

THE DAY OF SEPARATION

PART - I

Sermon delivered by

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Greetings in the name of our LORD Jesus Christ. Once again I Praise the Lord for enabling us to gather in His sanctuary on this Lord's day.

The Bible says in the gospel of Matthew:" **Ask and it shall be given to you , seek and you will find, Knock and the door will be opened to you."** The Lord is willing to hear our prayers.

I have been serving the Lord for the past 28 years. I have noticed that - whoever gave their heart to Jesus, whoever have come to the fold of the Lord and entered into the Church- 'Nobody lost anything' and even though they lost few things the Lord added many spiritual and material blessings. He is a giver of good gifts. He is the one who lifts us up and up. Many a times we are not faithful but He is so good and faithful towards us. That is why again and again in Jerusalem Central Church we plead you to come to the prayer meetings. As we keep coming in this manner we are seeing a great result. We are able to see God's protection and guidance and His blessings are covering all our families.

Sometimes some Brothers and sisters work very actively in the ministry. They work a lot. Even myself when I do a lot of work and stop praying, the Lord will remind me , the Holy Spirit will prompt me : " Now this is the time to reduce your work and start praying". So, if you are a child of God and if you are sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit, you will definitely hear His guidance. That is why we request the Church saying: More than your contributions, more than your work, more than your hard work in preparing for the love feast or in arranging the Church or singing or in doing other ministry- More than your ministry , God needs YOU. You have to sit in His presence , kneel down in His presence and intercede to God along with God's people. That is very very important, we should not neglect.

In the ministry of Dr. D.L.Moody , as the ministry is going on very powerfully, some people asked him 'What is the secret of your ministry?', then he took those brothers to the ground floor, may be its a cellar or a big hall where nearly 100 believers are interceding, praying bitterly, weeping and crying, and exactly over that hall, was the Pulpit of Dr. D.L.Moody. Then he said : this is the secret of my ministry.

As we all know that there is no other man of God who proclaimed Gospel to lakhs and lakhs of people at once. He is called the prophet of this generation- Dr. Billy Graham. Someone asked him , 'What is the secret of your ministry?' ' Then he said, the secret of my ministry, the first thing is prayer, the second thing is prayer and the third is prayer. Praise God for that!

Dear young people , brothers and sisters , we have to intensify prayers in our church. We pray individually but we have to pray collectively as a church too. That will give us more and more strength because we're living in such days that even the selected and elected people also can be drifted and deviated . Every day , everywhere -there is a sort of temptation and complete deception. The love towards the LORD in the believers life is growing cold and cold everyday.

The pressures of this world are taking us away from the LORD. So, we have to protect our spiritual standards and our faith. We can't just live as we like. Sometimes we think: "Well, I am coming to the church, I am giving my offering, I am there along with everybody singing songs, listening to the message, I am ok, that's enough! What more do I have to do?" But, the word of God and the standards of God's word is much higher than that.

1. On The Day Of Separation: Are we like WHEAT ? or CHAFF?

John the Baptist is challenging the people to live in this manner:

In Matthew 3:12, he said like this : "His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will clear His threshing floor, gathering His wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire".

He says that- God is clearing or cleaning the threshing floor. He is in the work of gathering the wheat. He does not want chaff. He is going to burn the chaff with unquenchable fire. Now, the wheat and chaff are mixed up together. Both are like a big heap. Maybe the chaff thinks : "I am also going along with the wheat". But God will fan the heap and gather only the wheat. If we are like chaff we have to burn!

One day at the time of separation, Jesus is going to divide His people -

Are we like chaff or Are we like wheat?

2. On the day of separation - where are you standing in doing the will of your heavenly father?

That is why even our LORD Jesus Christ is challenging the people in:

Matthew 7:21 "Not everyone who says to me LORD, LORD, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven".

Jesus -said it very clearly : if you call Him Lord, Lord all the time we will not enter the kingdom of God, but, we should be the Doers of the word of God. We must find out what the word of God is demanding from us. The whole essence of the Bible is this "A man must be born again". That is the first fundamental step. If you are not a born-again child of God you have no relationship with God.

We maybe calling ourselves like this from our childhood days saying: "I am a christian, I celebrate Christmas, I went to the church along with my parents, I have a Christian name, I read the Bible, I belong to Him". We may cry "Lord! Lord!" to follow the ten commandments, but Our LORD says "I do not know who you are!" Why? Because the Bible demands that every person should have the born-again experience.

In John's Gospel 3rd chapter: Lord Jesus spoke to Nicodemus straight forwardly saying" **Unless a man be born again , he cannot see the kingdom of God "**.Born again experience is having a relationship with your creator, having peace with your God.

Due to the disobedience of Adam and Eve, the whole mankind became enemies to God. Now, we have no peace with God, because we are born sinners and later, we're committing sins on our own. Nobody is Holy in the sight of God. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God".

We have no qualification to dwell in the presence of God . We are lost sinners, we have no hope in this world. All our good deeds are like filthy rags in the sight of God. So, You cannot inherit the kingdom of God through your prayers, through your giving, through your religious deeds.

Now, at the fullness of time , LORD Jesus came to the world as a mediator between man and God. He died on the cross, He shed His blood for our sins. The Bible says that " the Blood of Jesus Christ .. cleanses us from all our sins". So, when you come to Jesus at the cross and repent for your sins, the Blood of Jesus washes away all your sins. Then our heavenly father accepts you and me through His son LORD Jesus Christ, and you will have peace with God.

So, in order to enter into Heaven , in order to have peace you need JESUS. JESUS CHRIST is very precious . You have to come to Him and say: " Lord, I am a sinner, Forgive me and be the Lord of my life". The moment you say this "You Are a Born-Again Child of God".

Today we see millions of people going to take a holy dip in the river, thinking they're sins would be washed away, but we cannot get out of our sins that way.

My question this morning is this: " Have you received Jesus Christ as the LORD and Savior of your life? Have you ever repented for your sins at the Cross? Have you ever asked Lord Jesus to forgive you and wash you in His blood?

If you are willing then He promises to give you a new-birth, a born-again experience.

Let us see **John's Gospel 1:12 " Yet to all who did receive Him , to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become the children of God"**.

You see, the moment you receive Lord Jesus Christ , the moment you trust Him, the moment you believe the message of Cross, the very next moment, because of your faith, the Lord will accept you as His Son and Daughter. You will become a child of God. Now that is the First step . Something will happen within yourself . You will get separated from your sinful life . You will have a great desire and passion to live for the LORD. You will want to read the word of God, you'd want to learn the word of God and you want to spend time in Prayer. You will love Jesus Christ more than any other time , love Him more and more now. What I am trying to say to you

is that your nature will become new. You will be a new creation.

Now, what I am trying to talk to the church is A Day of Separation, A Time of Separation. As we already read Matt 3:12, God is going to separate the chaff from the wheat. He will preserve the wheat and burn the chaff.

Are we leading our life like Chaff? OR Are we leading our life like wheat?

A cleaning time comes, a fan is in His hand, we can't just run away from Him.

Matthew 7:21 Not everyone who says Lord! Lord! will enter into the kingdom of God. You and I have to live according to the word of God. We should learn the Word of God , learn the statutes of God, learn the standard of God and **LIVE ACCORDINGLY.**

Matthew 25:31-32 "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with him, He will sit on his glorious throne".

All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people -one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats".

You see , all the nations will be gathered before him. Only one flock but there are two categories: Sheep and Goats. Now the Lord said, He is going to separate the sheep from the goats. Sheep are His children- the believers. Goats symbolizes religious people - there is only religion in them but there is no spirit of God. He says to them "you are undisciplined people, you don't live according to God's standard, you never followed the word of God , you never obeyed my word, so get away from me, go to the eternal lake of fire which is prepared for the Devil and his angels. Now that is the nominal Christian life and that is the destination of the people who called Him Lord! Lord!

On the other hand, He calls His sheep - a Blessed people and says "you did everything according to the word of God, and the heavenly father loves you, Go and inherit the kingdom of God".

3. On the Day of Separation - How are we in the sight of the LORD?

A time of separation- my dear brothers and sisters, when I am reading these words , there is trembling in my heart about where I am and how I am leading my life. What is my spiritual standard? This is the question we need to ask ourselves today. It does not matter how we look like in the sight of the Church, it is not important how we are in the sight of our community. The entire world maybe appreciating us, for a matter of fact, people around us might say : "He is a very good man. He is from a very good family. They have helping nature. She does so much of Social Service" etc., but How are you in the sight of our Living God ? We need to answer that.

A) How are we in the sight of the Lord- with Respect and Honesty?

There is a couple in the church , Book of Acts 5th Chapter. They are very active in the church. They may be praying along with the others and they are following the mission of the church. When the new testament church was growing, they were thinking about the progress of the church. When the Church is growing there are so many needs to be met in the church. These people also wanted to do something in the church along with the others. Very sadly, this couple wanted to please men rather than pleasing God. They wanted to make themselves great in the sight of men, but not in the sight of God. They are Hypocrites!

Look Here in the passage, this is what Peter says: **Acts 5:1-3**

"Now a man named Ananias , together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his wife's complete knowledge he kept back a part of the money for himself but brought the rest and put it at apostle's feet"

Then Peter said," Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?"

Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold , wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think, of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God".

When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body and carried him out and buried him.

We see the couple - husband is Ananias and wife is Sapphira. The story goes on like this: first the husband dies, Later when the wife repeated the same, she also died. Oh! what a powerful punishment it is. When I read these verses there is a great fear in my heart. Many times there is a sort of deception in my life, I want to be esteemed great in the sight of people and I loose the conscious that I have to be good in the sight of God. Yes, I have that fear in my heart my dear brothers and sisters. Sometimes on the Dias when people start to glorify me saying he is so and so.. he is a great preacher, Oh! I regret- Why couldn't I lift my LORD high and high? Why have I received the appreciation, the felicitation- O' All these things are an abomination in the sight of God. As we grow higher and higher we should humble ourselves in the presence of God. Sometimes I praise God for some of our Brothers and Sisters, as they want to give to the LORD very secretly. With that conscious in their heart they say: "Pastor, don't announce our name"- they want to do that to Glorify GOD alone.

Whereas Ananias and Sapphira failed to do that . They are good believers, active in the church, but they wanted to look good in the sight of men and have forgotten that they are deceiving

GOD. Peter says," the Spirit of God -the Holy Spirit is grieved because of your action".

If you see the book of Acts 8th chapter, we realise that God will not tolerate such attitude. He does not compromise nor will He cover up our Sin. That is why He wants our honesty. So, you and I need to come closer to Him before that Day of Separation.

B) How are we in the sight of the Lord- with respect to the Gifts of God:

Lets see Acts 8:9-13

Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, and all the people both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed," This man is rightly called the Great Power of God", They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his sorcery. But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.

You know the story here, Simon the sorcerer , is like a magician in the city, doing mighty things, and people were astonished seeing his Magic, But when Philip and others preached the word of God , the Power of God filled the land more and more that Simon wanted to accept the LORD Jesus and became a follower of Jesus. As the time went by, he was there along with the believers, with the Godly men, witnessing the powerful things while they were preaching and how the name of the LORD was lifted up high.

You see, what happened at that time? we will read verse 18-23

"When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit".

Peter answered: " May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God, Repent of this wickedness and pray to the LORD in the hope that HE may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin".

You see Peter's intention towards Simon is like this : your heart is not right in the sight of God, there is deception in your life, there is hypocrisy in your life, you have no share in the Godly work. We thought you accepted Jesus and followed Him sincerely , but you want to purchase the Holy Spirit with money! your heart is not right in the sight of God. He says Repent and pray lest

the curse come upon you.

My dear brothers and sisters, what is the Holy Spirit teaching us today? We always need to have a conscious to please our LORD . We ought to think: I have to be accepted by the Lord, whether men appreciate me or not, whether people glorify me or not, I should be right in the sight of God because He sees our inner heart. So, our outward actions are not important . We should always strive to be right in God's sight and please Him with our lives.

C) How are we in the sight of the LORD-with respect to our Purity as Bride:

Acts 19:13-16 : Some Jews who went around driving evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the LORD Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say In the name of Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out. Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them," Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?" Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding .

Here we see they ran away naked and bleeding. They wanted to imitate God servants, but their life was not right in the sight of God. They wanted to utter the name of the LORD because Paul and others were doing the same thing. Signs and wonders are happening , everything is done in the name of Lord Jesus Christ. These 7 young people probably thought: " Why can't we use the name of Jesus and try to chase the demons away? . They tried to imitate Paul, but the devil identified them. You see, the evil spirit jumped on them that they ran nakedly. So, our INNER LIFE is more important.

Even if I try to do something with an attitude of hypocrisy, yes, the Lord will catch hold of me. He identifies us, He sees our inner life. So, it is very important for us to follow Him sincerely and honestly. It is not important to please men because HE BOUGHT US WITH A PRICE. He called us as a Church. Church is the most powerful agency in the world. If there is anything God depends, He definitely depends upon the church. He wants to perform His duty through the church. Through the church He wants to glorify His name because He loves the Church. The Bible says He bought the Church by giving His precious blood.

Where is the church? Church is none but you and me. Church is God's people , people who are redeemed by the Blood of Lord Jesus Christ. So, through YOU and me God wants to establish and expand the Kingdom of God and wants to bring more and more people inside. That's why you and I are important. Our Lord said "I will build My church". It is not the pastor, or elder, or singer, or anyone else, but He is building the Church. He gave Authority to the Church, for it is written : " The gates of Hell shall not prevail against it". Only the Church can shake the gates of Hell.

If we read Ephesians 5th chapter, we understand how God bought the church and what is His expectation from us?

Ephesians 5:23-27: A husband is the head of his wife, just as Christ is the head of the church. Christ is the Savior of the church, which is his body. The church serves under Christ, so it is the same way with you wives. You should be willing to serve your husbands in everything.

Husbands love your wives, the same as Christ loved the church and GAVE HIS LIFE FOR IT. He died to make the church holy. he used the telling of the Good News to make the church clean by washing it with water. Christ died so that He could give the church to Himself like a bride in all her beauty. He died so that the church could be Holy and without fault, with no evil or sin or any other wrong in it.

You see , He gave Himself for the church which is the Bride of Lord Jesus Christ. He is expecting that the bride should be Holy, blameless, without stain, without wrinkle and without blemish. He wants the bride to be pure and radiant. So, we have to live according to His expectations. Are we?

Some time ago, In Mehdipatnam, an Engineer fell in love with a young girl. He told his parents about the girl and his deep commitment to marry her. His parents were upset because the girl did not belong to their religion or caste, she was altogether from a different family. They suggested him telling there are so many girls in our relatives , why don't you marry one of them? But, he insisted on marrying the one he loved. Meanwhile , he got an opportunity to study in America for a special training purpose for almost 6months. So, the young man wanted his parents to arrange engagement ceremony before he left and so, did their parents for his happiness. The Engagement was done and he promised her that as soon as he gets back, he would marry her. He flew to the U.S, his training program went on well , but in the middle of his course due to some issues the course completion was put on hold. So, this young man was happy to come back and marry his girl in the mean time. He was actually supposed to come after 6months , but he was returning back within 3 months. He travelled back to Mumbai, and from Mumbai to Nampally. Out of excitement he wanted to surprise his girl, he took a taxi from Nampally to Mehdipatnam. As he was passing by Public Gardens ,he saw a young girl who looked exactly like his fiancé. he asked the driver to stop for a while. he went inside, there she is with another man, holding hand in hand and just simply walking in the garden. They both turned towards him, and he could not believe his eyes. She is the one he loved so much. You know.. she said: "You said you'll come after 6 months. Why have you come now? You see, she was not worried about the other guy with whom she was!"

Church is the Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ. Bridegroom is coming soon. Lord gave so much responsibility to the Church -to accomplish the task of the kingdom of God upon this earth. We

have to wait for His coming. In the meanwhile we have to do the work of the Lord. We are not supposed to wander in the Public gardens - (world). Are we moving close to the world than to the Lord? Yes, there are so many attractions to pull you from faith. The devil is very cleverly deceiving the believers -in forgetting their responsibility. The devil says " It is a waste of time , enjoy elsewhere. Why do you want to give to the kingdom of God, keep it for yourself".

The Bible says: "whatever you sow, so you will reap". That is why you need to know the word of God - the scriptures, then you will obey and keep up the standards of God. Then, you will be strong and will wait for the Lord prayerfully.

My dear brothers and sisters, we are responsible for our souls. He bought us with a price and there is a lot of work to do while we are here on earth. As a church, let us not go with the world , let us not move with the satanic people who are surrounding us. Do not have such kind of friendships -with people who are given to worldly habits and vices.

The Bible again and again exhorts you to make friendship with Godly people , pray with the believers, stay with the believers. Yes, because in the church we have every opportunity to preserve our faith. We have to grow in faith and keep up the word of God. You cannot live a neutral life. Are you leading a double-standard life?

My dear brothers and sisters, our sin will find us out one day and God will catch us. Oh! that day will be the day of punishment. He separates the goats and sheep. He separates the wheat and chaff. He identifies Ananias and Sapphira's deception in the church. The sons of Sceva ran without safety . Let us be honest in the sight of God. I am sharing these words with a heart of trembling. If I don't examine my heart in the light of the word, if I lead a hypocrite life in the sight of the Lord, God will not leave the preachers, we will face much stricter punishment .

My dear brothers and sisters, with a humble heart, I am sharing these words with you. Let us not take the kingdom of God lightly, let us not take the ways of the Lord carelessly. Let us give importance to Him in our life's, because He is our creator, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The galaxies, the stars, the sun , moon are telling us how great He is! The Psalmist says when I see the sun, moon and the stars which you have created , what is man that you should remember Lord, I am scared , what am I that you should remember me. God - you never sent your Son for those things, you never sent your Son for angels, or for animals in the forest, but you have sent your son for me.

When he came and died on the cross and paid the penalty for your sin and my sin, how much reverence should you and I have towards Him? How much should you and I love Him? ? On the day of separation, where you will stand depends on how you stand for Him now!

Let us Pray:

When we look at the cross, we hear a voice , the crucified LORD Jesus Christ, the one who died on the cross, the one who shed His blood for you and me. He is saying like this: My Son this I have done for you, what have you done for me? This much I have done for you, I shed my entire blood for you, I was beaten, I was bruised , nailed to the cross, I went through all humiliation, I took all your shame and bore upon me. I had a crown of thorn upon my head and every drop of blood I shed for you in order to save you, in order to give you everlasting life. This I have done for you, what are you doing for me , what have you done for me?

My dear brothers and sisters, we have to give an answer to this question. What am I doing in the Church? Yes, I am coming and going to the Church, but what am I doing ? Are we like Cain -when God asked Cain" Where is your brother?", he said: "Am I my brother's keeper?" do you think I am a watchman?

My dear brothers and sisters, what are you doing in the precious Church for whom He gave Himself, Do something before its too late. Whatever we sow, we will reap. Sow carefully and liberally then God will give you abundant fruit.

Gracious God and loving heavenly father, Lord help me to please you and not men. Many times I committed a mistake Lord. I tried to please men and women, friends and relatives again and again. Lord you are the one who sees our heart. Lord, men see our outer expression, behavior and outward life but you see us in the inside. Lord help me to understand this truth and live accordingly. Lord help us to please you alone, help us to a live a life which is right in your sight .You called us as Church- Father, Church is your bride O Father! , you are expecting the Church to be holy and blameless, cleanse us. Thank you for cleaning us again and again. Lord help us to engage ourselves in building your kingdom. Continue to lead and continue to bless us, we pray in Jesus precious name. AMEN.

Notes :
