

The 'Key' Parable!

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Father, this morning, even as we are here in the house at this time of receiving Your Word, I pray, Lord Father, You heard our worship, You heard our prayers. Father, we believe, Father, You were exalted through everything and even now, in the ministry of the Word that we'll exalt Your Name. Father, You said, You exalted Your Word above Your name, and this morning, Father, anoint every one of us; me, as I speak and all of us, as we hear. Give us ears to hear to what the Spirit of the God has to say to each one of us in this last hour of time. Grant us grace; to that end, we pray. Anoint us, touch us, convict us, change us, sanctify us, and, Father, empower us to do Your will in our lives. Thank You, Father. Bless us this time. We just want to exalt Your holy Name. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

Let's look into the Word and want to look at one of the most familiar passages every one of you know. I am sure there's none of us here in this place who doesn't know this passage and we'll go back to those familiar portions of Scripture and sometimes, when we look at them and dig at the Scripture, you find something of, we unearth new dimensions of God's Word and His personality.

Even as we meditate upon His Word, we change accordingly even as we hear the truth. And the passage that I am talking about is what we call is the Parable of the Sower. And everyone knows the Parable of the Sower and already has a smile on your face because you are so familiar with it. You know it at the back of your mind and I am sure there are still lessons to learn from this parable. And this, by the way; just want to put this in context the message in context. This is the first time if you look at the Gospel account where Jesus begins to speak in parables. 'Parabule'. That's the Word in Greek. And parable is like a riddle. It looks very simple from the outside, but it's got such deep pregnant cogent meaning and we have to unpack it as we understand the dimensionality of it even as we meditate upon it, different dimensions. This is such a familiar passage in Scripture and I want to just position this particular parable. If you see *the Gospel according to Matthew*, particularly, you'll see till *Matthew 12*, Jesus is doing a lot of miracles. He's doing considerable amount of teaching, especially, the most famous teaching is the Sermon on the Mount and He's speaking to them plainly about what the Spirit of the Lord is and He spoke to them in analogies explained those analogies He didn't put many riddles. But there comes a time when Jesus when He looks at the response of the people of God to His Word and to His miracles and to the Word the confirmation for the Word by the miracles He looks at the response and He says you guys did not receive what I spoke to you plainly and now what I am going to do is I am going to speak to all of you in parables and I am going speak to my disciples what exactly every parable means. And therefore, the entrance into the kingdom will be unlocked to us if we understand especially the Parable of the Sower and we all are so familiar with it so let us visit this parable and the renderings of the parable given in the three synoptic Gospels in *Matthews, Mark and Luke*. Let us look at the famous familiar passage of Scriptures and from *Matthew chapter 13*.

Matthew 13:1-9

¹On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea.

That's interesting, right? Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea, I am not going to go into the details what that means but it can look it up look at the context in more detail.

²And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.³ Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold,

This heading is 'behold'. It's like He's there at the seashore and He's possibly looking at the field just close by and He saw a farmer sowing seed and said 'Behold a farmer'. So, everybody is looking at the farmer now. So, He's going to teach this story this parable by just using simple illustrations but deep meaning.

³... "Behold, a sower went out to sow. ⁴ And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. ⁵ Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. ⁶ But when the sun was up, they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. ⁷ And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. ⁸ But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹ He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

"Whatever the Spirit has to say, I am not going to continue," this is what He says. Let's look at the Gospel according to *Mark* account, it's very similar except the last part and you'll just look at verses 8-9 from *Mark chapter 4*.

Mark 4: 8-9

⁸ ***But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop*** (the last seed) ***that sprang up, increased and produced:*** (now He reverses the order He says) ***some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.***⁹ ***And He said to them, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"***

Again, in Gospel according to *Luke chapter 8*, let's look at this passage from verses 4 onwards.

Luke 8: 4-8

⁴ ***And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable:*** ⁵ ***"A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down,*** (that is interesting detail interjected in the parable just notice that. it was trampled down) ***and the birds of the air devoured it.***

You see every, Luke is a doctor and thank God for doctors they are details mania. So, every detail is being recorded. That's what He tells Theophilus, "I dig; I wanted to know every detail of the chronological account of Jesus Christ," and that is how it records every some interesting detail given over here.

⁵ ***...some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it.*** ⁶ ***Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture.*** (some detail again) ⁷ ***And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it.*** ⁸ ***But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold."***

Luke is a doctor; he knows entrance exam, you should get 100. So, 100 marks, if you don't get, you'll not, your rank will go so he said, "Baba, 100."

⁸ ***...When He had said these things He cried, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"***

We have three renderings of this famous parable and everybody knows eyes are glued what is this fellow going to teach. Let's look at the parable. The parable. Very interesting, we have the four ingredients in this parable. First, we have the 'sower' – the one who broadcasts the seed. That's exactly the Word; when the sower is going, he's broadcasting. That's an interesting Word. What do television channels and radio channels do? They broadcast information. So, we have the sower who is broadcasting 'the Word', the seed, which is the Word which is essentially the signal. So, we have the broadcaster, you have the signal which is the Word. And then, we have the soil which is the receiver the hear the heart of those hears. It's not there, ears it's the heart. And these three elements of the parable this is very simple and what is expected after a sower is sowing the seed; what is he expecting? Answer? Fruit. The harvest, the Desired Result Bearing Fruit even a hundred-fold. That's the desired result. So, he explains the parable. So, now, we zeroed in on the elements of the parable and what is the parable expecting us to focus on is clear. And then, in *Mark's Gospel chapter 4*, makes a very interesting statement. We are looking at, I am going to go through the parallel passages to get a complete rendering of this parable.

Mark 4:10-12

¹⁰ ***But when He was alone,*** (say 'alone') ***those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable.*** ¹¹ ***And He said to them, "To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom*** (so say 'alone'. 'mystery' now this mystery is not like a who done it. It is not Agatha Christie or Perry Mason this is mystery which is revelation, alright?) ***of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables,*** ¹² ***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.***

So, I want to highlight one important principle when Jesus is trying to explain the parable. First, He says we have to get alone with Him to understand the mystery. You got it? Get alone with Him to understand the mystery.

There was a researcher from University of Wisconsin. Not sure if it was Madison or some other University; possibly, Madison. He published a very interesting article in the 2005 edition of the BBC science journal, whatever editorial. His name is Dr.

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Norman Wilsman. He made an interesting observation about these two guys. Who are they? Sheep. And you see this is a newspaper which is reporting obviously, you know how the newspaper reports. They put sensors into the leg bones of baby lambs and confirmed that most growth spurts occurred when the animals were at rest or sleeping. So, very interesting for the animals to grow they should, because they were supposed to be at rest or they should be sleeping. And then, this is Dr. Norman Wilsman observation. I am quoting this – "What was really interesting was that the bones were growing only when the animals were lying down, and almost no growth occurs when the lambs are standing or moving around." I thought it was interesting. This is a principle in Christian growth. Most Christian growth, if you want to grow spiritually in your stature in your walk with the Lord, you need to be alone with God in a place of rest. Every man of God, they all grew in solitude, in the wilderness away from all the clamor and the confusion of the world. So, if you really want to grow, I mean, talking to a lot of researchers and all kinds of busy people whoever you're here in this congregation this morning. If you want to grow spiritually, one thing that you can never circumvent is to get alone with God. Look at this principle,

Matthew 11:28-29

²⁸ Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and (what?) learn from Me...

Meaning – all learning takes place when you are in a one-on-one relationship with God, spending time in your secret closet. And honestly, it doesn't matter; no matter how busy your schedule is, there is some part of the day you just set apart. Even if you are a mother, full time mother; full time mother plus employee whatever your profession or lack thereof. one part of the day, go separate where you spend time with God. You cannot ever circumvent that. It is not your daily devotion or not even daily Bible reading where you transact something spiritual from God. You understand what I am saying? If you know James Tour to many of the young people over here, par excellence in chemistry in Rice University in Texas. You know what he says? "Every day, I get up in the morning at 3 o'clock and I open the Scripture; I read through the Bible from *Genesis* to *Revelation*. After I finish, I again go back." He's a scientist, he's got 636 research publication, 100's of patent several companies which he started. He's not only a professor of chemistry; he's professor of computer science also. He's a first who started nanotechnology, a Nano-computer. A Jewish man married to a Pakistani lady and brain spark excellence but hard work par excellent, but he says, "The secret of my success is because I get up in the morning and I spend time with God in prayer." And you need to understand – this man if you know his accomplishments and looked at his accomplishments and I looked accomplishments, I, as a researcher, felt ashamed. And I wrote to him. Actually, I said, "Boy. your life is an inspiration. "So, that's a first principle we all have to know; we need to spend time alone with God. See, why is there so much confusion in our lives is because we don't have a transaction with God alone. God is a God who speaks. Right from the beginning, it says, "In the beginning, God created heavens and the earth," and Lord **said**; the Lord speaking through creation through everything, He is a God who speaks. It says the Word of God is living, active, powerful than a two-edged sword dividing into soul and the spirit and the join and marrow; it is discerner of the thoughts and the intense of heart. So, if that is the case, what you have your hands which black white the print is the living Word of God which is able to speak to you. Got it? So, grow growth happens when you're alone.

Let's move on and see few more principles. *Luke 10:41-42* this is talking about Martha. We know it.

Luke 10:41-42

⁴¹ But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things,

How many anxious and troubled people in this morning in the house of the Lord? You don't have to put your hands up. Anxious and troubled people, I looked at your prayer request; many are anxious; many are troubled. God said, "Why are you anxious for your life?" Life is psychology. Why are you anxious for your body? Body is 'soma', why are you anxious about your psychosomatic problems? Don't be anxious about your psycho; don't get psyched out and don't get weary in your body. Anxious and troubled people over here, many. The antidote for anxiety is one thing needful – Mary chose that one portion sitting at the feet of Jesus and growing in your relationship with Him. See, once you grow in your relation, even God says, "You should stay there forever." He will specifically tell you what exactly you have to do. Understand that. So, growth happens when you are in a one-on-one relationship with God alone with God. God is a God who speaks to individuals. See, in the crowd, you know that is the reason why the Andrew's ministry is very interesting. You know what Andrew does, right? If you have a huge crowd, he looks at individual and he'll bring one individual to Christ. He's the one who brings Peter to Christ; he's the one who brings Barnabas to Christ. He's the one who brings that small fellow with the loaves of bread to Christ; he always

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brings individuals to Christ and then, one Greek and all these people come to meet Jesus. He brings them in a crowd he is looking at individuals. That is what we call is Andrew ministry and God is a specialist in Andrew Ministry; begins at home where you sit at Jesus' feet, you carry yourself in the spirit of Andrew. I am sorry if I have offended any Catholics here. Ex-catholic is laughing. So, just draw there in the spirit of Andrew; He speaks to you one-on-one. He's interested in individuals, you know that? I am speaking here to so many people, possibly about 100 people here in the congregation now here, but everyone is a project in God's hand. He's interested in your life. So, that is first principle. Let's move on.

Mark 4:13

¹³ **And he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?"**

In other words, if you want to unlock the mysteries of God and if you want revelation from this Scripture, for it is important for us to understand clearly objectively as well as subjectively; what this parable means so that we'll understand the principles of unlocking the truth of the Word of God. You understand this?

We'll first look at; I showed you four elements in the parable – we first have the sower, the seed, the soil. If you were in my other class in the university, I would have made you stand over there and all but it's okay. First, we'll look at the sower. See, the sower is very important. You need to understand something; you have seven Kingdom Parables. The first parable is called the Parable of the Sower, where we have the seed, which is the Word of God. Second, parable is the parable, anybody knows the answer? Wheat and the tares. In that, what is the seed? Seed is the, not the Word of God, are the people or the children of the Kingdom. The third parable is very interesting. Anybody knows the third parable? Yeah! The third parable is the parable of the mustard seed. Fourth parable is the parable of the leaven. Fifth parable is the parable of the guy who stumbles upon the treasure and he says everything is bought and he purchases the field. Sixth parable is the parable of this guy searching for pearls and he finds the pearl of great price and he sells everything that he's got and gets the pearl. And the seventh parable is the parable of the dragnet where you have all kinds of people, the righteous to everlasting life and the wicked to the everlasting to damnation and hell. Seven Kingdom parables. The first parable talks about the breath of the Kingdom, because he is sowing the seed. The second parable talks about the length of the Kingdom. That is the beginning of the end and the end of the age the length of the Kingdom. The third parable is the parable of the mustard seeds. So, it talks about the height of the Kingdom. The fourth parable is the parable of the leaven; he talks about the depth of the Kingdom. See? Everybody got it? So, everybody got it. So, you have four dimensions. You have the breadth of the Kingdom, you have the length of the Kingdom, you have the height of the Kingdom and you have depth of the Kingdom and the last two parables who are those people who are apprehended who are people who are entering into the Kingdom. Two kinds of people; people who stumble into the Kingdom; people who are searching for the Kingdom. Both kinds of people. You know lot of people stumbled here, right? Some of you were searching those kinds of people all things of people are there. We have seven parables and then, this particular parable, we have the sower. The sower is the person he sows the seed which is the Word of God. So, we'll zero in on the sower and all of us will eventually will become sowers one day because we're all supposed to go and sow the seed of the Word of God. So, let us look at potential sowers. If you want to become a sower this should be your attitude.

1 Timothy 3:1-3

¹**The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. ² Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, (lets read this together) able to teach, ³ not a drunkard, not violent** (man. KJV says not a striker. Not carrom board striker but you know all husbands know what this is right?) **but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.**

Another place;

1 Timothy 3:8-10

⁸ **Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. ⁹ They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless.**

You should have the ability to teach. Everybody has the ability to teach but we are lazy. Second thing, I am not talking about the gift of preaching; I am talking about the ability to teach especially if you're a mother, that is a default. It's a default gift

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for you and of course, if you're a guy like me who's passionate about teaching. I just love it. So, he should have a clear conscience and ability to teach. And then, something very interesting about the sower; the sower is important for a sower to be man of study. Chadvu entha mandi ki istam (how many of you like studying?) Look at what he says.

2 Timothy 2:15

¹⁵**Be diligent (Study) to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.**

So, it is important for a man who's in the teaching ministry or this ministry of sowing the seed and *1 Peter 3:18* will say "Always be ready to give an answer for the hope that is in you and you should give it in what kind of a conscience a clear good conscience. We should all be ready. Everybody is working in a company when they ask you what the reason for the hope that is in you should be able to tell them. That is how Nabeel Qureshi got converted because of David Wood. All the Christians, they were saying, "What are my four spiritual laws?" They were searching. This guy had an answer right on time the rest is history; you know what happened to Nabeel. You see, always be ready and prepared to give an answer in season, out of season. I was talking to Pastor James; you know what he said? "Vijay, when I go to the mission trip, I don't prepare anymore. What I am today is what I became in in my 40's, is what I did in my 30's, what I am in my 50's, is what I did in my 40's, what will be in my 60's, is what I do in my 50's." You see, there is a law of sowing and reaping and most of you are young and most of you are distracted too. You see but you should become men of the book, men of study. See, this is inevitable; you can see Paul tells a very interesting thing, right? He says, "*I am a debtor to the Greeks and the barbarians.*" His whole idea was to teach the *Book of Romans* to the barbarians. The barbarians don't have a script. What was his agenda? He would create a script and teach the gospel to them. That's exactly what happened. Everyone who was missionary to India, they learned the language and translated the entire Bible into regional languages all across the country, you see. These should be people of the book and second principle is very important all to be want to be preachers Bible teaches people who want to take Bible studies this is the principle with which you need to prepare for your study.

2 Timothy 2:15

¹⁵**Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the Word of truth.**

Look what it says in *Ecclesiastes* and I'll show you a very interesting translation. Look at that. This is one of my favorite verses in the Bible.

Ecclesiastes 12:9 – 10

⁹ **Besides being wise, (look at this verse okay) the Preacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs with great care.**

Love it. "**Weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs with great care.**" You know, we have a course in our university called 'digital language and processor' and there was one guy called Professor Biswas. He was from my ex-university. Actually, created the course. You should see the way he meticulously plans every class. 28 lectures in a semester. He knows precisely what he's going to teach every semester class. He knows what kind of an assignment he is going to give and what kind of lab experiment. Everything precision and in order, careful preparation. I looked at that man; he was 60-years old, 65-years old. He came; he was the one who taught us; I was under training as one of his students. Tremendous teacher. I got this from the ESV what we should do.

¹⁰ **The Preacher sought to find Words of delight, and uprightly he wrote Words of truth.**

What did he do? He sought to find words of delight. You know, there are lot of lyricists in the Telugu movie industry. If you say 'movie', everybody will put their heads like that. One of the lyricists, he was having an interview. This guy is a scholar. They asked him, "How do you write the songs like this?" You know what he said? "Kashtamaina patalu chala suluvu. To write songs which are abstract is very easy. But suluvaina patalu rayadam chala kastham. To write songs which are easy to understand is very difficult." Pastor tells me, "Vijay, one of the things you need to learn is to simplify. Work hard in simplification and it is not easy." Every good researcher, every good teacher is the one who can break up the entire concept into small, small building blocks. How many musicians over here? We have Abel, the natural musician. I was talking to him

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yesterday. How many notes in music? 7 notes. And entire music is a linear combination of 7 notes. That's it. So, it is the arrangement of those notes in a beautiful fashion, in some kind of a rhythm which creates interest in the music. Isn't it? Otherwise, what we call as 'cacophonous'. So, we've the cacophonous in Asterix. It is called as 'cacophonous'; otherwise, it is a symphony.

The preacher sought to find words of delight and uprightly, he finds the words of truth.

Look at it another translation, it is the New Living Translation (NLT) and I like this. Look at it,

Ecclesiastes 12:9-10

⁹ Keep this in mind: The Teacher was considered wise, and he taught the people everything he knew. He listened carefully to many proverbs, studying and classifying them. (I love that. You should read the *Book of Proverbs*, how Solomon classifies *Proverbs*) ***¹⁰ The Teacher sought to find just the right words to express truths clearly.***

Another translation, look at this. This is beautiful, *Ecclesiastes 12:9-10* in The Living Bible.

Ecclesiastes 12:9-10

⁹ But then, because the Preacher was wise, he went on teaching the people all he knew; and he collected proverbs and classified them. ¹⁰ For the Preacher was not only a wise man but a good teacher; he not only taught what he knew to the people, but taught them in an interesting manner.

Oh! We've a lot of researchers in universities who are terrible teachers. Oh! They got Ph.D and everybody is paying fees as royalty for their Ph.D now. I'm Ph.D, am I right? All the Ph.Ds with Partial Head Damage will know what I am talking about. You should see my professor; he is not there but if he listens, it's okay now. That time, he will be changed; he will be my brother. "Vijay, this teaching business? I'm a researcher, in my labs in my books." You should come to his class, it is one of the boring lecture on Robotics. And I'm like, "My God! How can you make Robotics so boring?" He is one of the big researchers in India. See, he is not only wise; he is also a good teacher, you see. He not only taught, what he knew to the people but taught them, how? In an interesting manner. How many of you lost interest in a subject because of your teacher? Raise your hands please. The victims of bad teachers. Come on now, be honest. I hated some subjects because of the teachers. He used to work hard to make the class boring. You see, work hard, the sower is so important. That is the reason Jesus is a tremendous teacher.

Look at John McArthur says in his commentaries of this particular parable, in his transcripts of this message. This is what he says, "Jesus, He always starts with something they can understand and move to something they don't understand. He begins with something they can see, and then, moves to something they can't see. He starts with something natural and moves to something supernatural. He starts with what is material to moves to what is spiritual. He starts with what is common and moves to something that is uncommon. He starts with something simple and He moves to something which is profound, that is Jesus!" Amazing! This is how a sower has to be. You should be interesting people, by the way. Am I right? People should love to hang around you. Then, they open up, "Arey, I just want to spend some time with this guy." Words of wisdom. It's an interesting character. Everybody is in a pursuit of happiness, right? The pursuit of happiness. But then, you'll say, "I know some people who love to be miserable." They are also happy, being miserable. All the time. So, they find enjoyment in misery and they will look for people who are miserable like them and everybody look for party in the misery, "Aha! You're miserable, I am miserable; you are worse than me. This is fantastic." Enjoying; pursuit of happiness, by pursuing misery. You should be interesting people, my dear brothers and sisters. You should be going through difficulties like the way no man but when people sit around you, they should see and smell the fragrance of Christ. That's the challenge, I tell you.

There is something interesting, right? You should be a teacher, who should create interest for the student in the subject. That is, you know what happens? A lot of people, Telugu lo (They say, in Telugu), "Kashtapadi chaduvutharu. Emi chestunamu? Kastapadi chaduvuthunamu. Chematorchi (They are studying hard. What are we doing? We are studying hard. With sweat). You're burning the midnight oil. Just change the 'Kashtam' to Ishtam (Pain to liking). 'Ishtapadi chaduvu (Enjoy studying) ; when you Ishtapadi chaduvu, then you don't have to be Kashtapadi chaduvu. You see, if you enjoy something, it does not matter; you just are engrossed in it. Hours and hours. Why? Because you enjoy it. That's my indictment from my wife, "Vijay, you love work." Because I enjoy it. It gives me a high. This is important for us to understand; we should be interesting people.

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If you're a researcher in your university and you're doing a problem which is not interesting, pack research and run home, because you will have no value; you will add no value to your company and your research paper will be absolutely fit for the trash can. You will have no contribution, if you are not enjoying what you are doing. You should be interesting people, sowers.

And then, there is something else also about the sower. This is a very, very important.

Ezra 7:10

¹⁰ ***For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel.***

First, what does he wanted to do? He wanted to do it first himself, and then, he? Jesus did it for 30 years. 30 years, Pastor was talking to me and I said, "Vijay, you know how many years did Jesus studied before He opened His mouth after 12 years, old? 18 years of studying." Kya baat hai (Something to be praised!)! Too much. And, after that, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Him, He opened His mouth and He was a fantastic teacher! Can you find a better teacher than Jesus? Challenge you, you can't. Alright. So much to the sower. How many of us want to be sowers now? Like this kind? I want to be sower like this man. I want to an interesting person. I don't want to be a miserable person. I want be a guy who people just like to be around. I want to give value to people so that when they transact with me, there should be some kind of spiritual transaction that should take place.

The sower. So, second is Seed. What is the seed? It is His seed; not synthetic seed; it is not manufactured in the laboratory. Look at what it says in *Mark 4*.

Mark 4:14

¹⁴ ***The sower sows the word.***

What is the seed first? It is called the Word.

Luke 8:11

¹¹ ***Now the parable is this: The seed is the Word of God.***

Look at this interesting addition over here in *Matthew 13*.

Matthew 13:18-19

¹⁸ ***"Hear then the parable of the sower: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the Word of the Kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path.***

So, we have the word, the Word of God and Word of the Kingdom. Interesting! So, what you are being invited into is a Kingdom. What is it? Everybody say, Kingdom and a kingdom have a king. You need to understand that all of us, deep down inside, we have a fascination with monarchy. You know that? That is the reason why when one prince and one princess get married, oh! Everybody is waving flags and they are crying and wailing and emotional. Why? How much power does Queen Elizabeth have? Zero! She is rubber stamp only. She is powerless actually; she is just head of the state; naam key vassthey (just for name sake). But why this fascination with monarchy? Even in our own country, what do we want? Ram temple, Ramrajya, maryadha purishotham ram (Ram kingdom. respectable man of honor, Ram). Kisney bola tujhey? (who told you?). We have fascination towards kings deep down inside of us. What it tells me is this – democracy is the government only for the fallen man. One man of God, I think Tim Keller said this, "Democracy is like medicine. Nobody can live on medicine." How many of you'll had Paracetamol for breakfast? And Aspirin for lunch? And Vitamins for dinner? You will have kidney problem for sure, if you have Vitamins. We were never meant for medicine and by the way, medicines will never satisfy us, you will actually become immune to medicine; you know that? If you keep on using medicine, you will get immune to medicine. So that is the reason why we keep on kicking governments out. First, we have the liberals and we get tired with them and kick them out. And we will have conservatives and afterwards, we get tired with them and kick them out. Then, we have progressives and we will get tired with them and kick them out. We will never be satisfied with democracy because deep down inside, everyone has a desire for the king. But you know what? We hate the king. Why do the nations rage and the

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kings of the earth set their hands against His Son and the anointed? Let us break His bands asunder and in Hebrew it is beautiful.

Psalm 2:1-6

¹ *Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?* ² *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying,* ³ *"Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us."* ⁴ *He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.* ⁵ *Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying,* ⁶ *"As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill."*

God laughs. They hate the King. They only can live by the King. Do you know why they hate the King? Because they don't want the King in their heart, they want the king who is to be a political leader but not the Lord of their lives who will come and solve their problems but He is not going to reign in their lives. Pastor was talking about this emperor who visits his subjects. Remember the story he was sharing? I was reminded of one of the story by Richard Wurmbrand, in one of his books he was writing. The book name is 'Alone with God' if I'm right. He talks about this emperor who visits his subjects in disguise at nights. So, the emperor disguises himself and is walking on the streets and he finds a beggar with a begging bowl. He feels so sorry for him and he goes and tells him, "Hi." And the beggar looks at him and says, "Hi." The emperor says, "Do you know who I am?" And the beggar says, "No." He reveals himself and says, "I am the emperor," and he says, "Ask me whatever you want and I will give it to you." This guy is very interesting; he says, "Are you sure?" He says, "Yes, absolutely. I am the King. What do you want?" "Are you sure? You are not going to back off, right?" He says, "Fill this begging bowl. A small begging bowl, fill it up." The king looks at him and says, "What do you want me to fill it up with?" He says, "Gold." "This begging bowl with gold? Ah, nothing!" He calls his guys and commands them to go the treasury and bring the gold. So, that guy gets the gold and he puts it in the bowl and it disappears. He is shocked and says, "What is this? Maybe, I'm dreaming." He says, "Bring more gold and he puts the gold and it disappears." He is taken aback and says, "What's going on?" He is thinking that he is hallucinating and says, "Bring more gold." He is getting frustrated now, he gets more gold and he puts it in the bowl and it disappears. He says, "What kind of a magic trick are you playing with me?" You know what he says? "King, this begging bowl is my heart. It doesn't matter how much wealth you fill it with, it will never satisfy me." Most of us are looking for solutions for our problems. Like the Samaritan women who had five husbands and living with the sixth one, never satisfied because every relationship on the earth is short circuited for depression, it will never satisfy you. If you think that you are going to get satisfaction from your wife, then you are going to put so much weight upon her. It will crush her. No one can satisfy us except God and that satisfaction is deep down inside not outside. It is not the lack of problems but it is the joy in the midst of the problems. So, the word is the Word of the Kingdom, are you getting that everybody? Have you ever thought that in this parable in that dimensions?

Look at the seed in detail a little more. How do we get the seed? As I said it is not synthetic but it is something that Lord gives. Look at what it says in *1 Corinthians 11*.

1 Corinthians 11:23

²³ *For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you,*

So, what should I do? The seed is something which I have to receive. And then, second thing. The way I have to speak this is. How do I receive this seed? That the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread,

1 Peter 4:10

¹⁰ *As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.* ¹¹ *If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God.*

Look at what it says in another translation.

¹⁰ *God has given each of you some special abilities; be sure to use them to help each other, passing on to others God's many kinds of blessings.* ¹¹ *Are you called to preach? Then preach as though God himself were speaking through you. (TLB)*

Phew! I was talking to Brother Wilson the other day when we were having a discussion. I was telling him, "Brother Wilson, one of the things I have realized after coming to full time ministry is without the Lord, I can do nothing. With all my cleverness

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and intelligence, I can make one sermon, it will look very clever and intellectual but it will be absolutely dead if it is not from God." And then, the seed has to have several dimensions to it. Look at what it says in *1 Corinthians 14*.

1 Corinthians 14:6

"But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching?"

It has to have four dimensions. It has to be revelatory; means, it has to speak to your problem and to reveal the problem inside of you according to the Word of God. And then, it has to be knowledge; meaning, it has to tell you what the mind of the Lord is. It should be prophetic in that it should correct you and also tell you what your future course of life will be if you make a decision today. And it shall be teaching to edify you. That should be the seed. So, we have the sower, we have the seed and finally, we have the soil. Now, the man of God called the parable of the sower as 'the parable of the soils'. Ultimately, it will depend upon the type of soil. You see, very interesting; I'm preaching the Word or for example, Pastor James is preaching the Word; every one of us is receiving the Word in different ways; same word in different ways. Actually, the same Word according to the idol in your heart. For example, I will tell you my struggle; when he is preaching, what is the idol in my heart? "I want to preach like him." So, when I'm listening to him, I'm listening to the way he is explaining but I'm not concentrating on, what? What he is explaining. You see that? Some people are enamoured by the preacher. You know, he is bombastic; he is charismatic; he is eloquent. Recently, there was a debate between David Wood and Muhammad Hijab. How many of you saw that? David Wood and Muhammad Hijab. You've seen that? Muhammad Hijab is this guy who is bombastic and very charismatic. He will speak the lies confidently. All he speaks is lies; but very confidently. And what will all the Muslims say? "Kya bola re bhai? Kya bola? Too much!" "Hey, this should be true. Look at the confidence!" Nonsense. You see? That is the reason when Paul says, "When I came to you, I did not come to you in excellency of speech or eloquence of men, because I did not want your faith to stand upon the wisdom of men but on the power of God." You see that? So, the soil is important; so, it can also be called as the Parable of the Soil. So, how many soils do we have? How many kinds of soils? Let me see. Guess. Just close your mind for 5 seconds and shout out the answer unanimously. Answer? How many kinds of soil? Somebody said, "4." How many of you think 4? Okay, that is what you think. That is what I also thought. So, let us see the kinds of soil we have.

The first kind of soil is what we call as the 'wayside soil'. What is 'wayside soil'? How many of you have seen fields? When I was a small boy, when I was in the third grade or the fourth grade, my Aunt, Narasingapalli, right? She took me to her village and she had so many farms and I used to go to the sugarcane farm and I used to enjoy the jaggery those days. So, every farm has a portion which is like a boundary. It is the same soil but what has happened to it? They have made it very hard to make clear demarcations from one part of the field to the other. That is what we call as the 'wayside soil'.

The second kind of the soil is what we call as the 'rocky soil'.

The third is the 'thorny' or the 'weedy' soil.

And the fourth is 'good soil'.

So, how many kinds of soils are there? 4. The answer is wrong. Among the good soil, there are 30-fold soils; there is 60-fold soil and there are 100-fold soil. So, there are 3 kinds of bad soil and 3 kinds of good soil. Understood? Did you understand everybody? So, we have 6 kinds of soil. 3 good, 3 bad. So, let us observe the way-side soil. *Luke 8:12*. This is explaining the wayside soil.

Luke 8:12

"Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved."

How do I know that I belong to the wayside soil? Or in other words, my heart is hard. How do I know? See, we only can know by the effects. We can't do a diagnosis because this is a spiritual principle. We can't go to a cardiologist and we can't go to, for example, where is that sister? The young intelligent girl. Hebhsibah. She wants to become a cardiologist. We can't go to

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her and ask her because these are spiritual principles. How do I know that my heart is hard? Let us observe this particular parable in the parallel portions in *Matthew 13:19*,

Matthew 13:19

¹⁹ When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.

There are several ways the enemy can steal the seed and by which you can know whether your heart is soft or whether it is hard. Look at one of the ways.

Acts 14:1-4

¹ Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed. ² But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds...

So that they would not believe. So, if your mind can be poisoned, then you have a hard heart. You know how it happens? "Don't go to that Church. They teach all these things. Nobody can live up to these standards." What has happened? You have poisoned them. "You know how many hypocrites are there in the Church? Full of hypocrites!" I like what John McArthur says, "Yes, we are full of hypocrites and we have room for several more. You are all welcome. We can certainly accommodate you." You need to be very careful when we use these terms. Jacinth and I, when we were kids, I said, "All Pastors are hypocrites." That's what I said. And ultimately, God made me a Pastor. So, you have the biggest hypocrite standing here. You know what they do? They point out to the weaknesses in the man of God and they will poison your mind so that you will not receive the Word. That is how the enemy snatches the Word. I know, in this Church, so many people left because their minds were poisoned. They don't even realize what has happened to them. The enemy has come and snatched the Word of God. No man is perfect. I'm not saying that preachers and teachers should not be living up to a higher standard. We are accountable and we are asked to live at a high standard but don't put unreasonable expectations on them. I learnt this lesson the hard way. 3-4 years back, a strange incident happened in my life. We were living in a place called Lothkunta in Alwal, just before we shifted to Bowenpally. There was this guy, both his legs were chopped. He came to my apartment, climbed up the stairs and he asked, "Is there Solomon Raj over here?" I just opened the door to pick up the milk and I looked at him and said, "Sorry, this is not Solomon Raj." "Oh, they said there's one Solomon Raj; that there's one Christian family living here." "I'm sorry. This is not Solomon Raj's home." He said, "I'm so sorry." And I closed the door and I came inside. That guy, both legs were chopped off; he was walking down the stairs again and I was so convicted and I opened the door and I said, "Brother, please come inside." And he came up the stairs and made him sit on the couch. I looked at him and he said, "I was a Brahmin convert and God called me to Pakistan. As I was preaching, they put all false allegations on me and they took me to the printing press and chopped off my legs." They came to Grace Home. You remember? That guy came to Grace Home. He came and he disappeared. I was thinking, "Lord, sometimes, we have unreasonable expectations out of leaders." "They should stand firm." Who said so? If you go through such trials and situations, will you stand? Think about it. It's so easy to point fingers at others. If you have a slanderous, a heart that can be poisoned, you are a child of the devil. I can say that on the authority of Scriptures. The devil is the one who opens up people's lives. He is a slanderer. He is the one who tarnishes people's images and that is how the Word of God gets polluted and we don't receive the Word. Our minds get polluted. I know so many people in our Church; their minds got polluted. They messed up their lives. We don't even know where they are now. Look at this.

...against the brethren. ³ Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. ⁴ But the multitude of the city was divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles.

You will always find the true and the false. Some people who believe. Even here now, in this congregation. I don't know if everybody is believing. I can't see your heart. I don't even know if my heart is believing what I'm sharing. Forget about yours.

Second way I know I have a hard heart. It is what we call as 'the principle of procrastination'.

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2 Corinthians 6:1-2

¹*We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ²For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*

Today, if you hear don't harden your heart, do not put away because you know what? Enemy is going to come and snatch it off. That is the reason why it says in,

Ephesians 4:26

²⁶*Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,*

In the olden days, in the Old Covenant, Joshua said, "Sun, moon, stop before I finish my battle!" In the New Covenant, God says, "Finish the battle before the sun goes down." Overcome anger before you sleep. If you put it off for next day, do you know what happens? Your relationship, especially with your spouse, will be shallow. So shallow! You know because the walls of layers and layers of misunderstanding have happened now.

I was telling the men's group yesterday, the most incredible challenge in a marriage is to convert your Eros love in Phileo (friendship). It's easy to be Eros lovers but it is very difficult to be friends. That is the reason why God says to Peter, "Peter, do you Agape Me?" Second time, "Peter, do you Phileo Me, do you love Me as a friend? Are we friends, Peter?" The difference between Eros love and Phileo lovers - Two lovers just love each other, "How beautiful is your eyes, smell of your skin and your hair and you are handsome and the way you speak." They are describing one another, but in Phileo, in a friendship, they are talking about something in common. "Oh! We are such good friends!" How many sang with your friends like that. You didn't become romantic like that? Diya jalthe hai, phool khilthe hai, badi muskil se magar duniya mein dost milthe hai. You should see the video as if it's a love song between Amitabh Bachchen and Rakesh Khanna. What nonsense! No friends will talk like that. What is the opening statement in a friendship, "Oh! You also have the same interest, is it?" That's how it starts off, and whenever you meet, you are talking about that common thing. You don't have to pay for that, that was free of cost. I am reading C. S. Lewis and was getting excited of it. Otherwise, what happens when we procrastinate? *Hebrews Chapter 3* says,

Hebrews 3:12-13

¹²*Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;*

See, you don't depart from religion; you depart from a relationship. It says in *1 Thessalonians*, there will be a falling away, which will come first. The word for falling away is 'apostasy,' you where the word apostasy comes from? It comes from the Greek word 'divorce.' The Pharisees comes and ask Jesus, "Is it okay to divorce, apostatize my wife for any reason?" That's what it means. When you leave Christianity, you don't leave a religion, you probably are the most religious person, you will come to every Bible Study, take every notes; what has happened to you? You have left the person and there is no personal relationship with God. That is why today I started the sermon with – "Are you having a one-on-one personal relationship with God?" That is important, you cannot circumvent that. So,

¹³*but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

Tomorrow is not guaranteed. We won't even know what happens the next moment. What are we talking about tomorrow? Let us take the illustration of this principle in the life of Felix,

Acts 24:24-26

²⁴*And after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.*

They all like to hear sermons. "Oh! Beautiful sermon." They love to hear anointed preachers. "We have heard so many boring preachers. Let us hear this preacher, excited and after a period of time, he will also become relented," and you leave. So, look at what he says,

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²⁵ ***Now as he (Paul) reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you."***

You are postponing repentance and change for a convenient time and convenient time will never come – “When I have the money, I will repay.” You will never have the money. You understand! No, you start now. What you have, first give away.

²⁶ ***Meanwhile he also hoped that money would be given him by Paul,***

How his heart is getting hardened! The same sermon over and over can be preached but there is no effect on his conscience, you know why? It is hardened because he postponed it. You want to get more light? Then you have to be faithful to the light, which is given to you, then you will get more light. Let's look at what it says in James, illustrates the principle of procrastination,

James 1:22-24

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

In other words, you just hear the sermon and thought it was an interesting presentation “Wow, beautiful all those embellishments you give to the sermon.” Look at what is happening here,

²³ ***For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror;*** ²⁴ ***for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets*** That's how enemy comes and snatches the Word ***what kind of man he was.***

The Word of God has got in; it's the anointed Word, *faith cometh by hearing and hearing the Word of Christ*. The anointing Word, if you want the anointed word to work in your life, you have to believe and you have to obey. You have to act upon it. The blessing is for doers not the hearers. *If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.*

1 Thessalonians 2:13

¹³ ***For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.***

It is the believing of the Word, which unwraps the power of Word of God. Don't lose focus, concentrate.

You know they were playing the World Chess Championship, Magnus Carlsen (current world champion) vs Fabiano Caruana. The first match lasted seven hours, it was a draw. Seven hours of intense concentration for a one million Euro. And what are we getting? A crown, which can never be measured, priceless. We just waiver on our concentration. Don't waiver Saints. I didn't sleep last night. I hardly sleep on Saturday nights. Even the Pastors Conference, we have six hours of teaching and I don't sleep the night before, a very little sleep because so many things are going on my mind. They play for eight hours at a stretch. Focus! See our generation is the generation, which can be distracted easily.

Tim Keller was talking about something, which I was discussing with my relative the other day. In 1990s, you would have found a guy waiting at the bus-stop for a bus, what he was thinking is his idol but now in 2018, you find a guy waiting at the bus-stop, he has got his face time, WhatsApp, his Instagram, he has got selfie, he is distracted into millions of idols. He has not got one idol. We are living in the age of distraction. So, let's focus! I tell my children also to focus. If you can't teach a child to focus when they are young, they grow up into people who will never be able to focus. You don't want that to happen. Teach them to focus.

Let's look at the example of the Centurion. Centurion answered, “Lord, I am not worthy that You come under my roof but only speak the Word and my servant will be healed.” Jesus was marveled because the power of God is released when you believe the Word. It has the power to change. Many of us want to change. We don't want to live a defeated life, we want to change but you know what it says in *Jeremiah 13:23*?

Jeremiah 13:23

²³ *Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil.*

Romans 5:6

⁶ *You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.*

So, we are powerless to change. So, act upon the Word. So, we go to the Rocky Soil. So, we have the Wayside Soil and the Rocky Soil. Let's read this verse, so you get an idea what is Rocky Soil.

Mark 4:5

⁵ *Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil.*

So, let's try to explain what this rocky soil is? These soils are soft above and hard beneath. There is no depth in their conversion. Their conversion is either at the intellectual level or at the emotional level. "Oh! Such a nice Word!" They have an intellectual high but what happens? They don't deal with the real deep-rooted issues. See, ultimately, what is God looking for? Fruit. Do you think this will have fruit? No! First soil, forget about it. He explains what these kinds of people are. *Matthew 13:20-21*

Matthew 13:20-21

²⁰ *But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.*

Little change they will get offended.

Third kind of soil – Weedy soil

Luke 8:14

¹⁴ *Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.*

Who are these kind of people? These people who have a divided heart. They want to be in the Kingdom and they also want money. They are the people who wants career, they themselves wants to be Christian. They wanted to be full hearted for God, they also wanted to be full hearted for career. This is not going to happen.

Luke 16:13

¹³ *"No servant 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."*

He is a double-minded person. He doesn't want to receive anything from God. That is the third kind of soil. We know this.

Finally, we go to the good soil, which I want to focus because we want to be the good soil, right?

Mark 4:20

²⁰ *But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."*

Look at every rendering of this parable, how it renders this particular word.

Matthew 13:23

²³ But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

Luke 8:15

¹⁵ But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

Good soil – they do three action verbs – first, they accept or receive the Word; then, they understand the Word; and then, they keep the Word. How do you therefore receive the Word? This is very important, right? How do we receive the Word? Very interesting verse, one of my favourite verses in the Bible

James 1:21

²¹ Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

When you look at this Word, receive with meekness, overflow of wickedness, filthiness. So, I have to get rid of filthiness, the overflow of wickedness and then, I have to receive the Word. That's how I prepare myself to receive the Word? Look at KJV renders this particular verse.

James 1:21 (King James Version)

²¹ Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

When we look at this word 'naughty', 'Eh, naughty boy!' No, it's not the naughty boy, that is what we know from the modern time – "My child is very naughty." We say that. "Such a naughty boy that I bought him naughty boy shoes from BATA." BATA has naughty boy shoes. It's an archaic model. Right from my childhood, we have naughty boy shoes and my parents bought me and if you have a boy, you can buy tit for him. But the word 'naughty' is very interesting in the Old English. Today, I am going to teach you what it is to be naughty. And all the people who are writing MBA, CAT, GRE, GMAT, SAT, I am going to take a class for free for you.

So, let us look at the etymology of the archaic language. What is etymology? It's the origin of the words. Taxonomy, if you will. Naughty. Naughty = Naught + y. Don't just look at the equation and say, "That is nothing." What is it? What does 'Naught' mean? "No." So, in other words, naughty means 'no-y'. I looked at this word in the dictionary. I found a spectrum of meaning for this particular word 'naughty' when people in the old English, when they use the word 'naughty', they had a spectrum of thoughts which they wanted to convey. You want to know what the word 'naughty' means in the old language? I picked up fourteen, seven plus seven; because my birthday is on the 7th and the Children's Day is on the 14th. Just something random. Don't look at me like that! Look at this –

Naughty – what does it mean to be naughty?

Let's start with easy one. Disobedient. That is easy. He is a disobedient boy. We know that.

Another meaning – Defiant. What does 'defiant' means? Always challenges leadership - that is naughty. So, how many naughty people here today?

We will get a little more personal now. Delinquent. What does it mean? A guy who is lawless, unruly. No order! Athikramam (No order). Kramam ledu anamata (it means there is no order). There is no kramam in his life. There is no order in his life. So, how many people with disorder in your life? You are naughty.

Another place, this is easy – Undisciplined. You get it.

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This is a killer – Mutinous. In other words, mutiny; Inqalab zindabad. You know what he is going to do? He is not only defiant against leadership; he is going to start of a mutiny against leadership that is naughty.

Another one – Fractious; In other words, a guy who keeps causing division so that we will not listen to the leadership – naughty.

I like the next one; all people with spectacles – 'refractory'. What does 'refractory' mean? We know refractive index, right? How many of you read that in optics? What does it do? It bends the light. In other words, a guy who bends things to his convenience. In other words, he changes the rules according to his convenience. For example, if he is the manager in the company, everybody should be there at 9 o' clock. "If you are not here by 9 o' clock..." But that guy, he will come at 9:30. What is he? Naughty. Refractory. Have you seen water? You take plain water; you do an experiment; go back home and do an experiment and put some object in the clear water. If it is like 10 metres of length, how much does it appear? It appears shorter, right? It is deceiving; it is bending the light. Something which bends the light. That is naughty.

Another word – 'recalcitrant'. What does it mean? Resistant to change. He has got too much of inertia. He believes in Newton's first law – everybody continues in his state of rest or uniform motion unless acted upon by an external source and even if you apply infinite force, it is not going to move. Naughty. How many naughty people?

Another word – 'obstreperous'. Obstrepero; meaning – strepero noise; make a lot of noise. In other words, we make resumes which make a lot of noise. In other words, empty vessels; paina pattaram, lona lottaram; nothing is there; nothing to show but you make a lot of noise. "We are doing this; we are doing that; we are expanding; we are doing contraction; expansion, contraction. Big things." We had our school evaluation the other day. The lady who came to our school; we mentioned about our school agenda that we want to keep it as a Church school, small school. We are not looking for expansion; we are looking at discipleship. This is our agenda; this is our vision. And you know what she said? She made a very interesting observation. She said, "You are the only school who knows what they are doing. Everybody else is making a lot of noise." "We want to expand. We want to have 50 students, 60 students, 100 students, 150 students." Noise.

Another word – 'contrary'. You know that. It's easy. Naughty is also attention-seeking, positive or negative. You see, when you have a student in your class (I learnt it the hard way), because I taught a spectrum of students from 3 years till PG. 3 years in our school, PG in my university. You should see, whenever a child or a student is throwing a tantrum, he is seeking for negative attention that you can do is, "Hey! Stop doing it! Otherwise, I will give you a time-out!" Don't say that! I've learnt it the hard way. The best punishment is ignorance. Ignore. Because nobody loves to be ignored. They can do all kind of tantrums but act as if he is not even there. And when you don't give them attention, they will stop. That is what we call as 'dressing', right, Jacinth? Don't seek attention. That was my daughter. When she was 2 years old. Some wedding, a wedding in our Church. When we have a wedding coming up, "That day, I'm going to wear this dress and I'm going to wear these shoes. Ailsa Aunty gave me those shoes. I'm going to put them on." And I thought it was so cute and I went and said, "Pastor, you know what Abigail said? She said that she wanted..." And he looked at me like that and he said, "Vijay, let me tell you something – she is already thinking about dresses when she is 2 years old. She is making a lot of noise. Attention seeking. Do something about it now." My eyes were opened. Dingummani gnyana velugu veligipoinchi anamata (that means the knowledge light lit up). You see. Change attention seekers. That's what we call – 'dressing loudly'. I don't know what that means. "We have an attitude in our dress." What nonsense, I say.

Another word for naughty – 'exasperating'. Meaning, what? Testing the patience of their elders. How much can I stretch my Dad before he lowers the boom?" That's the children of Israel were. The children of Israel forever remained children of Israel. "Can the Lord do this?" "How long will you exasperate Me? Naughty!"

Incorrigible – resistant to correction. Naughty.

I've encapsulating all these 13 in one word. What is it? 'Self-willed'. Now, tell me, according to this examination; you know, it's like a Complete Blood Picture – CBP after fasting. She is already laughing. Sister is laughing. My wife went through that, sister. Before fasting, after fasting, all the Blood Pictures, we got. This is in analysis now. How many of us are naughty? Oh, we are getting embarrassed. Naughty. So, what is he saying? Get rid of super fluidity of naughtiness. Meaning – you have an

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abundance of naughtiness inside of you. Receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls. So, that is how we receive the Word – we get rid of naughtiness. Okay, naughty children? Let's move on.

Understand it. Next one is 'keep it'; next one is 'understand'. How do we understand it? I'll tell you how we understand? Six conditions you have to fulfil to understand; three pairs of two. Got it?

Proverbs 2:1-4

¹ My son, if you receive my words, And treasure my commands within you,

So, what should you do? Receive and treasure.

² So that you incline your ear to wisdom, And apply your heart to understanding;

You know what 'inclination' is? Incline. Acute angle. Don't be obtuse. Relax. That is what is called as 'relaxing'. His name is 'obtuse angle'. That's why, when we say, "Why are you so obtuse?" What does it mean? Why are you so indifferent? Obtuse. Incline. See, your disposition tells me how interested you are in the subject. I have taught so many students and I say, "This one is interested; that fellow is gone-case," because I know one student of mine. Lab exam, I gave her a question. She did a song and danced before me. I asked her, "Why did you put a circuit? What does it mean?" "I don't know, sir." "Why did you use this chip?" "I don't know, sir." "What do you think should the end result be?" "I don't know, sir." "What are you expecting me to do?" "I don't know, sir." I know. Some students, I scare them. I look at them in the class; they play the fool and I say, "I'll be personally taking your viva exam." And you should see those guys when they are doing the experiment; their hands are shaking like this. I said, "Okay, take it easy now." I know, by disposition, who is interested in the subject and who is not. Inclination. Are you inclined towards Jesus? Pairs of two – receive, treasure; incline, apply. And then,

³ Yes, if you cry out for discernment, (it's not easy,) And lift up your voice...

How do you lift up your voice? Lift up your voice. If you come to the Church office when nobody is there and you just sneak in, you will, kind of, hear my cries. "Lord!" And my voice itself is loud. So, it's cried out. Then,

⁴ If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures; ⁵ Then (what happens?) you will understand...

That's what Paul tells Timothy in *1 Timothy 4*,

1 Timothy 4:14

¹⁴ Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.

Practice. Immerse. Keep a close watch. Persist. You see that? Action verbs to understand.

2 Timothy 2:7

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

Think. Hard work.

Finally, keep it. How do you keep it? Patience. How much? Patience. Patient endurance is what you need now so that you will continue to do God's will so that you will receive all that He has promised. Patient. What does it mean? What is this? This is talking about character which can hold the blessings.

Romans 5:3-4

³ And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; ⁴ and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;

So, what is God after? Proven character. Be patient. Don't cut the rules and do something like Abraham – marry Hagar and create an Ishmael. Don't do that. Don't take shortcuts.

James 5:10-11

¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹ Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

You know why? Because, like Hrishy was praying in the morning; he said, "You are not going to tempt me above which I can bear." Temptations are trials are to build character so that you can hold the blessing. You know why? There is a time in your life when testing will stop and the blessing will overflow. That's what we call as 'Rehoboth'. Rehoboth means, what? Expanded. Expansion; and the blessing will flow but be patient. And let God change. God has the power to change us through His Word.

As I close, I want to tell you a story of this; I read this beautiful story from Richard Wurmbrand's 'The Sweetest Song'. Beautiful book. There was this guy who was a hunchback. You know hunchback, right? Not the hunchback of Notre Dame but this is a guy who had a hunch; ugly looking guy. Nobody loved him. Depressed, oppressed in life and he wants to kill himself. So, what did he want to do? He wanted to climb the highest mountain in his town and jump off the cliff. So, he is climbing the mountain. So, even as he is climbing the mountain, he sees this beautiful looking girl who is also climbing the mountain along with him. And he looks at the girl and he says, "Hey, you look so beautiful. Why are you climbing the mountain?" "I want to kill myself," she says. "Why do you want to kill yourself?" "My boyfriend ditched me for another beautiful-looking girl. I can't live my life anymore. I also want to die." So, he said, "Oh, we've got company. Let us walk up the mountain and die." Even as they are going, there is another police officer who joins him, who is also climbing the mountain. They looked at him and they said, "Who are you?" He says, "I'm a police officer." "Why are you climbing the cliff?" He says, "You know what? There is a robber; there is a thief who is at large. They gave me the responsibility to capture him and I've been trying to years and years. I couldn't catch him but finally, somebody tipped me off that this thief is on the top of this mountain." They asked, "How are you going to recognize the thief? So many years have passed. He could be a very old man now." He said, "He has got 6 fingers on both of his hands. I will catch him." So, he said, "Fine. Let 3 of us go to the top of the mountain." So, even as they climb the top of the mountain, they see that there is a monastery over there. In this monastery, there is a saint with a radiance in his face. Peaceful looking man. When they looked at him, all their problems were gone. They forget all their problems; they forget all their ambitions; they look at him and they are captivated by the image of this man and they draw close to him and they look at him and they say, "How can this man look so peaceful? Let us kiss his hands." And they take his hands to kiss him and on both his hands are 6 fingers. The story stops. Richard Wurmbrand says, "The story has to stop there. You know why? That man was converted by the power of God." You know, *the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes*. Who wrote that verse? Paul wrote that verse. You know why? Because he experienced that in his own life. You know why? Because he never forgot the enormity of his sin. He said, "You know what? I killed Christians." But can you imagine the amount of faith he must be having to accept the forgiveness for God, that he was forgiven? *The Word of God has got the power to work in those who believe*. It can change the vilest offender who truly believes. That moment, from Jesus, a pardon receives. It is at the Cross that this man looks at that Man and he says, "I am unjust. He is suffering unjustly; I am suffering justly. If He is suffering unjustly and if He is a just Man, He is dying for one reason – to take my sin. Lord, remember me today in Your Kingdom." "This day, you will be with Me in Paradise." The power of God to change. Do you have faith? Do you have the faith?

Let us stand this morning in the presence of the Lord. The Word of God has got the power to galvanise the entire ammunition power of God in your favour, if you believe. This morning, let's pray. Just take a few moments. Hrishy, can you just come and lead us in a song, if you don't mind. One song, even as the Lord leads you and you can worship. We've got 10 minutes. We can worship and then, we will pray.

Spend a few moments this morning. So many of us, I know are going through intense testing, for sure, without a doubt. I know it because I'm acquainted, at least, with some of your problems for sure. Being a Pastor, I know it. You know, the best way I can love you is to prepare the Word for you. Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee, in the Name of Jesus Christ; if I truly love you, you know what I will do? I will go to the presence of the Lord and I will work hard to give you the Word that you need for today and I believe this is the Word that God laid on my heart because I know so many of us, going through intense doubts and anxieties and whatever thoughts, giving up. I saw some of the prayer requests but you know what? The Word of God has got the power to work in those who believe. Are you that good soil? All you need is a good

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and an honest heart which will receive, keep and understand the Word. Amen? Yes, Hrishi. Lead us in a song (Amazing Grace) this morning. Hallelujah. Praise God. That's the song. Hallelujah.

Closing Song: Amazing Grace

This morning, I know many of us have burdens in our hearts, including myself. If you truly want to just surrender your life to God this morning, all your burdens and your cares, as I said in the morning, come and cast your burden at the feet of Jesus. I just want to encourage you to come to the front this morning. Sisters – Sister Ailsa and Sister Jacinth will lead the sisters in prayer. We can all just join hands this morning and surrender our lives to Jesus. Come. Don't just hold back. Don't just look to the left or to the right. All of us are naughty for sure. And I'm not doing this because I want to show off. I truly feel led in my spirit. Just lay it at Jesus' feet. Some of you, still struggling to forgive yourself. You said, "Lord, I've sinned so bad. I've let You down so much. I can't forgive myself." You need to receive forgiveness this morning. If you're wounded, God will heal you. If you have sinned, God will grant you the gift of repentance. If you are oppressed, God will deliver you. And if you believe that the Word of God has got the power to work in us who believe, this morning, sister Ailsa, if you can please lead us in prayer?

Closing Prayer:

Hallelujah! Thou He slay me, yet will I praise Him. Hallelujah. Purge us today, Father. Purge us. Wash us. Cleanse us from inside out, my God. Guard our hearts today, Father. Guard our minds today, Father. Jesus, there's something about that Name – Jesus. Demons tremble at the Name of Jesus. There's power in the Name of Jesus. We call on You today, Father, the Author and Finisher of our faith, the Lord that knows the end from the beginning, the Lord that sits high and looks below. Heaven is Your throne and earth is Your footstool. What we go through here on earth is temporary, my God. But we look towards eternal life, eternal glory, my God, towards that crown, my God. Lord, I pray, today, Father, that You would touch every broken heart today, including my own. Touch every mind today, Father. Who can ascend into the holy hills of Heaven? Except a man who has clean hands and a pure heart. Yes, Lord. We once were lost but now, we are found. We once were in darkness but now, we see light, my God and I pray today, my God, every one of us standing here today, every one of us, my God, from the youngest to the oldest, my God, I pray, today, let deliverance, let healing take place in the house of God today, my God. Let the anointing destroy yokes, pull down strongholds, break bondages today, Father. Tear down the walls of Jericho today, my God. Tear it down today, Father. Tear it down, my God. Let us learn to worship in spirit and in truth. Let us love God first with all our hearts, all our souls, with all our minds, with all our strength. Only then can we love our neighbour as we love You, my God. Only then, my God. O Lord, I pray – God is love. And Father, I pray today, my God, Jesus, teach us to love one another. Teach us to look beyond faults and see the need; the need is Jesus, my God. The need is You, my God. We need You in this last 11th hour. We need You today, my God. We need You, my God. Thank You for the Word today, my God. Thank You for Your presence here today, my God. Thank You for convicting us; thank You for comforting us; thank You for touching us; thank You for meeting us at our point of need; thank You for speaking to every one of us, my God. I pray today, my God, we will tear down the idols in our hearts, my God. We tear it down, my God. Tear it down today, Father. As we search right now, as we search our hearts right now. Naughty hearts. Above all things, the heart is deceitfully wicked, my God. We acknowledge, my God, that without You, we can do absolutely nothing. You are the God of impossible, my God. Touch us right now. Touch us, my God. One touch, to be made whole in You, to be complete in You. One touch, my God. We just thank You today, Father. Thank You for the Word; thank You for Pastor Vijay. Thank You for speaking to us, my God and as we leave this place but never Your presence, my God, I pray, today, faith cometh by hearing and by hearing the Word of God, I pray change will come from within; that we will not go back to our old selves; we will pick up our mat and walk and follow You, my God. We will deny ourselves, pick up our Cross and follow You. It is a daily walk, my God. It is a genuine surrender, my God and I know, my God, without You, we cannot do it. We cannot, my God. Without Your anointing, O Lord, I pray, let the anointing rest upon every one of us today as we are here right now and You destroy everything that disappoints You, everything that displeases You. Destroy it today, my God. Cleanse it from within, my God. Cleanse this heart. Cleanse this mind. Cleanse this tongue. Take the coal and cleanse our lips today. Take the Blood and cleanse our ears today, my God. Help us never to be dull of hearing, my God. "Today, if you hear My voice, harden not your heart." O Father, take the stony heart and turn it into a heart of flesh and compassion, my God. Thank You for Your mercy. Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. Thank You for mercy, my God. Thank You for grace, my God. Thank You for truth that will set us free, my God. Thank You. We love You, Jesus. We love You, my God. Touch us right now, my God. Touch us. Help us. We thank You and praise You, Jesus. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

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Benediction:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest and abide with us and grant us the faith to believe that the Word of God has got the power to work in those who believe and change us from the inside out. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.