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A Journey of Faith



Blessed are those who are persecuted  
because of righteousness,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
Matthew 5:10

20th October 2024

Evangelical  
Fellowship of India 

**INTERNATIONAL DAYS OF PRAYER FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2024**

*“If one member suffers, we all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together.” – 1 Corinthians 12:26*

Greetings from the Evangelical Fellowship of India,

You are invited to join the International Days of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP), an initiative of the World Evangelical Alliance promoted in India by the Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI). IDOP is an opportunity to unite with churches worldwide in praying for persecuted Christians.

Persecution is a harsh reality. Last year, nearly 5,000 Christians were killed for their faith, over 14,000 properties were attacked, and 4,000 believers were detained. Around 316 million Christians globally live under severe persecution, facing threats to their lives and freedoms.

In India alone, EFI's Religious Liberty Commission has documented nearly 570 incidents of violence and hate crimes against Christians in the first nine months of 2024.

Despite these challenges, the Word of God gives us hope. Deuteronomy 31:6 encourages us to be strong and courageous, reminding us that God will never leave nor forsake us. IDOP is a time to remember and intercede for our persecuted brothers and sisters, while also praying for the souls of their oppressors.

EFI urges churches, organizations, and individuals to hold special IDOP services on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> November 2024. Resources, including posters, pamphlets, and prayer calendars, are available on [www.idop.org](http://www.idop.org).

We hope you will participate in this vital event. If you'd like an EFI representative to join your IDOP observance or wish to share your experience, please contact us at [mail@efionline.org](mailto:mail@efionline.org). To support EFI's work financially, donation details are provided below.

Warm Regards,



Rev. Vijayesh Lal,  
General Secretary

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Editorial 



Rev. Vijayesh Lal

## **BUILDING A LEGACY THAT GOD AFFIRMS**

The recent passing of Ratan Tata, the Indian industrialist and philanthropist, has sparked widespread reflection on the nature of legacy. Tata's impact extended far beyond the business world; his visionary leadership transformed the Tata Group into a global powerhouse while his philanthropic efforts touched countless lives. From pioneering affordable housing initiatives to funding education and healthcare projects, Tata exemplified how business acumen could be married with social responsibility.

Yet for Christians, Tata's passing prompts a deeper examination: What does it mean to leave a legacy that God affirms? While Tata's achievements are undoubtedly admirable, they invite believers to consider how worldly success aligns with eternal values.

The concept of legacy is deeply

rooted in Scripture, with numerous examples of both godly and ungodly legacies. One particularly striking account is found in 2 Chronicles 21, which tells the story of King Jehoram. Despite his royal lineage and abundant opportunities, Jehoram's reign ended with a damning epitaph: "He passed away, to no one's regret."

Jehoram's failure stemmed from a fundamental disconnection from God. Driven by insecurity and self-reliance, he acted out of fear and selfish ambition, even going so far as to murder his own brothers to secure his throne. His story serves as a sobering reminder that position, power, and worldly accomplishments do not guarantee a legacy of value in God's eyes.

So, what does constitute a God-affirmed legacy? The Apostle Paul provides insight in Galatians 1:10, asking, "Am I now trying to



win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.” This verse challenges believers to seek affirmation not from the world, but from God Himself.

This shift in perspective transforms the entire concept of legacy-building. Rather than focusing solely on personal achievements or worldly recognition, a God-affirmed legacy centres on faithful stewardship of the gifts and opportunities God provides. It's about recognizing God as the source of all we have and using those resources to serve His purposes.

An apt analogy for this concept is that of a reservoir fed by a hidden spring. While the reservoir may appear impressive, it would eventually run dry without the constant supply from the spring. Similarly, a person's life may seem accomplished by worldly standards, but without acknowledging God as the source, it risks spiritual depletion.

Building a legacy that God affirms inevitably involves generosity and a commitment to God's mission. Jesus highlighted this principle in Luke 21 with the story

of the widow's offering. Her two small coins were deemed more valuable than the large sums given by the wealthy, demonstrating that God looks at the heart behind our actions, not just their outward appearance or impact.

Engaging in God's mission extends beyond financial giving. It encompasses being His ambassadors in every sphere of life – workplaces, neighbourhoods, and families. Whether making business decisions, interacting with colleagues, or raising children, each moment presents an opportunity to represent Christ and contribute to His kingdom work.

The life of William Carey, often called the "father of modern missions," exemplifies this holistic approach to legacy-building. Carey's work in India transcended mere preaching; he translated the Bible into local languages, fought against social injustices like the practice of sati (widow burning), and established educational institutions. Centuries later, his legacy – firmly rooted in his faith in God – continues to impact lives around the world.

For those seeking to build a God-

affirmed legacy, the ultimate question shifts from “Will people remember me?” to “Will God be pleased with how I lived and used the gifts He entrusted to me?” The goal becomes hearing those precious words from Matthew 25:23: “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

This approach to legacy often requires choices that may seem counterintuitive to worldly wisdom. It might mean choosing integrity over profit, service over status, or generosity over accumulation. It calls for living with an eternal perspective, recognizing that true impact extends far beyond earthly lifespans.

Practical steps towards building such a legacy include:

- Cultivating a deep relationship with God through prayer and Bible study
- Identifying and developing God-given gifts and talents
- Serving others with love and compassion
- Practicing generosity with time, talents, and resources
- Engaging intentionally in

God's mission through both words and actions

- Living with integrity, even when costly
- Investing in and mentoring the next generation

As Christians reflect on the legacies of influential figures like Ratan Tata, they are called to a higher standard – one that prioritizes eternal impact over temporal acclaim. While Tata's commitment to social responsibility and ethical business practices sets a commendable example, believers are challenged to root their legacy in something even deeper – a life lived in faithful obedience to God.

Building a legacy that God affirms is not about achieving worldly success or recognition, though these may come as a byproduct. It's about faithfully stewarding what God has given, living generously, and engaging wholeheartedly in His mission. As followers of Christ pursue this path, they can trust that their lives will have an impact that resonates through eternity – a legacy affirmed not just by people, but by God Himself.

**Rev. Vijayesh Lal**



# Be Courageous Like Christ Amid Persecution

Rev. Dr. David Mende

## Introduction

Christians are called to stand out from the rest of the world. But we have to pay a price to live consecrated lives. For more than two thousand years, God's people have been facing persecution for the sake of Christ. Often, we have to choose between Christ and persecution. What would you choose? Mark 14:66-72 reveals that Peter had to choose between possible imprisonment for Christ and the denial of Christ. Peter ended up choosing the latter. I've entitled this article as "**Be Courageous Like Christ.**" In Mark 14:66-72, we see that Peter denies Jesus when he is confronted by a slave girl and bystanders. As we go through this passage, let's see

how our Jesus, our guru is a great example of courage.

## 1. Peter Denies Jesus After Being Confronted by a Servant Girl (14:66-68).

After mentioning Peter in 14:54, Mark resumes his story in verse 66. The literary technique of flashback indicates that Mark wants us to contrast the trial and interrogation of Jesus with the trial and interrogation of Peter. We can even see a contrast between Jesus' watchfulness and Peter who failed to be watchful in Gethsemane. The fact that Mark mentions the denial from verse 66 points to verse 65 which mentions that Jesus was mocked and ironically asked to prophesy. The Sanhedrin didn't

realize that Jesus' prophecy was being fulfilled right in the courtyard.

**a. Peter is confronted by a servant girl (14:66-67).**

The mention of Peter being "below in the courtyard" (v. 66) suggests that Jesus' illegal trial took place in a room that was above the courtyard. In Gethsemane, Jesus found Peter sleeping thrice (vv. 68, 70, 71) which was a foreshadowing of his three denials. As Jesus went through an intense trial above, Peter also went through a different kind of trial below. Though Peter fled from Gethsemane, he came back following Jesus to the high priest's courtyard. To be fair to Peter, we have to admit that he was trying his best to stay true to his words of commitment and stick to Jesus. Peter still loved Jesus and was concerned about him. He did show quite a lot of courage too. However, Peter eventually failed to stand for the Lord.

"One of the servant girls of the high priest" came to the courtyard and saw Peter warming himself

(v. 67) at the fire (literally: light). In John 18:16, we read that the servant girl is a doorkeeper. This incident happened somewhere in March/April and it must have been pretty cold in Jerusalem at this time. Probably, the servant girl recognized Peter due to the light from the fire. Since the high priest's house was near the temple in Jerusalem, she probably saw Jesus and his disciples at the temple earlier in the week. Though Peter wants to be "at a distance" (v. 54) and hide among others in the courtyard, the servant girl eventually recognizes him. Mark tells us that the servant girl looked at him twice: "seeing" (Gk. *horao* : discern clearly) and "looked" (Gk. *emblepo* : to observe fixedly).

The servant girl calls out Peter emphatically, "You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus." The Galileans (Nazareth was in Galilee) had a reputation for being troublesome. Even in Acts 24:5, Paul is referred to as "a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes." The phrase "with the Nazarene" (cf. Mk 3:14) suggests that this girl accused Peter that he was Jesus' disciple.

**b. Peter denies Jesus (14:68a).**

Peter denied Jesus by saying, “I neither know nor understand what you mean.” These words were used to make a formal, legal denial in a court of law. Mark uses two Greek verbs for “know.” The first verb, *oida* refers to theoretical knowledge, and the second verb, *epistamai* refers to practical knowledge. So, Peter completely denies Jesus! Peter thought only about his own safety. He was afraid of people. You see, fear of people will paralyze us in our spiritual life. Fear of people will stop us from being used by God. That’s why we must fear God rather than people.

**c. The rooster crows (14:68b).**

Then, Peter went to the gateway so that he would not be noticed by the light of the fire. He went further away from Jesus. As soon as he went into the gateway, the rooster crowed.

**2. Peter Denies Jesus Again After Being Confronted by a Servant Girl Again (14:69-70a).**

**a. Peter is confronted by a servant girl again (14:69).**

The servant girl saw (Greek: *horao* meaning discern clearly)

Peter again. This time she saw him at the gateway. Now she began to call the attention of the bystanders as well. She told them, “This man is one of them.”

**b. Peter denies Jesus again (14:70a).**

Though Peter changed the place, his heart didn’t change. Now Peter had to deny Jesus before more people. The verb “denied” is in the imperfect tense, suggesting that he continuously denied Jesus before others. The second denial is more intense than the first one. That’s how sin works. Repeated sin will make our conscience insensitive to sin. That’s why we must never play with sin. The more you sin, the deeper you get into it.

**3. Peter Denies Jesus for the Third Time After Being Confronted by the Bystanders (14:70b-72).**

**a. The bystanders confront Jesus (14:70b).**

After some time, the bystanders probably recognized Peter’s Galilean accent and said, “Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.” Matthew 26:73 tells that the bystanders



said to Peter, “Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you.” Since Jesus was from Nazareth, which was in Galilee, the bystanders identified Peter as one of the disciples of Christ.

**b. Peter began invoking a curse and denied Jesus (14:71).**

Peter’s denial is as strong as the accusation of the bystanders. In the first two instances, Peter denied being identified with Jesus. In the last denial, he denies Jesus himself. Peter began to invoke a curse and to swear, “I do not know this man of whom you speak.” In the statement, “he began to invoke a curse on himself,” there is no object in Greek. Some scholars suggest that Peter probably cursed Jesus to protect himself. He even swore and said, “I do not know this man of whom you speak.” Peter doesn’t even take the name of Jesus on his lips. He is ashamed of Jesus (cf. Mk 8:38)! Dear brothers and sisters, claiming that we will be faithful to Jesus will not guarantee faithfulness. When we go through pressure, we must ask the Lord to help us to be faithful to him.

**c. The rooster crows a second time (14:72a).**

As soon as (“immediately”) Peter denied Jesus for the third time, the rooster crowed a second time. Some scholars say that between the first crowing and the second crowing, there must have been a one-hour gap.

**d. Peter remembers Jesus’ prophecy (14:72b).**

Peter remembers the Lord’s prophecy given in Mark 14:30. Another prophecy given by the Lord is fulfilled. Heaven and earth will pass away, but Jesus’ words will not pass away (cf. Mk 13:31)!

**e. Peter broke down and wept (14:72c).**

Luke 22:61 says “And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord.”

Commenting on this encounter, John MacArthur writes, “The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Straight into Peter’s eyes went the gaze of the Lord Jesus. Perhaps his trial had just ended and He was coming back across the courtyard, headed to prison where he’d be kept for a few hours until the dawn, fake trial,

scourging, crucifixion in the morning.

“His face covered with spit, black and blue puffy from being punched in the face and slapped. His garments covered with sweaty blood that had oozed out of His sweat glands in the agonies in the garden. And as He’s bound, is taken through the courtyard. He looks right into the eyes of Peter. I’m pretty sure that’s a look that Peter never, ever, ever forgot.”

The last sentence in verse 72 can be translated as, “And when he had thought about it, he wept.” This shows that Peter felt remorse. Unlike Judas who betrayed his Master, Peter denied him due to his weakness rather than any other evil intentions. This anticipates that Peter will be restored (cf. Mk 16:7).

## Conclusion

Since Peter was the chief apostle and the spokesperson for the rest of the apostles, his denial is hard-hitting. Though Peter didn’t face a formal trial, he denied Jesus without even uttering his name.

This story teaches that even the best apostle was not immune to apostasy. Peter didn’t watch and pray, and thus he denied his own Master thrice.

This entire episode also teaches that no one is beyond God’s grace, forgiveness, and restoration. However, this story should not be seen as an encouragement to sin. Rather, we learn that God is the God of second chances! Mark wants us to see the contrast between the bold and good confession of Jesus (1 Tim. 6:13) before the Sanhedrin and Peter’s denial before a servant girl and bystanders. Jesus is not only our Lord and Savior, but he is also the best example for us.

The main message I want to share through this article is: **Instead of being timid, we must be courageous like our *guru*, the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Christ’s disciples must not be timid. We must be bold. Not all of us may be imprisoned or killed, but all of us will be mocked and questioned for our faith. Sometimes, we may hesitate to

identify ourselves as Christians. Let's not make the mistake that Peter did. Let's be courageous like Christ! Let's be courageous witnesses for the Lord!

P.S. This article is adapted from Dr. David Mende's book, *The Passion of Christ: Expository Sermons on Mark 14-16*. You may contact him for copies of this book.



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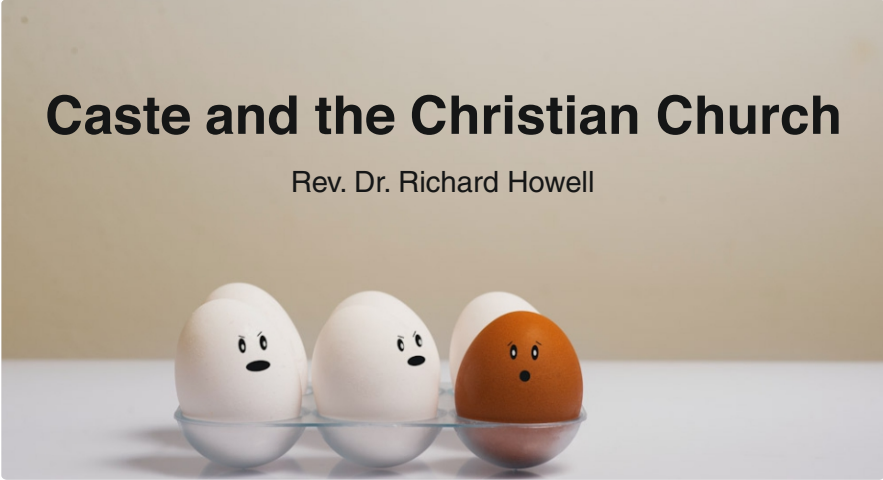
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# Caste and the Christian Church

Rev. Dr. Richard Howell



## The Church at a Crossroads

The Christian Church in India faces a significant challenge: caste-based discrimination. Like a lighthouse guiding ships through stormy seas, the Church is called to be a beacon of justice, equality, and peace. However, as caste-based divisions continue to persist even within church walls, the Church must revisit its core teachings—especially the doctrine of the Imago Dei (Image of God) and the Epistemology of Love—to navigate through these troubled waters.

## Casteism Within the Church

Casteism, though subtle, is deeply rooted in the Indian

Church. Even in the sacred space of the church, caste divides believers. In some congregations, seating arrangements and communion practices reflect caste hierarchies. Brothers and sisters in Christ are separated based on their caste background, with those from lower castes often pushed to the margins, their dignity ignored.

This segregation extends beyond worship settings. Leadership roles and decision-making positions are often reserved for the upper castes, leaving those from lower castes voiceless. The church, which should foster love and unity, sadly mirrors the

world's divisions, discouraging inter-caste marriages and maintaining power structures that harm the marginalized.

### **Caste-Based Segregation**

In states like Tamil Nadu and Kerala, caste-based segregation is visible in Christian communities. Separate congregations for Dalit and upper-caste Christians perpetuate the inequalities that the Church should stand against. Dalits, in many cases, receive the Eucharist separately, and Dalit children face discrimination in Christian-run schools. This practice contradicts the core message of the gospel—love, equality, and justice.

Particularly, Dalit Christian women experience compounded discrimination due to both caste and gender. They bear the weight of societal hierarchies, despite the Church's claim to preach equality and justice. How can the Church embody Christ's love while carrying these heavy chains of casteism?

### **The Testimony of Caste Oppression**

The story of Priyamani Ramani, a Dalit woman, highlights the persistence of caste-based discrimination in India. As she shared on 31 August 2024, caste violence continues unabated in the digital space and in everyday life. Dalits are routinely attacked for simply asserting their rights—whether it be for entering temples, building places of worship, or even drinking water from public taps. These acts of violence, particularly against Dalit women, expose the deep-rooted nature of casteism in modern India, including within Christian communities.

### **Jesus' Call to Justice**

Jesus' words, "What you did to the least of these, you did unto me" (Matthew 25:40), serve as a powerful critique against caste-based violence and discrimination. Jesus identifies with the oppressed, making it clear that any harm done to them is harm done to Him. This teaching challenges the



dehumanization that underpins caste-based discrimination and reminds us that every person bears the image of God (Imago Dei).

The Church, therefore, cannot remain passive in the face of casteism. It must actively break the chains of discrimination and embrace every individual as a reflection of God's image. Only then can the Church fulfill its calling as a community of love, justice, and equality.

### **Conclusion: Reclaiming the Imago Dei and Epistemology of Love**

For the Church to address caste-based discrimination effectively, it must reclaim the foundational doctrines of the Imago Dei and the Epistemology of Love. These doctrines remind us of the inherent dignity of every person and call the Church to live out Christ's love in practical ways. The Church's role is not only to

preach but to actively dismantle the structures of casteism within its own walls and in society.

By embodying Christ's love, the Church can become a true beacon of hope, justice, and reconciliation. In doing so, it navigates the rough seas of inequality and oppression, leading society toward a more just and inclusive future—one that reflects God's Kingdom of love and equality for all.



**Rev. Dr. Richard Howell**  
*is the former General Secretary of Evangelical Fellowship of India and Asia Evangelical Alliance and is presently the President of Caleb Institute, Gurugram, Haryana.*

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved,  
but whoever does not believe will be condemned.  
Mark 16:16



# AT HEAVEN'S GATE

Rev. Kuruvilla Chandy

Cogito, ergo sum. That's Latin, and it means, "I think, therefore I am." This dictum was coined by the French philosopher René Descartes in 1637. Descartes was making the point that while one can doubt the existence of everything else, the doubter cannot doubt his or her own existence.

In today's world, people question everything, especially religion and faith. So let's begin with Descartes' starting point. Who are you? What are you?

Those who would dismiss religious belief would say that humans are just like all other creatures, insects, fish, birds, or animals. There's no difference at

all. All creatures are born into this world, live their lives, and die. But that view doesn't stand to reason.

## Humans are Different

All insects, fish, birds, and animals are creatures of instinct. On the other hand, humans can learn what is not natural or instinctive to them. We do have instincts, but that is not our predominant way of learning stuff or living life. We can acquire knowledge and skills through our mental efforts. While humans can teach tricks to birds and animals, by themselves birds and animals don't get creative or inventive.

Humans build artificial homes and fill them with all sorts of tools, gadgets and conveniences. True,

birds build nests, and bees make hives, but they don't make any home improvements.

And then, humans have this innate ability to appreciate abstract stuff like beauty, courage, and honesty...all the qualities that point to our spirituality. If you leave your garden gate open, stray cattle are not going to wander in to smell the roses and take in their beauty. They'll take them in alright, but by chewing on them.

Plus, humans have last rites for their dead. Animals may mourn their dead, but they don't have funerals. Humans do because we believe that our lives don't end with our deaths. There will be life after death. And so, we give our dead a send-off as they go on the journey that takes them into the next dimension of life.

### **Benji & Bharat's Final Journey**

Talking of death and the last journey, let me tell you about the death of two dear friends. They were Benji and Bharat. From their childhood, they were good friends. They played together. They did their studies and

homework together. If one was sad, the other was sad too. And they defended each other fiercely. On the whole, they were good chaps. However, Benji was rather short-tempered and got into fights easily. Bharat would still rise to Benji's defence.

Though it didn't come between them, there was one difference. Benji was identified as a Christian and Bharat followed another religion.

They were together when they died in an accident. Once dead, they found out that there was only one heaven. There was only the heaven where Jesus ruled as King. There was no separate heaven for people of other faiths.

When he discovered that, Bharat was reduced to tears. He cried out, "Oh no, we're going to be separated."

Benji said, "No. You're good. Everything's going to be OK. Just come with me and I'll tell whoever is at the gate that you're good and you're my friend. I'm sure they'll let you in then."

They reached heaven's gate. It was closed. Benji was surprised that it was still shut. He thought to himself that folks in heaven must have known when they would reach there. The gate should have been left open for them to pass through immediately on arrival. Benji looked up at the tall gate and shouted, "Ahoj there! Open up! We want to come in"

A little window opened and an angel peeped out. "Who are you?" the angel asked.

"I'm Benji and this is my very good friend Bharat."

"I see," the angel said. "Just one question: in life, did you put your trust in the Saviour Jesus?"

Bharat kept quiet. Benji spoke up. "Well, you see, Bharat was born and brought up in a family that follows another religion. But I want you to know he's a really good guy. He's very gentle and kind. In fact, he's better than I am."

The angel said, "So you think he should be let in because he's good. And I suppose that's what you think should happen to you

too, that you should be allowed in because you've been good."

Benji replied, "Yeah. I'm not bad. I'm pretty good, you know."

The angel said, "Won't do. You're not good enough."

Benji almost screamed, "What do you mean? I'm really a good person. I've never killed anyone. I've not deliberately hurt anyone. I've never stolen from anyone. And you know, I never committed adultery. I got all the big stuff right didn't I?"

The angel said, "That's still not good enough. You're not perfect."

Benji said with some frustration, "Of course, I'm not perfect. But that doesn't mean that I'm not good."

The angel said, "Sorry, but only the perfect can get in here."

Benji said, "Come on! Who's perfect?"

"God is," said the angel, "and to get into heaven you have to be like God, because God said to

people, ‘Be holy like I am holy’.”

Benji was almost in tears as he exclaimed, “But that’s impossible. No one can be like God.”

“That’s true,” said the angel.

“Then how can anyone get into heaven?”

“That’s why you needed to put your trust in Jesus,” said the angel. “If you had, then Jesus would have covered you. His death would have paid for your sins to be forgiven and washed away. He would have transferred His own righteousness to you. Then you would have been as holy as God.”

All the bravado and bluster drained out of Benji as he asked, “What can we do now?”

“Nothing,” the angel said.

“Can’t we put our trust in Jesus now?”

The angel solemnly replied, “You had your chance. You had your life. That’s when you should have put your trust in Jesus. Not now,

when your life is over. In life, you didn’t want Jesus.”

Benji asked, “Now what? Where can we go?”

“You can go to hell,” the angel said.

Sounds a bit harsh, doesn’t it? But what can we do? That is how the Word of God describes the criteria of divine judgment.

### **What the Bible Says**

The Apostle Paul said that humans are without excuse because everything they need to know God is before their very eyes, but many turn away to their own ways of viewing God: “the Good News... is the power God uses to save everyone who believes—to save the Jews first, and then to save non-Jews. The Good News shows how God makes people right with himself—that it begins and ends with faith. As the Scripture says, ‘But those who are right with God will live by faith’.”

Paul went on to say, “God’s anger is shown from heaven against all the evil and wrong things people



do. By their own evil lives they hide the truth. God shows his anger because some knowledge of him has been made clear to them. Yes, God has shown himself to them. There are things about him that people cannot see—his eternal power and all the things that make him God. But since the beginning of the world those things have been easy to understand by what God has made. So people have no excuse for the bad things they do. They knew God, but they did not give glory to God or thank him. Their thinking became useless. Their foolish minds were filled with darkness. They said they were wise, but they became fools. They traded the glory of God who lives forever for the worship of idols made to look like earthly people, birds, animals, and snakes” (Rom. 1: 16-23, NCV).

### **What Jesus Said**

Sometimes people think that Paul made all this up, because he wanted to make a religion out of the simple moral teachings of the poor village carpenter Jesus. So, let’s look at what Jesus said. He told the religious expert Nicodemus, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot be in God’s kingdom.”

Nicodemus countered that it was impossible for a grown-up to take birth again, or did Jesus think that a grown-up could re-enter his mother’s womb and be born again? Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born from water and the Spirit, you cannot enter God’s kingdom. Human life comes from human parents, but spiritual life comes from the Spirit. Don’t be surprised when I tell you, ‘You must all be born again.’ The wind blows where it wants to and you hear the sound of it, but you don’t know where the wind comes from or where it is going. It is the same with every person who is born from the Spirit.”

Jesus then went on to say, “God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son so that whoever believes in him may not be lost, but have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world guilty, but to save the world through him. People who believe in God’s Son are not judged guilty. Those who do not believe have already been judged guilty, because they have not believed in God’s one and only Son” (Jn. 3: 3-18, NCV).

Jesus said it very clearly. If you believe in Him, you are not going

to come into judgment. If you don't, you are already judged and condemned.

Heaven's admission rules are in place. They won't change because you turn up at the gate.

So many ask, what about those who have never heard of Jesus? They do that because if there is another way others are getting in, that's what they want too for themselves. If there is another way, then they don't have to accept Jesus.

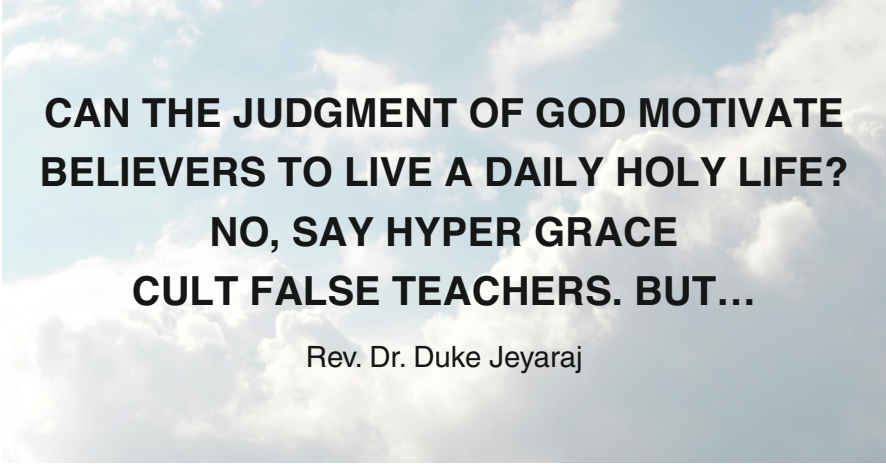
Anyway, to answer the question about those who have not heard of Jesus, as Abraham acknowledged, "Won't the judge of the whole earth do what is fair?" (Gen. 18:25). God will do right by them. They will be judged for not having followed through on the evidence before their eyes (Rom. 1:19-23). They will be judged by what they know (2:14-16).

Abraham didn't know Jesus. He was saved because he didn't trust himself or his works, but put his faith in God alone (4:2-3). That is how God will judge those who have not known of Jesus. So you don't have to worry about them.

Worry about your own salvation, if you are trusting yourself. According to our Lord's teaching, you are not good enough to enter heaven. There is only one way you can enter. Because you have heard of Jesus, you will have no excuse if you don't accept Jesus as your Saviour. Unless you put your faith in Jesus, that by His death He paid for your salvation and entry into heaven, you are not going to get in. The fact that you attend church, have been baptized, take communion or that you have been a pretty good person, counts for nothing with God, because you simply don't measure up to God. Only one thing will count: have you asked Jesus to take over the task of saving you?



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**CAN THE JUDGMENT OF GOD MOTIVATE  
BELIEVERS TO LIVE A DAILY HOLY LIFE?  
NO, SAY HYPER GRACE  
CULT FALSE TEACHERS. BUT...**

Rev. Dr. Duke Jeyaraj

Do the Scriptures use judgment passages to motivate believers for holy living? Hyper Grace cult false teachers would say 'no'. This is an actual quote from a Singapore based Hyper Grace pastor: "There are still people who insist that we have to preach on repentance. Well, I disagree! I think we should do it God's way – preach the goodness of God and allow the goodness of God to lead people to repentance. Such repentance will be true repentance. It will not be motivated by the fear of judgment and indignation. It will be a genuine repentance that is motivated by His grace, unconditional love, and compassion. After all, our ability to love God stems from our first

tasting His love for us." But, a careful observation of Scriptures tells another story.

Perhaps, the most exhaustive judgment passage in the Bible comes in the book of Revelation. In Revelation 20:11-15, the Bible talks about the Great White Throne Judgment. Here all the dead, the hades occupants (remember the rich man whom Jesus talked about who went to Hades, Luke 16:23?) and the current living were gathered in one place and are judged by Jesus, the Lamb. Before the Great White Throne Judgment would be the largest ever crowd that has ever gathered in the history of time! Only the paradise occupants are missing in this

crowd (remember the repentant dying thief who went to paradise, Luke 23:43?). These folk were in Christ when they died and therefore, there is no condemnation into the Lake of Fire, which is the Second Death, for them (Rom. 8:1). The 'book of life' referred to in Great White Throne Judgement (Rev. 20:15) is called Lamb's book of life in Revelation 13:8 and Revelation 21:27. Revelation 21:17 clearly states only those whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life will be found in the New Heaven and New Earth after the Second Coming of Jesus (See Rev. 21:1). Revelation 21:15 states those whose names are not found in the Book of Life will be thrown into the Lake of Fire. What Revelation 21:27 says in a positive way, Revelation 20:15 says in the negative way. I believe both these verses are talking about the same book – the Lamb's book of Life. Who is the Lamb? He is Jesus. 'Lamb' is one of the most-often repeated titles of Jesus in the Bible. What is the implication of Revelation 20:15 and Revelation 21:27? It is this: those who have received the forgiveness of sin through the

blood of the Lamb and those who abide in Him there after, will escape the Lake of Fire and will go the New Heaven and New Earth and live there forever and ever!

Let us look at Revelation 21:27 again. It goes this way: 'and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life' (NASB). Notice the word 'practices' here. Those who live stubbornly in sin without receiving the forgiveness from the Lamb who shed his sinless blood for them in repentance will go to the Lake of Fire that burns forever to be tormented there. I John 3:6 makes it that the one who abideth in sin is not even saved! Romans 2:2-11 also says, the stubbornly unrepentant will be judged by God on the day of wrath (presumably the Great White Throne Judgment Day). If we see Revelation 20:11-Rev.21:27 as one unit, the call for holy living comes in Revelation 20:12 (yes, we are saved by Grace but that does not mean we don't care about what we do in our day to

day life, we must live out the Grace-enabled holy life) and in Revelation 21:27, a call to avoid the practice of sin, a life of stubborn sin after we become believers. So, in Revelation 20 and 21, when the Scripture talks about the Day of Judgment, it calls us to live a Holy Life! Clearly, Hyper-Grace false teachers who say that fear of judgment should not drive us to live holy are missing something here! Yes, primarily the Grace of God moves us to say 'no' ungodliness (Titus 2:11-12). But, the Wrath of God also does the same as we can understand from the collective reading of Revelation 20 and 21.

In fact, Apostle Peter put this very plainly. He makes clear the coming of Jesus, the day of Judgment must motivate us to live Holy Lives. See what He writes: 'But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye

to be in all holy conversation and godliness. Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless' (2 Peter 3:10-14, KJV). The phrases: 'in all holy conversation and godliness' (v.11), 'be diligent that ye may be found in him in peace, without spot and blameless' (v.14) from this passage calls us for sin-rejecting Grace-enabled holy living after a clear proclamation of the coming of the Lord, Day of Judgment and arrival of new heavens and a new earth!

So, both in Revelation 20-21, in 2 Peter 3, the call for holiness is clubbed with Day of Judgment announcement! Like-wise in Romans 2:2-6. It goes this way: 'And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. But do



you suppose this, you foolish person who passes judgment on those who practice such things, and yet does them as well, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and restraint and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will repay each person according to his deeds: 7 to those who by perseverance in doing good seek glory, honor, and immortality, He will give eternal life; but to those who are self-serving and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, He will give wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of mankind who does evil, for the Jew first and also [i] for the Greek, but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who does what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God' (NASB). Look at these phrases in this passage:

'those who practice such things' (v.2), 'those who practice such things' (v.3), 'your stubbornness and unrepentant heart'(v.5), 'will repay each person according to His deeds' (v.6), 'those by perseverance in doing good'(v.7), 'those who are self-serving and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness'(v.8). All these phrases call us for a consistent Grace-enabled Holy Living clubbing these with the judgment of God theme!

So, Revelation 20-21, 2 Peter 3, Romans 2 – all these passages call believers for holy living warning of judgment if this is ignored. We are not done yet.

See what Paul writes in I Corinthians 10. Let us look at verses 6-14 in the excellent The Voice version: 'Look at what happened to them as an example; it's right there in the Scriptures so that we won't make the same mistakes and hunger after evil as they did. So, here's my advice: don't degrade yourselves by worshiping anything less than the living God as some of them did. Remember it is written, "The

people sat down to eat and drink and then rose up in dance and play.” We must be careful not to engage in sexual sins as some of them did. In one day, 23,000 died because of sin. None of us must test the limits of the Lord’s patience. Some of the Israelites did, and serpents bit them and killed them. You need to stop your groaning and whining. Remember the story. Some of them complained, and the messenger of death came for them and destroyed them. All these things happened for a reason: to sound a warning. They were written down and passed down to us to teach us. They were meant especially for us because the beginning of the end is happening in our time. So, let even the most confident believers remember their examples and be very careful not to fall as some of them did.’ What is the thrust of this passage? Simply this: Old Testament stories of judgment should motivate New Testament believers to live holy and overcome day-to-day temptation!

So, Revelation 20-21, 2 Peter 3, Romans 2 and I Corinthians 10 –

all connect the day of Judgment with daily holy living!

Not only do Judgment of God passages motivate us for Holy Living, they motivate us to endure sufferings for the Lord. In 2 Thessalonians 1, Paul makes this point: endure suffering, because the Christ-rejectors who make you suffer will one day suffer forever in hell! Hear Paul yourself in verses 6-10: ‘In his justice he will pay back those who persecute you. And God will provide rest for you who are being persecuted and also for us when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven. He will come with his mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire, bringing judgment on those who don’t know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with eternal destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power. When he comes on that day, he will receive glory from his holy people—praise from all who believe. And this includes you, for you believed what we told you about him’ (NLT).

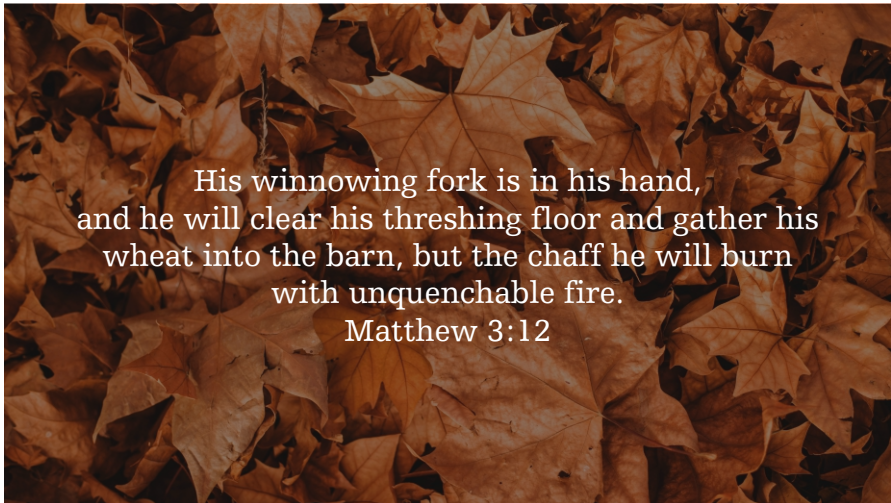
So, Judgment passages in the New Testament have great value: they motivate us to live Holy and also endure suffering! Let us keep returning them again and again! Let us ignore what the Hyper-Grace cult false teachers say about these passages!



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# The Judge of all the earth

Mr. Chacko Thomas

## Here are a few quotations:

“... Shall not the judge of all the earth deal justly?” (Genesis 18: 25)

“If you take this idea of judgement out of the Bible you have very little left.” So wrote Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones [Gems from Martin Lloyd Jones by Tony Sargent]

“At the day of judgement, we shall not be asked what we have read but what we have done,” wrote Thomas à Kempis [quoted in Book of Great Thoughts by Bob Philips]

## Introduction

I was shocked more than a little by the statement made by Dr

Lloyd-Jones: “If you take this idea of judgement out of the Bible, you have very little left.”

But then, when I stopped to think and run my mind through different books of the Bible, especially the Prophets, I realised that Doctor has made a truly profound statement – and it has the backing of the whole Bible.

Take for example, the judgement of God on Nineveh in the book of Nahum. Although forgiven after Jonah’s preaching, they were wiped out completely when they resorted to their old wicked ways. The judgements of God on cities and nations like Nineveh and Edom serve as examples of the

judgment to follow on the whole world which has rebelled against God. Yes, “Vengeance is mine, says the Lord”. I hope to look at the Book of Nahum in a short while.

Our God is not only the Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer, and Guide, but also the judge of all creation, especially of mankind. We are aware that the Lord Jesus spoke more about judgement and hell than any other New Testament writers.

**“Sinners in the hands of an angry God”:**

The most famous Christian sermon ever preached in America, or for that matter in the world, was by Jonathan Edwards (1703 - 1758), the great Theologian, Pastor, and the second President of Princeton College. His sermon was entitled: “Sinners in the hands of an angry God”. His text was Deuteronomy 32:35: “their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand.” (KJV).

Psalms 73:18-19 (KJV) expresses a similar thought: “Surely thou

didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction; how are they brought into desolation as in a moment!”

He preached saying: “All you who never passed under a great change of heart, by the mighty power of the Spirit of God upon your souls; all you that are never born again, and made new creatures, and raised from being dead in sin, to a state of new, and altogether unexperienced light and life, are in the hands of an angry God...”

He also pleaded with them, saying,

“And now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day wherein Christ has thrown the door of mercy wide open, and stands calling, and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners; a day wherein many are flocking to him and pressing into the kingdom of God.

“Many are daily coming from the east, west, north, and south; many that were very lately in the same miserable condition that you are in, are now in a happy

state, with their hearts filled with love to him who has loved them, washed them from their sins in his own blood, and rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God...”

He ended his sermon by admonishing: “Let everyone that is out of Christ now awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over a great part of this congregation. Let everyone fly out of Sodom: ‘Haste and escape for your lives, look not behind you, escape to the mountain, lest you be consumed’.”

Thank God that “the little town of Enfield was never the same.” [Taken from the One Year Christian History by E. Michael and Sharon Rusten]

## **7 Judgements given in the Bible:**

One of the greatest Bible study resources for Christians, and readily available in India in several languages is the great book One Hundred Bible Lessons by Alban Douglas. He lists seven specific types of

Judgements given in the Bible. He lists each of them under five basic points: Subject; Time; Place; Basis and Results.

“They are not the only judgements; there was the judgement by flood in the days of Noah and the judgement of confusion of languages at the Tower of Babel. There have been lesser judgements that have fallen upon individuals, nations or even group of nations at various times.” [Alban Douglas]

However, I can only just name the main judgements here, and a few Bible references to each of them.

- The Judgement that Fell at Calvary, Christ bearing our sin: (John 1:29; Hebrews 2:9; 1 John 2:2)
- Daily self Judgement, Saints judging themselves: (1 Corinthians 11:28; Psalm 26:1-2)
- The Bema, The Judgement Seat of Christ, the Saints being judged for their works: (2 Corinthians 5:10, Hebrews 9:27 (Douglas has a whole chapter on this.)
- The Judgement of the Jews,

the Jewish Nation or People: (Ezekiel 20:34-38; 1 Samuel 8:7; Luke 23:18; Acts 7:51)

- The Judgement of the Nations: (Matthew 25:31-41)
- The Judgement of the Fallen Angels: (Ezekiel 28:12-19, Isaiah 14:12-17; Revelation 12:4; Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4)
- The Judgement of the Wicked Dead – those who have never been born again, those who did not rise at the first resurrection.: (Revelation 20:11-15)

“The Great White Throne Judgement is personal and final; it is not a trial to discover whether a person is guilty or not; it is a pronouncement of judgement by the Lord God Almighty on the ungodly and doomed. [notes taken from Lesson 85, The Judgements, One Hundred Bible Lessons, 1960, by Alban Douglas]

### **Nahum: The Righteous Judge to take vengeance on His enemies**

I recently came across a brilliant book on the Minor Prophets subtitled, A Message for the 21st

Century (2008) by Michael R. Abbott. Below are just few thoughts that are relevant for this article, from his chapter of eight pages on the book of Nahum:

“It was possibly around 800 BC that God sent Jonah to pronounce His judgement against the sinful people of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. Nineveh had repented at the preaching of Jonah, and the city was spared at the time.

“Nevertheless in 721 BC Assyria had crushed Samaria and taking the people captive and dispersing them throughout their own empire. Now about a hundred years later, Nahum prophesies the destruction of the mighty and proud city. ... Now, they are told that the opportunity for repentance is past. The prophecy was fulfilled in 612 BC when the Medes sacked the City of Nineveh.”

Nahum means “comforter”. The primary purpose of this book therefore is to give comfort to those who trust the Lord as judgement day approaches.



**Chapter 1:** The Divine origin of Judgement. Here, the two sides of God's character are clearly seen. His love for His people is set alongside His judgement of the wicked.

1:3: God is slow to anger, but will not acquit the wicked

1:7-8: God is a stronghold to His people, but will utterly destroy His enemies.

1:12: God will no more afflict His people, but will cause Nineveh to cease.

It is clear that Nineveh is used here as a type of the world in its enmity against the Lord. Whilst the prophecy is directed specifically at Nineveh, verse 5 speaks of destruction that is to come upon all the inhabitants of the world. There is a striking parallel between this verse and the final judgement described in 2 Peter 3:10. Both reveal that the elements shall melt and the earth shall be burned up.

“The emphasis in our society today is upon the love of God. ...

The knowledge of God's love must be balanced out against the fact God is holy and righteous and that He will not at all acquit the wicked.

“If God did not punish sin, He would not be righteous. Like Nineveh, this world has had the opportunity to repent and turn to the Lord but, whilst God is slow to anger, the day will come when He will make an utter end of all His enemies.”

I am afraid that space will not allow me to convey Abbott's message on the two remaining chapters of Nahum. His comments on chapter 2 is entitled “The Decisive Nature of Judgement” and Chapter 3, “The Defensible purpose of Judgement”.

“Men may continue in their sin, convincing themselves that the judgement will not come. If it does, they will be able to justify themselves before God. The Scripture reveals that such an attitude is folly,” writes Michael R. Abbott.

Allow me just to conclude this article with a couple more quotes from Dr Martin Lloyd-Jones: “If there was nothing beyond death, perhaps I would not be preaching at all, but I know that there is something beyond death and it is judgement. God is the Judge. The God who so loved the world that He send His only Son into it and put your sins upon him and smote Him for us, He will be the judge.”

Again, here is another key statement by the Doctor: “If only every man and woman in the world today realised that he or she had to stand before God in the judgement it would be a very different world.”

I hope that I have given you

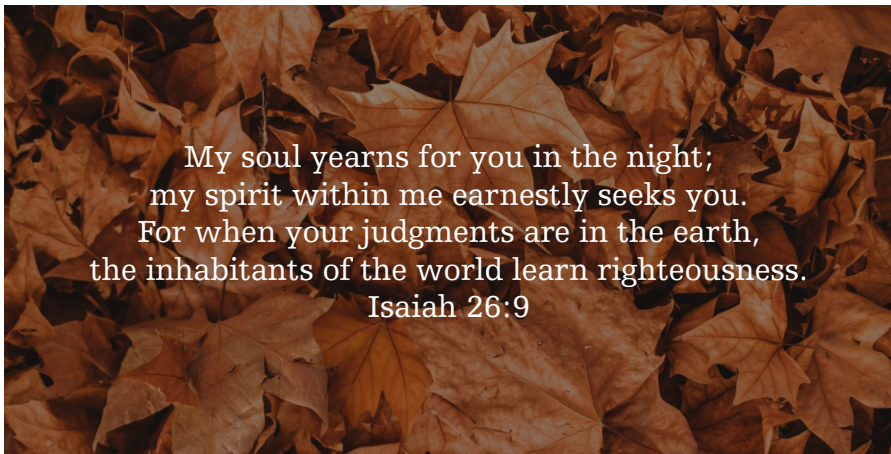
something to think about and perhaps to preach about and to make profound changes in your life and calling.

God Bless!!!



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In the 1990s, Star Plus telecast an American TV serial that was very captivating. The serial “Picket Fences” revolved around the family of a sheriff, his second wife, a doctor, his daughter from his first marriage, and two sons from the second marriage. Other characters included two deputies from the sheriff’s office, a medical examiner, a defence lawyer, and a crusty old judge. Almost invariably each episode would end in the court with the old judge delivering impassioned verdicts that made viewers think about the moral and ethical issues involved. The title “Picket Fences” was apt as the serial dealt with the limits of acceptable behaviour.

### **Fences For Safety**

Why do people have fences? The

obvious answer is that they have them to fence in some things and to fence out others. We want to keep in safety the people we love and to keep out what would endanger the people we love. We love our families. We work for them and save to provide for their future so that they will be spared any deprivation. We do all we can to protect them. We have invisible fences around them. We do everything we can to keep them out of harm and dangers of all kinds.

When we work hard at making our homes safe, we are essentially doing all we can to protect our children from physical harm. There is a need however to ask ourselves the question whether we have done all we can

to protect them from spiritual harm too.

Satan complained that God had put a fence around Job so that he, Satan, was unable to attack Job: “Have you not put a fence around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land” (Job1:10, NRSV). Solomon in one psalm wisely says, “If the Lord does not protect the city, it is useless for the sentries to stand guard” (127:1, GNB). Or, as Eugene Peterson says in his paraphrase *The Message* (TM), “The night watchman might as well nap.” For His part, God is doing everything to protect His children. What fences can Christian parents put up to protect their children?

Today, parents worry about their children’s physical, mental, and emotional health. Their primary concern is that their children grow up and be able to pursue a career to support themselves. But that is not enough. The greatest loss parents can suffer is when their children no longer share their parents’ values. That is why there

is a need to have fences for spiritual protection.

### **Spiritual Values**

The values we teach and impart serve as spiritual fences. “Point your kids in the right direction—when they’re old they won’t be lost” (Pr.22:6, TM). “Teach children how they should live, and they will remember it all their lives” (GNB). However, parents often say, “We can only teach our children. Who knows whether they will hold on to what we teach them?”

They probably speak from their own experience of having departed from their parents’ teachings. Since they did it themselves, they fear that their children, in turn, will reject their values. The implication is that it is pointless to try inculcating spiritual values.

We need to analyse why it is that children grow up and reject parents’ values. The most common cause is that the children regard their parents and what they teach as old-fashioned. They perceive their parents as merely thrusting upon them rules

and regulations that do not take into account the changed circumstances of modern life.

If all the rationale for our values and rules is “because I say so,” they will seem to be based on personal whims and fancies. As kids attain the age of choosing for themselves, they will reject such values regarding them as outdated. There needs to be a higher reason—a higher authority that commands respect and obedience. Only an objective standard will not be regarded as being based on generational notions.

### **God, Our Standard**

God alone is the objective standard for all humans. He is the only one who has the moral authority to command submission. He is the ultimate reality of our lives and the sole basis for all moral conduct.

Without God, moral values don't make sense. As Paul said in connection with the resurrection, we might as well join those who say, “Eat, drink, be merry, for tomorrow we die” (1 Cor.15:32). If our life has only physical reality,

then it doesn't make any sense to deny ourselves any or all the experiences that would give us physical pleasure.

The moral/spiritual values we impart must therefore be based on two realities: That

- God is there, and
- God is the One Who has given us the values to live by.

When we believe in these two realities, it follows that there is a need for people to know personally

- God, and
- His values.

### **Knowing God**

How can we know God and His values? Many people imagine that it is all a matter of speculation and guesswork. No one can have sure knowledge, as no one has really seen God. All we have is the notion that God is there. The rest is just a matter of opinion, and one viewpoint is as good as another. That is why we have so many religions. No one knows God for sure. Everyone is sincerely trying to discover God, and every attempt is okay because everyone is groping in

the dark equally and trying to move toward the light. When one can't be sure, it is better to hedge one's bets, like the Athenians having a temple to an unknown god in case they had missed out on some god (Acts 17:23).

Paul argued that just as no one can know a person's mind unless the person reveals it himself, we cannot know God or His view of things unless God chooses to reveal Himself. "Who knows the thoughts that another person has? Only a person's spirit that lives within him knows his thoughts. It is the same with God. No one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God" (Cor.2:11, NCV).

Yes, it would be correct to believe that each and every human opinion or speculation about God is legitimate, except for one fact: that God has given us revelations of Himself. If God had not revealed Himself, we could each try to discover Him and share what we think with each other and feel that religious tolerance and cooperation are what is needed to discover the truth.

But

- God has spoken (in His Word), and
- God has come to us in the person of Jesus our Lord.

In the face of such revelation, our human speculations are not worth holding on to. We must therefore ask, "What is it that God wants me to teach my children?"

### **What God Wants**

God's servant Moses told God's people that they should love God and teach their children all about God: "Attention...! God, our God! God the one and only! Love God, your God, with your whole heart: love him with all that's in you, love him with all you've got! Write these commandments that I've given you today on your hearts. Get them inside of you and then get them inside your children. Talk about them wherever you are, sitting at home or walking in the street; talk about them from the time you get up in the morning to when you fall into bed at night. Tie them on your hands and foreheads as a reminder; inscribe them on the doorposts of your homes and on your city gates" (Dt.6:4-9, TM). As the New

International Version puts it, “Impress them on your children” (v.7).

Most of us think we can understand the command to love God, but wonder about the value of a book of laws. So many of them are obscure and seem outlandish. What is the point of God having given His people so many rules and regulations?

God’s law does have a point. It serves to give us direction. The commandments of God are like picket fences that help us to stay on His path. If the picket fences are removed we would wander like sheep and get lost.

Essentially, the law of God talks about how to treat others. “Don’t run up debts, except for the huge debt of love you owe each other. When you love others, you complete what the law has been after all along. The law code—don’t sleep with another person’s spouse, don’t take someone’s life, don’t take what isn’t yours, don’t always be wanting what you don’t have, and any other ‘don’t’ you can think of—finally adds up to this: Love

other people as well as you do yourself. You can’t go wrong when you love others. When you add up everything in the law code, the sum total is love” (Rom.13:8-10, TM).

God’s law lays out or defines the path of love—the direction our actions should take. God has given us rules to live by so that we don’t infringe on the rights and freedoms of others. That is all that His law does: it teaches us not to mistreat and hurt people. He wants us to desist from harming others. Or, to state it positively, God wants us to love our neighbours as ourselves. He wants us to care for others. “Do not be interested only in your own life, but be interested in the lives of others” (Phil.2:10, NCV).

Our Lord said that when we care for others, we care for Him. He indicated this in the parable of the sheep and the goats. The sheep are those who feed Jesus, clothe Him, befriend Him and otherwise take care of Him by caring for those who are the objects of His care. The goats are those who do not feed Him, clothe Him, befriend Him or take care of Him



by caring for others (Matt. 25:31-46).

### **Give Them Jesus**

The problem is that we are surrounded by people who live just for the self. There is nothing new about that. People have always been self-centred and selfish. They live to make money. They aim at advancing themselves. "...People around here are looking out for themselves, with little concern for the things of Jesus" (Phil.2:21, TM).

We know all this. We know we are to be kind to others and do what is good and loving. But knowing that doesn't help us. When parting with their friends, today many people say, "Be good." But they say it with a naughty look, implying that they know that people are going to do some bad things, but it's okay. Telling people, "Be good," doesn't make them good.

Laws have never made anyone good. There is mostly nothing wrong with the laws of our country. The problem of implementation lies in the fact

that while the law can legislate, it cannot empower goodness. People need Jesus to make them good. "God gave the Law through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (Jn.1:17, GNB). That is the difference between Moses and Jesus. Moses and all lawmakers are good at only one thing: they can make laws. But Jesus is different: He empowers people to keep the law. Without His grace, we cannot be good. Without Jesus empowering us we cannot be Christlike.

Give your family, Jesus. He is the best picket fence they can have.

As with the Old Testament, the New Testament too urges teaching children about God and the beliefs, practices and disciplines that are all part of knowing God. "Parents, do not treat your children in such a way as to make them angry. Instead, bring them up with Christian discipline and instruction" (Eph.6:4).

Inculcate in your family the habits of reading the Bible, praying, joining in family prayer, and being

involved with a church for the sake of Christian fellowship. Inculcating these spiritual habits involves practising them yourself and setting an example in doing them. Having taught these things by example and instruction, there is also a need for elders to ask, “Have you read your Bible and prayed today?”

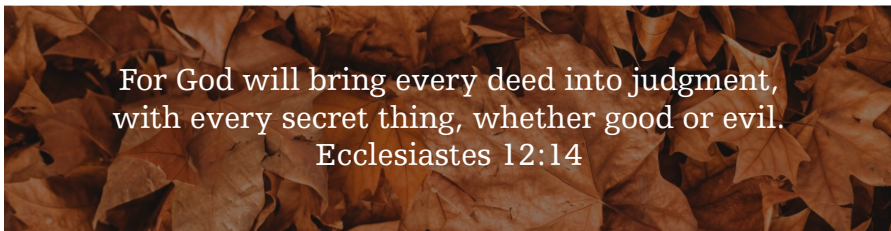
While we monitor our children in all the other areas of their lives, we don’t monitor their spirituality. That is because many think that it is fanatical to share one’s faith, and so have a casual attitude about faith and its practice. They feel it is sophisticated to be casual. But as I said, we are not casual about other things, are we? We do intrude on our children’s private space to ask, “Have you brushed your teeth? Have you had your bath? Are your fingernails clean? Have you done your homework? Have you written your grandparents to thank them for the gift they sent

you?” We do this to ensure that they grow up well—physically, mentally, and socially. But our children have a spiritual dimension too. Who will ensure that they are growing well spiritually if we do not ask them questions that probe their spiritual lives?

Picket fences for physical safety and well-being are important. But it is equally important that we erect picket fences to safeguard our families spiritually and eternally.



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# Foundation for Christian Ministry-Part IV

Ps. Grish Lal Tamta

## **Introduction**

The foundation for Christian ministry has been discussed in three parts in my previous articles dealing with it, from OT and NT perspective and its distinctiveness and calling to serve the master and his people. Now let us discuss about one of the most important aspects of ministry is the relationship with master, family, children and brother and sisters in the body of Christ and beyond.

## **The minister's relationship with his master**

The first and foremost important thing that a minister needs, is to have personal and intimate relationship with the Master through prayer and

studying his word. In other words, he must talk and hear him and keep the communication live which is most important in any earthly relation too. Jesus has shown us the example by praying to father early in the morning to take guidance, direction and strength for the whole day and teach, preach and heal (Mark 1:35-36). Then he would go in the night to update the father about the whole day work with grateful and thankful heart (Mark 6:35). To a minister, God must be on top of the relationship to be successful in leading the people he has given him.

In the same way, a minister should spend some quite time with master for his guidance, direction and strength with the help of the Holy spirit to lead the sheep in order to overcome the challenges lying ahead for the day. Then, the minister should meditate upon his word, daily devotion and reflect in his daily chores and errands for his glory. The relationship is successful on the basis of communication to talk (pray) and hear (studying of the word of God). The relationship with master stands on these two pillars.

### **The minister's relationship with his family members**

The relationship of a minister with his family depends upon the relationship with his master. God created family as a basic structure of the society which plays very important role in the life of a minister. It depends upon mutual submission, sacrificial love, understanding communication and tender care. Scripture tells us that a minister must manage his family and see that his children obey and respect him (1 Tim 3:2-5). He has to provide all physical needs of the family and spent

time with them and make balance between family and ministry. In other words, the family responsibility must take precedence to ministerial responsibility. It is God ordained structure which a minister must keep. It is important because spouse and family complement the Christian leader and harmonious marital relationship. The united family can establish an effective model for the people being ministered. The role of father, husband and wife, mother should be in mind with the mind of minister. So, the emphasis is to have self-sacrificial love, respect and self-denial for each other to demonstrate the divine order of unity.

### **The minister's relationship with wife**

The husband-and-wife relationship is created by God with an instruction to be one flesh and the success of a minister depends upon the success of his being husband and father. Basically, there are many ways to describe it. The following verses teaches us :

a- Minister should be

c o n s i d e r a t e a n d understanding towards his wife and treat her as gracious gift of life (1 Pet 3:7).

b-Minister should love his wife and treat her with respect and honour genuinely. He should make communication open and esteem her and appreciate her abilities and qualities and love her as he loves himself. The minister should love her as Christ loved his church and sacrificed his life for her (Eph 5:25).

c-Minister should be faithful to his wife and vice versa because God created them as husband and wife and made them one flesh (Gen 2:24). The minister should always be loving towards his wife, admire and cherish his wife and spend quality time with her.

d-Nurture one another for wellbeing and devotion helps them to grow in love and unity to follow the divine order of trinity and spend private time with the Lord (Luke 10:38-42). Both must have private time with the Lord, to be strong in the Lord to face the ministerial challenges.

## **The minister's relationship with his children**

Bible says children are a heritage from the Lord and a reward from him (Ps 127:3). They are given by God as responsibility to parents to teach them in the way they should go which is not an easy job but requires commitment, prayer, hard work, dedication, sacrifice, planning and care. Bible says that the minister should not exasperate their children (Eph 6:4) rather manage his family and see that the children obey and respect him (1 Tim 3:4). Science says, a child begins to emulate parents from the 4<sup>th</sup> month of conception and become full blown adult like parents. So, the influence of parent is very important in raising them. They learn every shade of life from parents, family, church and the community by observation. They should demonstrate the Christian values and treat them with love, respect, care, concern and discipline them. Bible says spare the rod and

spoil the child. The parents should be a godly example and display Christ likeness and develop Christ centered family and witness Christ power and his love.

### **The relationship of a minister with his congregation**

It is true that the relationship of minister and his congregation is like a *shepherd* and *sheep* which is promised by the Lord who will feed his sheep with knowledge and understanding (Jere 3:15). In order to prepare God's people for serving the Lord and build up the body of Christ so that all reach unity in faith and in the knowledge of his son Jesus Christ (Eph 4:12-13). The relationship of shepherd with sheep is personal, intimate and mutually affectionate and his shepherding offers them to protect, guide and lead them to green pasture and feed them and make them strong. In the same way, the minister's love and care of the congregation develops healthy relationship. The periodic visit of minister in sickness and suffering makes a lot of difference. The minister should be impartial, not favourable to anyone, nor

close to any group or family, must be trustworthy, maintain confidentiality, fulfilling commitment, keeping his word, will build long term relationship. The minister should be approachable to the congregation. He should be alert while dealing with opposite sex in the congregation and put on armour of God to control himself with the help of Holy spirit (Eph 6:10-18).

### **The minister's involvement in his community**

The minister is not only responsible to his family, congregation but also to the community as a representative of Christ. Though the minister is not of this world but is in the world as new creation in Christ, obedient and righteous. The minister is required to live a life of blameless, pure, non-complainant, no arguing and shine like stars in the community (Phil 2:14-15). His involvement in the community is to carry the message of the salvation of the Lord to the community as his ambassador (2 Cori 5:20) not his own message. He speaks as an authorised representative of



the Lord in meekness and gentleness in Christ (2Tim 2:24-26). He acts diplomatically to reconcile the opposition without compromising the Biblical principles. The minister should be approachable and sensible to the needs around. He should lead a pure and holy life in the community to display the difference between believers and non-believers. He should find suitable ways to connect with the people in his community with love and care.

### **Conclusion**

The relational element is one of the most important aspects of ministry in relationship with master, family, children, brother and sisters in the body of Christ and beyond. The foundation for Christian ministry is purely based on the

relationship of minister with the master whom he serves. This relationship is measured on the basis of relationship of minister with the master as his ambassador to connect people to the Christ with love and care and save them for eternity which Christ has promised, not only for humanity but for the whole creation (Rom 8:19-21).



### **Ps. Grish Lal Tamta**

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For God did not send his Son into the world  
to condemn the world,  
but in order that the world might  
be saved through him.  
John 3:17





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**Working arrangement:** Full time, work from home. Send your CV to [gracy.ligy@gmail.com](mailto:gracy.ligy@gmail.com) by 28th November 2024. Our dream is to see an India where every person can respond to the gospel. An India with a church in every village and a gospel witness in every community. Launching in 2014, we are now supporting over 1,200 church planters across the length and breadth of India.

The Comms Officer will report to the CEO, a Westerner.

The Comms Officer will implement and develop our strategy for achieving the following objectives:

- 1) To motivate our supporters to maintain or increase their giving
- 2) To raise up prayer support for the mission
- 3) To inspire our supporters to walk more closely with Jesus

### **Required Skills & Experience**

- 1) Excellent spoken and written English
- 2) Creative writing skills including story and report writing
- 3) Experience using newsletters or social media for communications and marketing purposes
- 4) Experience of written and verbal engagements with a Western audience
- 5) Experience implementing donor journey strategies
- 6) Proficiency with Google Sheets
- 7) Proficiency with CRM and newsletter software
- 8) Organisational skills for arranging meetings and scheduling content
- 9) Analytical skills to evaluate the impact of our existing communications strategy and to identify how it can be improved
- 10) Willingness to travel to Indian villages at least 1-2 times per year
- 11) Alignment with our vision and values and a willingness to commit to the organisation

**Prayer Points for the International Days of Prayers (IDOP)  
for the Persecuted Churches 2024**

1. Please pray for religious freedom worldwide, so that all people may practice, profess, and share their faith freely. May Christians across the globe exercise their right to religious freedom, and may this freedom continue in nations where it already exists.
2. Please pray that world leaders take decisive action to address persecution against Christians. May governments and authorities enact legislation that keeps the door open for the proclamation of the Gospel.
3. Please pray for strong and resilient churches to arise during these challenging times. Pray for local church leaders worldwide to boldly proclaim God's truth with love and compassion, reaching both believers and non-believers.
4. Please pray for God's comforting presence to envelop the persecuted Church. May His presence be a soothing balm for their troubled hearts, souls, and suffering bodies (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17).
5. Please pray that, like Christ, those who are persecuted may find the strength to forgive and love their persecutors. May love overflow from their hearts, and may they unceasingly pray for the transformation and salvation of those who oppose them (Matthew 5:44).
6. Please pray for spiritual insight and boldness for the persecuted. May God open their spiritual eyes to see His greater plan of salvation and embolden them to testify to Christ's love (Colossians 4:3).
7. Please pray that the persecuted Church remains joyful despite suffering, focusing on their heavenly inheritance (Acts 5:41).
8. Please pray for justice, early release, and restoration for those imprisoned for their faith. Pray for victory, peace, and comfort in the most challenging circumstances.
9. Please pray that they are reminded of the abundant blessings promised to those who sacrifice for Christ (Matthew 19:29).
10. Please pray for spiritual maturity that glorifies God (Colossians 1:28-29).
11. Please pray for organizations and individuals working to support and assist persecuted Christians, that they may have the resources and wisdom to carry out their mission effectively.
12. Please pray for the persecuted to grow in their love and commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ.
13. Please pray for the families and loved ones of those facing persecution. May God provide for and protect them.
14. Please pray for the oppressors and those who target the Christian community. May God open their eyes to His love and make them receptive to the message of the cross.
15. Please pray for unity within the Body of Christ, that Christians of all denominations may come together in support of their persecuted brothers and sisters.
16. Please pray for peace in regions where religious conflicts are prevalent and for reconciliation among different religious groups.
17. Please pray that God grants wisdom and guidance to the international community in addressing religious persecution.



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Intercessory  
*Prayer*  
Points



November 2024

**1 FRIDAY** Thank God for the new month with new opportunities to spread the love of God. Pray that people would be receptive when they hear the Gospel.

**2 SATURDAY** Pray for the ministry of Evangelical Fellowship of India. Pray that EFI would continually be instrumental to reach the grassroot gospel workers as well as the urban workers and be their voice to the world. Pray for the financial needs as well.

**3 SUNDAY** The International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP). Pray for comfort and encouragement for those persecuted because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Pray also for perseverance and courage so that even in adverse situation, they would display Christ's beauty to the world. Pray also for justice, release and victory.

**4 MONDAY** Pray for the Mennonite Church in India, Chhattisgarh. Pray that the church would be vibrant and over-flowing with spiritual blessings. Pray that the church members

would grow in Christ-like character as they live out their faith.

**5 TUESDAY** Pray for Kentwood Community Church, Maharashtra. Pray that the Lord would use this community church to shelter and feed many hungry and thirsty souls with His Word.

**6 WEDNESDAY** Pray for Full Gospel Farm Ministries, Maharashtra. Pray that this mission agency would be instrumental in changing people's lives. Pray that God would abundantly bless their ministry.

**7 THURSDAY** Pray for Kashmir Evangelical Fellowship, Jammu & Kashmir. Pray that this organization would be the backbone of churches in J&K. Pray that God would give clear vision and insights to the leaders to lead believers according to His will.

**8 FRIDAY** Pray for Doon Bible College, Uttarakhand. Pray that this college would continually groom, equip, and empower men and women of God to witness Christ in the world.

**9 SATURDAY** Pray for the persecuted churches in your state. Pray that they would draw strength from God and carry on the good works that they do. May God enable them to be bold and courageous as they share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Pray for growth of faith as they go through persecution.

**10 SUNDAY** Pray for the evangelists and missionaries that the Gospel would reach the remotest corner of every state in India. Pray for God's light to shine and dispel darkness.

**11 MONDAY** Pray for The Transformational Movement, Gujarat. Pray that this organization would be an effective transformational agent that brings change in the state of Gujarat.

**12 TUESDAY** Continue to pray for AIM magazine. Pray for all the writers to have new insights and appropriate words to express their thoughts as they write. Pray for their homes and relationships to be protected and blessed by the Lord.

**13 WEDNESDAY** Pray for Indian National Evangelical Church in Tamil Nadu. Pray that the church may grow in number and in quality for God's glory. Pray for God's guidance and abundant blessings upon this church.

**14 THURSDAY** Today is National Children's Day. Pray for all the children of the world that God would

protect them and provide for them. Pray that each child would have the opportunity to hear the Gospel of Christ's love.

**15 FRIDAY** Pray for EFI new member, Anisha Charitable Trust, New Delhi. Pray that the Lord would guide them and use them in effective ways to bring glory to His name.

**16 SATURDAY** Continue to pray for our nation that Christ's light may shine brightly and that more and more people may see the love of God and develop a greater desire to know Him.

**17 SUNDAY** Thank God for his watchful eyes on His children despite our weaknesses and short comings. Pray that the Lord would bless you and make you a fountain of blessing to others.

**18 MONDAY** Pray for Capital Pastors Fellowship, Chhattisgarh. Pray that the Holy Spirit would anoint, comfort, and strengthen all the members of this fellowship. May God mightily use them for the extension of his kingdom.

**19 TUESDAY** Pray for EFI new member Aashray Ministries in India, Agra, UP. Pray that they would flourish and many souls may find rest in their care and God's kingdom may grow.

**20 WEDNESDAY** Pray for Covenant Life, New Delhi. Pray for

this new church to be blessed and be used by God to reach many unreached people in the city of Delhi NCR and beyond.

**21 THURSDAY** Pray for EFI new member National Theological Association, Tamil Nadu. Pray that the Lord would provide all their needs and enable them to fulfill their calling.

**22 FRIDAY** Pray for Shammah Ministries international, Telangana. Shammah Ministries International is involved in church planting, women & children ministries and also for the poor & underprivileged. Pray that God would provide all the means to reach out to these groups so that Christ's love would be embedded in those to whom they minister.

**23 SATURDAY** Pray for the suffering servants of God to be encouraged, emboldened, and courageous. Pray that nothing would dampen their spirit to serve their Almighty God with undivided heart.

**24 SUNDAY** Pray that the Lord would bless your corporate worship at your church. Pray that you will returned filled and encouraged.

**25 MONDAY** Pray for Full Gospel Pentecostal Church, Tamil Nadu. FGPC is involved in Church planting, missionary family welfare and providing shelter, rehabilitation,

and orphanages to needy people. Pray that God would bless the ministry abundantly to display his unconditional love to mankind.

**26 TUESDAY** Pray for EFI new member The Equipping Church, Punjab. Pray for the growth of this church. Pray that God would use them to reach the unreached and spread His good news within and beyond the state of Punjab.

**27 WEDNESDAY** Pray for EFI new member, Advanced Leadership Training Centre, New Delhi. Pray that the Lord would use them mightily as they train godly leaders for mission.

**28 THURSDAY** Pray for the ministries that are reaching out to the next generation today. Pray that the Lord would give them appropriate tools for every challenge that young people would love God despite worldly trends and influences.

**29 FRIDAY** Pray for religious liberty in our country. Pray that every individual would worship and share the gospel without fear. Pray for the safety and protection of your church today.

**30 SATURDAY** Thank God for helping us see the last day of the month. Pray that the new month would bring more opportunities to serve Jesus.





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