recorded of what the Lord Jesus spoke in:

**Luke 7:29-30**

*<sup>29</sup> When they heard this, all the people—even the tax collectors agreed that God’s way was right, for they had been baptized by John. <sup>30</sup> But the Pharisees and experts in religious law **rejected God’s plan for them**, for they had refused John’s baptism (NLT).*

We gather from what we just read above that, those who are obedient will observe God’s Truth and will be set free and those who are disobedient will reject it. The Pharisees were only interested to argue, find fault or make excuses, rather than seek the Truth and be set free. Those who oppose the Truths of God’s Word today are no different from the Pharisees during the Lord Jesus’ time on earth.

So let me ask you, are you rejecting God’s plan for your life today? Or as I mentioned in the introduction of this book, that some of us are still like the ones during the Lord Jesus time as in:

**John 12:42-43**

*<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, **but** because of the Pharisees **they did not confess Him**, lest they should be put out of the synagogue;  
<sup>43</sup> **for they loved the praise of men**  
**more than the praise of God.***

Often we confess with our mouths to the Lord that we love Him. But it is at times like these (which come as Litmus tests) which prove whether we really love Him. Jesus said in his own words, that if we say we really love Him, we will express our true love

by obeying His commandments (John 14:15). As the Lord Jesus asked Peter 'Do you love me *more than these*?' The '**these**' can be the peer pressure around us that prevent us from sticking our neck out; to dare enter into areas what the Spirit of God is asking you and me to, for His name sake. Water Baptism is I believe an obedience test by our Lord Jesus' which He has in fact also laid as a command to all Christians (Matthew 28:19).

Dearly beloved of Christ, the Old Testament had so many numerous laws, between God and the children of God, **but in the New Testament the Lord God has laid out only two major physical ordinances** (or can I call it Covenants) as a test of our obedience/submission as an expression of our True love for Him, **Baptism being one of them** and the other being Holy Communion.

**The Lord God gives every believer this privilege** to express out of his or her free will and we should never ever miss this God given privilege, which in a way is as a Spiritual Marriage. As I said He will never infringe on us. Yes it is a God given ordinance to every believer who believes in Jesus Christ after repenting from their old sinful ways, to want to express it through 'Baptism' and through sharing in the 'breaking of the bread – Holy Communion'.

As mentioned several times it **can be utterly eternally catastrophic** if we apply our mind (in thinking that we have known Christianity all our life and God's Word) and fail to realise that His thoughts and ways will always be far above ours ways and thoughts. To the Lord God when He brings a revelation **in His time** all He wants us to do **is to obey immediately** and not reason or argue about that which He is calling us to do.

Take Apostle Peter's example – He had moved so closely with the Lord Jesus but initially refused what the Lord wanted him to do, in partaking of his feet being washed by the Lord Jesus. To that the Lord warned Peter that if he refused to partake in this act, Peter would be at the risk of having no part with the Lord Jesus – **John**

**13:8.**

**In ending of the Chapter on Believers Baptism,** I want to say, we all may love the Lord dearly and I am no one to question that. We may know the Bible very well and argue the whole day to prove a certain thing, but remember the Jews (many) who knew their Bible better than many of us and still missed recognising their very own Messiah.

My prayer is that you seek the Lord God alone, not man **and then be obedient to what the Holy Spirit is nudging you to do without wavering or delay.**

It is very hard for me to share (but I will for the benefit of many) of a tragic incident which will show you that sometimes there may not be another chance. The parents of my close friend had recently come to spend some time with their son. One Sunday at Church I met the father and was challenging him soon after Church, if he would consider participating in Baptism along with the others who were announced, to take place the subsequent week. He looked quite convicted and told me that the Spirit had been nudging him to do the same for some time. Looking at his wife and son who were besides him, he told them what I was asking him to consider. Later through the week I requested the Church Pastor to follow up with him in knowing that the father of my friend was also keenly considering Baptism by encouraging him to get Baptised that week. The Pastor later called me after a couple of days saying that my friend's father said that he would go back to his country and be Baptised through someone he had in mind. A week later it was time to go back to their home country but no sooner the Aircraft touched the tarmac of the runway at its destination (of my friends father's country), my friend's father had a massive heart attack and died there right on his aircraft seat.

I am not judging and I am no one to, as to where his soul is but all

I am saying that procrastination can be very costly at times.

**The Word of God says in  
Hebrews 4:6-7**

<sup>6</sup> *Since therefore it remains that some must enter it,  
and those to whom it was first preached*

***did not enter because of disobedience,***

<sup>7</sup> *again He designates a certain day, saying in David,  
"Today," after such a long time, as it has been said:*

***"Today, if you will hear His voice,  
do not harden your hearts."***

**I will leave you with few verses below to read and meditate for yourselves on the BIBLE TRUTHS on Water Baptism** (perhaps during your usual morning meditation time) so that you would not shift, delay and procrastinate this so very important act and command of God any further, before it's too late. I believe, if you take time to read each of the Scriptures below yourself, which are all related to BAPTISM, **you will know without a shadow of doubt** that, you need to take 'Adult Believers Baptism'. And sorry to say, you will also know that your ritualistic infant baptism, taken on behalf of you, as a tick in the box, did not unfortunately qualify Christ command and His Great Commission to the Church on Baptism, as part and parcel of sharing the Gospel and making Disciples.

The reason I am laying down the verses for you to study below without simply expanding them for you, is for two reasons. Firstly I believe that as a Believer if you and I are seriously interested to know the TRUTH of anything it's best that we ourselves exercise our mind, faculty and heart to **seek and find** the Truth ourselves. Secondly such kind of Scriptures is best understood in their fullness when personally read from our own Bible.

Remember your faith will be tested by God in what you do with what you believe in (**James 1:22; 2:14, 17, 24**) and I believe Baptism is an endorsement of that Faith.

*Would you flip the page to the next Chapter, saying 'let's go on with the*

Book', or would you be intrigued to stop and read each of the Scriptures below saying 'let's know what is God's will in my life regarding **BAPTISM**'?

*So let's begin this Biblical search if*

**Infant Baptism**

**V's**

**Adult Believer's Baptism**

*Fulfills Christ Jesus Command upon the Church?*

*(For The Bible and Christ should be the final Word for our Faith  
Not Man or Denomination – Right?)*

Starting from the Old Testament prophesy in  
**Ezekiel 36:25-27**

To the command of the Lord Jesus in  
**Matthew 3:15; 28:18-20; Mark16:16**

To the early Church in the Book of Acts of the Apostles as in  
**Acts 2:41; Acts 8:35-38; Acts 9:17-19; Acts 10:47-48; Acts 16:14-15,27-34;  
Acts 18:8,24-28; Acts 19:1-8; Acts 22:12-16.**

And then finally as we read through the Epistles  
**Romans 6:3-8; Galatians 3:26-27; Colossians 2:12;  
Hebrews 10:22; 1 Peter 3:21; James 2:14-17**

When you take this step of obedience, let me encourage you by saying; that I truly believe that God will ignite the fire within you and from that day on, you will want to live for Him alone. But remember it is again up to us after that, to keep the fire going or to quench it up like the 'Foolish Virgins'!

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# Chapter 7

## Lack of Christian Brotherly love - A BIG Killer/Disqualifier!

Moving on to this very crucial Chapter, - 'Lack of Christian brotherly Love - A big Killer and Disqualifier' among Christians today! The book of Hebrews warns that many believers are at the point of being disqualified only because of this grave folly.

### Hebrews 12:14-17

***<sup>14</sup> Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: <sup>15</sup> looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God;***

***lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;***

***<sup>16</sup> lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.***

***<sup>17</sup> For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.***

The above verse is very clear that if Christians are having any root of bitterness in them, they can fall short of the Grace of God, become defiled and finally come to a point of being rejected by God.

In this sixth and last Chapter of 'Foolish Virgins' I want to mention that we believers should not be foolish in missing our crowns on the count of one of the biggest and most dangerous disqualifier in Christianity today by which '**many are becoming defiled**' in the sight of God.

**Hebrew 12:14-17** as we just read, taking the example of Esau (from the Old Testament), who negligently threw away his 'God given birth right' on a small issue, like for a morsel of food, **cautions Christian believers** who may be foolishly throwing away their 'God given Salvation - a free gift' only because they are harbouring bitterness between one another, be it with a Christian brother or sister or family member or neighbour. Our spiritual adversary knows this very well too and keeps assailing us with thoughts of un-forgiveness, envy and bitterness.

Brotherly Love is unfortunately replaced today with Brotherly **bitterness, jealousy and gossip**. Many believers on one side, even though they address each other as brother and sister but unfortunately within themselves carry a stigma of hypocrisy in their love, with roots of bitterness and jealousy.

**Romans 12:9 says**

***'Let love be without hypocrisy.***

*Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.'*

I was told that in United States every year many Pastors are falling out of faith and many Churches are closing down – Why? It is because unfortunately there is very little unity between Christians and more of disunity. The result is, few gather together in one accord in prayer and fellowship, (which is supposed to be the backbone of our Christian faith) leading to further division and chaos. Even if there is fellowship, then unfortunately it is invariably followed up with brotherly gossips and slander. **Very Sad!**

Apostle John had sent out the warning, seeing those same traces in the early Church then, laying before very clearly, the **costly price that we will have to pay** on account of this 'Lack of Brotherly Love' amongst us in:

**1 John 3:14-15**

*<sup>14</sup> We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.*

***He who does not love his brother  
abides in death.***

<sup>15</sup> Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

We see Apostle Paul addressing the same thing in

**1 Thessalonians 4:6-9**

<sup>6</sup> That no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified.

<sup>7</sup> ***For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.***

<sup>8</sup> Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.

<sup>9</sup> ***But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.***

Yes there indeed is no need for us Christians to be told to love one another for we indeed are taught by the Jesus our Lord and God.

**Matthew 22:37-40**

<sup>37</sup> Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' <sup>38</sup> This is the first and great commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it:

***'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'***

<sup>40</sup> On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

**John 15:12**

***This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.***

Unfortunately many Christians are going to be found wanting on that Day on account of this biggest sin of disobedience; **Yes, disobedience to the Lord's command.** To me I have come to realise

that every word of the Lord Jesus spoke is a command (not a mere suggestion) and needs to be taken very seriously, needless to say in places where He explicitly says it, as this particular **command**.

Take the example of the Lord Jesus and see how He displayed His love to His disciple and fellow brethren in the Lord God - Judas Iscariot (the betrayer).

The Lord could have asked Judas to leave the Upper Room before commencing 'Washing of His disciple's feet' (as an expression of His love and service to His disciples) or the Lord could have asked him to leave the room at least before the 'Last Supper'. But no, He washed Judas's feet also and then broke bread with him and only then asked Judas Iscariot to leave the Upper Room.

God's Word commands us to not only love the brethren but to love our brethren **'fervently'**

**1 Peter 1:22**

*'Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit **in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently** with a pure heart.'*

The 'love' Apostle Peter was meaning was an 'unconditional love'. To **'Love fervently'** means, being stretched to the limits, that is, love the brethren in spite of being treated unkindly, unfairly and perhaps even if treated with hostility.

However this love does not mean you will not correct a fellow believer when you see him or her in the wrong, but in fact your love for them will make you tell them the truth. **Matthew 18:15** *"If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother."*

However let me also clarify that this love in no way needs to be mixed up with partaking with a brother who is in sin, for 1 Corinthians 5:11-13 warns us of that.

**1 Corinthians 5:11-13 says**

<sup>11</sup> *But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.* <sup>12</sup> *For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?*

The Bible in 1 John 4:16-17, is very clear that only the strong presence of LOVE in our lives can we have boldness as we stand before the Lord on Judgement day.

**1John 4:16-17 says**

<sup>16</sup> *And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. **God is love**, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.* <sup>17</sup> *Love has been perfected among us in this: **that we may have boldness in the day of judgment**; because as He is, so are we in this world.*

As I come to the end of this chapter about brotherly love, we need to remember with Holy fear that the 'Word of God' holds the power of life and death on Judgement Day.

We all know the Lord Jesus' prayer which He taught us to pray 'Our Father who art in heaven....' But did we know the very next verse after that Lord's Prayer as in:

**Matthew 6:15:**

*But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

*And there is no mention of an exclusion or exception for a saved believer there.*

**Apostle John said in 1John 4:20-21:**

<sup>20</sup> *If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, **how can he love God** whom he has not seen?* <sup>21</sup> *And this commandment*

we have from Him: that he who loves God **must love his brother also**.

In other words Apostle John was saying above, any of our claims to love God is a delusion, if it is not accompanied by unselfish and unconditional love for another fellow believer in Christ (or that matter any of our neighbour).

**1 Thessalonians 3:12-13**

<sup>12</sup> *And may the Lord make you increase*

***and abound in love***

*to one another and to all,*

*just as we do to you,*

<sup>13</sup> ***so that He may establish your hearts***

***blameless in holiness***

*before our God and Father*

***at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.***

**Unfortunately many Christians are confused and corrupted with the general 'Christian View'**

which at the face of it seems alright, but it is quite different from the way the Lord looks at things as we read **1 Corinthians 13:1-8**:

**The general 'Christian view' of Love for God** is when people have the various gifts of the spirit. We say of such people "How close he or she is to the Lord and that is the reason the Lord is using them mightily." But how God really looks at it is found in

**1 Corinthians 13:1-2:**

*Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, ***but have not love, I am nothing.****

**The general best 'World view' of Love as it can get is** - helping the poor, sacrificing through bodily penitence by holy pilgrimage, cutting of body, walking on coals, climbing mountain shrines with heavy loads to see a deity and so on,  
**but your eyes may be opened to how the Lord God views it:**

**1 Corinthians 13:3**

*<sup>3</sup> And though I bestow  
all my goods to feed the poor,  
and though I give my body to be burned,  
but have not love,  
it profits me nothing.*

**So what really is 'God's view' of Love in the bible is as in:**

**1 Corinthians 13:4-8 what God calls LOVE:**

*<sup>4</sup> Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; <sup>5</sup> does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; <sup>6</sup> does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; <sup>7</sup> bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

**<sup>8</sup> Love never fails.**

*But whether there are prophecies, they will fail;  
whether there are tongues, they will cease;  
whether there is knowledge,  
it will vanish away.*

In ending I am prompted to remind ourselves again of **Isaiah 55:8-9** which says that, **God's ways** and thoughts are far above man's ways and thoughts. Beloved of Christ the only way to really know God's ways for man is - '**By diligently READING THE whole BIBLE**' from Genesis to Revelation.

**1 John 5:2**

**Jesus our Lord says**

**'For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.**  
*And His commandments are not burdensome.'*





## CONCLUSION

*(Prepare Ye the way of the Lord)*  
*Isaiah 40:3*

GOD is calling all believers all across the world, to 'Repent and Return' and prepare the Way for Him, our Messiah Christ Jesus for His soon and Imminent Return! What the Lord Jesus testified at the beginning of His Ministry in **Mark 1:15 as we will read below**; today again testifies to the Churches all over the world- which is what I call the '**Bottom-line**' of the Bible found in **Revelation 22:12!**

*"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.  
Repent, and Believe in the Gospel."*  
**(Mark 1:15)**

*"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me,  
to give to every one according to his Work."*  
**(Revelation 22:12)**

The prophetic words come to us today as in  
**Acts 17:30-31:**

*Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked,  
**but now commands all men everywhere to repent,**  
because 'He has appointed a Day'  
on which He will Judge the World in righteousness  
by the 'Man' whom He has ordained.  
He has given assurance of this  
to all by raising Him from the dead."*

The timing could not be better for us to return to our first love whole hog, when the world is soon moving to the fulfilment as in the words of Prophet Obadiah:

**Obadiah 1:15**

*"For the **day of the Lord**  
upon all the nations **is near**;  
As you have done, it shall be done to you;  
Your reprisal shall return upon your own head."*

The warning above 'As you have done, it shall be done to you' clearly states that we shall pay for the deeds we have done. That comes so very clear many times especially through the words of our Lord Jesus.

Again many of us think it does not include us the saved Christian believers **but all such are mistaken**. It's evident as we read from the below Scriptures that judgement would be rendered by the Just Judge according to each ones '**works**'.

**Revelation 2:5**

*'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**.'*

**Matthew 16:27**

*'For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His  
angels, **and then He will reward each according to his works**.'*

**Revelation 22:12**

*"And behold, I am coming quickly,  
and My reward is with Me,  
**to give to every one  
according to his work**."*

Make no mistake, all '**works**' done as led by the Spirit (which God had prepared before the foundations of the world, so that we walk in them) are '**good works**'.

All the rest of the 'works' done, even with all good intentions post salvation still remain as filthy rags with the risk of the Lord Jesus telling us '**I Never Knew you**' looms high over us (Ephesians 2:10;

Matthew 7:21-24; Matthew 25:11-12; Romans 8:14; 1 John 2:17; Revelation 2:2-7). Therefore, imagine how crucial it is for you and me to always keep checking and inquiring with the Lord God (and waiting on Him) if we are in His will in all that we do.

Doing the 'Will of God' is what the Bible calls **'WHITE GARMENTS'** without spot and wrinkle. This reference of having our **'White Garments or Wedding Robe'** has a prophetic analogy to us being found with 'righteous acts or good deeds' at His Appearing. This indeed is a mystery, right from the Old Testament prophecies of Daniel to our Lord Jesus reference in the Gospels. May the Holy Spirit **unlock** the fullness of the Bible Scriptures below as you study each of them:

**Matthew 22:11-14**

<sup>11</sup> *"But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on*

***a wedding garment.***

<sup>12</sup> *So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here*

***without a wedding garment?'***

*And he was speechless. <sup>13</sup> Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

<sup>14</sup> *"For many are called,*

***but few are chosen."***

*In Book Revelation the Lord Jesus again makes references of this White Garment:*

**Revelation 3:4-6**

<sup>4</sup> *You have a few names even in Sardis*

***who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white,***

*for they are worthy.*

<sup>5</sup> ***He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments,***

*and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life;*

*but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.*

<sup>6</sup> *"He who has an ear, let him hear*

***what the Spirit says to the churches."***

**Revelation 3:18-19, 22**

<sup>18</sup> I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich;

and **white garments, that you may be clothed**, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

<sup>19</sup> As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.

Therefore be zealous and repent.

<sup>22</sup> "**He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.**"

*Revelation Chapter 19 and Chapter 22 brings out what really do that White Garment's represent:*

**Revelation 19:7-8**

<sup>7</sup> Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and **His wife has made herself ready.**"

<sup>8</sup> And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, **for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.**

**Revelation 22:14**

<sup>14</sup> Blessed are those

**who do His commandments** (*Wash their Robes* – NASB says), that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.

**In many parables of Jesus, we see that the people were confident to enter the Kingdom of Heaven but they were taken by surprise to see that they were going to be thrown into outer darkness (unfortunately our confidence does not make the difference, holy and obedient living does!).**

**One of my favourite Scriptures is Hebrew 9:28** because it beautifully lays out all what a Believer needs to be found with at Christ Return unto salvation. In fact this verse contains the whole Gospel in a nutshell and it reiterates what the Lord Jesus said in **John 14:23-28**.

**Hebrews 9:28 says**

*"So Christ was offered **once**  
to bear the sins of many.  
To those **who eagerly wait** for Him  
He **will appear** a second time,  
**apart from sin**,  
for salvation."*

**That Hebrew portion brings three Bible truths of the Gospel, spot-on:**

1. Christ has offered Himself **once** to remove our sins, and will not repeatedly come to be a sacrifice again.
2. A true and faithful Bride, would **eagerly await** her Bridegroom's Return (2 Timothy 4:8; Revelation 22:17). A longing and eager waiting for our Lord Jesus is direct evidence to the very first command in the Bible 'In loving the Lord God with all our heart, soul and strength.'
3. At His appearance we need to be found '**apart from sin**' as **overcomers**, and not in the least found in repeated and deliberate unconfessed sin/s. (1 John 1:7-10; 1 John 3:7-11; Revelation 2:4-7; 3:2-5)

**The Bible says:**

*For if we sin wilfully  
**after we have received the knowledge of the truth**,  
there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,  
<sup>27</sup> but a certain fearful expectation of judgment,  
and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.  
(Hebrews 10:26-27)*

**Two sides of Calvary!**

**'Calvary is certainly an expression of  
the undefinable Love of God to the world.  
But Calvary also is -  
A reminder of a 'Holy God' who cannot tolerate sin**

And that equation does not change any time, even for us who

are saved, who are expected to then walk in Holiness and Godly Fear, in keeping with true repentance – **Titus 2:11-12.**

Dearly beloved of Christ, I want to end this book by saying; perhaps some parts of this book may have come to you as things you have never thought of before or never have been taught before and because of which such parts might have come as an eye opener. Or perhaps for a few of you, some parts have come as a disagreement. To all such may I earnestly appeal, "Would you please take those matters of concerns to the Lord in prayer, to seek God's view (not man's view) and then wait on Him, till He alone answers you".

Or let me put it another way, if you have any questions on any of the content/s in this book '**Bible Truths Unlocked**' please do not brush it aside because it just did not match up with what you have been taught, your doctrine, denomination or what your tradition is (for remember, that you did not come into faith in the Lord Jesus Christ because of your denomination or because of man). Can I humbly challenge you again, to seek the Lord (not man) to confirm the same through the Holy Spirit and then be bold to follow that through **with action.**

As I said earlier several times before, **when we stand before the Lord God on the last Day**, we shall be judged or justified (like I said not by what you or I thought or we were taught but) **by what is WRITTEN!**

*The Lord Jesus said in:*

**John 12:47-50**

**<sup>47</sup> And if anyone hears My words  
and does not believe,**

*I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world  
but to save the world.*

<sup>48</sup> *He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words,  
has that which judges him*

**the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.**

<sup>49</sup> *For I have not spoken on My own authority;  
but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should  
say and what I should speak.*

<sup>50</sup> **And I know that His command is everlasting life.**

Therefore, whatever I speak,  
just as the Father has told Me, so I speak."

*And again the Lord says in*

**Matthew 7:23-24, 26**

<sup>23</sup> *And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you;  
depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'*

<sup>24</sup> *"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them,  
I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:*

<sup>26</sup> ***"But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine,  
and does not do them,  
will be like a foolish man***

*who built his house on the sand. <sup>27</sup> and the rain descended, the  
floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it  
fell. **And great was its fall.**"*

*We just cannot afford to ignore the Lord Jesus' Words.  
Lest He ignores us at His Appearing!*

I have come to realise, that I am the Lord's first project before anyone else, reminding myself that I'm the sinner, whom Christ Jesus came to save! That God will continue His sanctification work in me, as I learn and unlearn, through the daily reading of His '**Awesome Word**'. **He is still working in me!**

**Daniel 12:10 says**

*Many shall be purified, made white, and refined,  
but the wicked shall do wickedly;  
and none of the wicked shall understand,  
but the wise shall understand.'*

<sup>20</sup> **Now may the God of peace**

who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

<sup>21</sup> **make you complete in every good work to do His will,**

working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.

Amen.

**(Hebrews 13:20-21)**

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If the Biblical Truths found in this book has challenged your Christian walk, all glory be to our Lord God, 'Who' alone is worthy of all glory. Then can I also urge you to share this book with your fellow Christian friends. I have made it convenient for you, by simply forwarding the 'WEBSITE' below, which has a '**Free eBook**' download. **May the Lord God bless you and keep you holy, blameless and spotless till His Appearing.**

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*Prepare the way of the Lord;  
Make His paths straight'*  
**(Isaiah 40:3; Luke 3:4)**

**Bible Truths Unlocked** comes very timely, when the prophesied Apostasy has hit the walls of the Church and now is spreading like gangrene - 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 1Timothy 4:1-2; 2Timothy 3:1-7; 4:3-4.

When we all stand before our Lord Jesus, it would not matter then as to what we thought, neither it would matter what we were taught, but all that would matter is what is **'Written'** and by His **'Written Word'** we would be judged - Matthew 16:27; 2 Corinthians 5:10.

There is unfortunately a sharp dichotomy between what is predominantly being taught and preached today to that of the teachings of our Lord Jesus in the Gospels and the Epistle Writers. The Bible instructs that all such teachings should be **exposed** - Ephesians 5:1-14; 2John 1:8-11. Sad to say, many Christians have unfortunately understood the 'grace of God' **upside down!** **Titus 2:11-12** says "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age."

Apostasy means— moving away from the Truth. The Bible categorically says that in the Last Days this **Apostasy will come** upon many in the Church, who may have a form of godliness, although they have denied its Power. Today what is largely preached is 'feel good factor' pampering messages, without convicting the saved sinner, the need to **grow in sanctification** through obedience, unto salvation - Hebrew 5:8-9.

The Lord Jesus addressed all such believers who lost their Souls into eternity as 'Foolish' (through His various parables). Today, many in the Church unfortunately lack discernment. **Bible Truths Unlocked** warns believers of Christ all over; that it's time we **wake up to maturity**.

When the Lord Jesus started His ministry on earth, one of His very first words was **'A call to Repent and Return'** - Mark 1:14. Incidentally those were also one of His last prophetic Words to the Church - Revelation 2:4-5; 3:2-6; 22:12-14. This Book is **a reminder to heed to that Call!**

