

## Wednesday meeting – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017

**Most people come here or to any other place, looking for God, because all of us have needs. If you don't have needs, whether you will look for God is a question all of us have to answer.**

We may not be actively seeking God if we don't have a need. But when we have a need, we have this desire and push to seek the Lord. But the problem is that when we have a need - say a sickness, a financial crisis or a relationship problem - we start focusing on that particular problem. What happens then is you keep on thinking about your sickness. For example: I'm a diabetic for many years so I know a lot of things about diabetes that other people don't know. Why? Because I'm looking at the sickness. There are heart patients who have a lot of knowledge about heart disease that other people don't know.

The negative side of it is, we start focusing on our disease and then the disease becomes powerful and big. Sometimes it even controls our lives. Isn't it the same about relationships? When we have a problem in a relationship, we start focusing on the problem. We start focusing on the person who created the problem. Then the problem becomes big, the person becomes impossible and suddenly the situation is too big for us to handle.

- That's why many of us live and die with the sicknesses we carry inside,
- many of us live and die with the problem we carry inside,
- many of us live and die with the weaknesses we carry inside.

**Why? We are empowering that weakness.**

**How? By thinking about it the whole time.**

In the morning we get up and say, "Good morning, problem." We don't say, "Good morning, Lord," instead, we greet our problem and say, "How are you doing today?" We welcome the problem, the sickness and the weakness. What happens is, little by little, they become like rocks inside our lives - immovable, unshakeable, massive rocks that we carry.

**So what is the answer? As I preach to you, I myself am learning that we need to look at who God is without looking at what our problem is.**

If you study the problem of cancer and you study its details, cancer becomes a God. Then we think, "My God, I can't come out of it." When you study a financial crisis, and think about the limitations you have in finances, your financial limitations become a God. So every morning you get up in that situation and think, "My God, I don't have a solution to my problem."

**Today, we are going to learn another way. Now you have looked at your problem and what has it done?**

- It has given you ulcers
- high blood pressure
- other complications in life
- and it has not helped you.
- You have reflected on your sickness and you have become even sicker.

**From today, we will learn another method - look at who God is.** It costs you nothing and it can gain you everything. Nobody who doesn't believe hardly ever receives a miracle from God because they are focused on their problems. Then again, you can't say never because with God you never say never. Why? God has a way of disproving all that we explain. I read once of a deaf man who by mistake went to a healing service. He didn't know where he was, he didn't know who was there and he didn't believe in God, but the Holy Spirit was moving in that hall and suddenly his ears popped open. After that, the person who was conducting the service rewrote a book. That person had written a book earlier saying you need to have faith to be healed. After that she wrote, "I don't know what you need because God can even heal without faith" But generally, faith contributes to the healing and the solution of the problem.

**Now the problem is, what is faith? On the surface it looks easy because on the surface we can say that faith is believing in God.**

**Then the question comes: What God do you believe in?** Of course we say, "We don't believe in any other god than the Christian God." **But again I say: What God do you believe in?**

**The Christian God you believe in –**

- who is He?
- How do you know Him?
- How much do you know of Him?
- What do you know about what He can do? **That's the question we have.**

**Many say, "I believe in God," but when they say that, what they are saying is,**

- I believe in the God I think I know,
- I believe in the God that I learnt about in my childhood,
- I believe in the God I learnt about at catechism,
- I believe in the God I learnt about all my life.

But is that enough for a miracle from God?

**Tonight we need to look at the God revealed in the scriptures.**

**If your opinion of God is different from the scripture - don't be too smart. Let your opinion go and embrace the revelation of the scriptures.**

So we focus more on our problems than on God.

**The more you focus on your problem, your weakness or your sickness, the stronger it becomes.** The solution is, instead of focusing on your problem -tonight we focus on God.

**Again we have a problem: What God do we focus on?** The God that I may know may be a miracle-less, powerless idea that I carry in my head, because that's all I know.

**I suggest to you tonight let's use the scripture to find out who God is.**

If your idea and God's idea don't agree; don't be smart but convert. That's what you mean by conversion. You shift your mind from your understanding to God's. The moment you do that, you're in line for a move and a power of God upon your life.

So we are learning who God is. First of all, one text I'd like to start with is:

*Psalm 148:1*

*Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the heights above.*

**The invitation calls us to praise God.** One way of getting your eyes off your problem and fixing it on God is not complaints but praise. Many people don't know that and they never shift because even when they're praying they are focused on their problems. They say, "O Lord, do you know how big my problem is? Shall I explain it to you again? I did it a hundred times but now I'll do it the hundred and first time, just in case you didn't understand the first hundred times." For many people, prayer means explaining their problem to God. The result is the problem is getting bigger and stronger than them. The solution is you praise God and thank God. The moment you do that, you're taking your eyes off the problem and focusing on God. Without doing that, just talking about a miracle or a healing can be a waste of time.

*Psalm 148:2-4*

*Praise Him, all His angels, praise Him, all His heavenly hosts. Praise Him, sun and moon, praise Him, all you shining stars. Praise Him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies.*

The angels, all those in heaven, the sun and the moon are all called to praise Him. What are the waters above the sky? Those days in the ancient world, people thought there was the sea on the ground and there was also water in heaven. That's why there was a blue sky. So rain meant that God opened a window in heaven and water came down. Floods meant that God opened a door and floods come. That's why it talks of waters above the sky.

*Psalm 148:5*

*Let them praise the name of the Lord...*

Who is "them"? Angels, heavenly hosts, sun, moon and stars. Why?

*Psalm 148:5 continued*

*...for He commanded and they were created.*

**So who is our God? The answer is: He commands and things come into existence out**

**of nothing.** Unfortunately, we don't know that. We think about God in a little, abstract form. Because of that, God is unable to reach into our lives most often.

**Today, let's make a shift. What's the shift? Who is our God? He has only to speak and what didn't exist comes into existence.**

Today modern scientists will agree with this because they are able to look back into time. How? They have these telescopes that are fixed in space that can look back. If you go beyond 186,000 miles you don't see this second but you see the last second because light travels 186,000 miles/second. So the further you look back, the further you see in time. With these telescopes, they have been able to look almost at the beginning of time. What have they found? At the beginning, there was absolutely nothing. They have a word for this and they call it a singularity. Even atoms didn't exist. And then suddenly, one day, out of nowhere, scientists can't explain why, but the whole universe was created in a second. The Bible says why it was created: God spoke and it happened.

That day, Jeevaka led a reflection and he said, "Man hid from God and God asked Adam, 'Where are you?' The words God spoke that day when He said, 'Adam, where are you?' became Jesus Christ." I thought that was an amazing insight because Jesus is God in search of human beings. God speaks and says, "I want to seek them," and the word He speaks, like it became creation, the word became flesh - Jesus Christ.

**The first characteristic of God is that He can do anything with a word.** Therefore, if you think He can't handle your problem because your problem is too big for Him - convert. Don't try to be smarter than God. Convert to the word of God. God speaks and out of nothing He creates anything.

The second text I'd like to show you is what happens after the Blessed Mother asks angel Gabriel how these things are going to happen:

*Luke 1:35*

*The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you."*

Two things that the angel said God will do: The Holy Spirit will come and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. What does overshadow mean? Like a shadow He will come upon you. That's why we are going to worship God after some time. In the worship of God, these two things happen: the Holy Spirit moves and the power of God overshadows the place where we worship. Everything becomes crystal clear and the power of God moves in that place. Then what will happen?

*Luke 1:35 continued*

*...So the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God.*

**Here is how God's desire and word becomes flesh.** God's word is in heaven and it is only a thought and an idea, until it rests upon somebody, where the Holy Spirit comes upon them and the glory and presence of God overshadows them. Suddenly that word becomes a reality in their lives.

A few days ago we were in a place in the United States, where we were in a prayer group. I was preaching and they had hardly ever seen a miracle from God, because in that environment, they don't expect anything like that to happen. So I was telling them about shifting your thinking to receive a

miracle from God. By the grace of God, by the time we finished the worship, legs were healed, hips were touched, people's lives were transformed and there was this mighty move of God in that place. Why? Because someone comes with the word carried in their heart. Until then the word is there in heaven, we are living here and nothing happens in between.

**So here it was:** *The two things necessary.* Then the angel goes on:

*Luke 1:36*

*Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month.*

**God almost plays brinkmanship, where you do things right on the edge.**

God is never late, that you can be sure - but He is not early either. Here you will see, the angel says, "Your cousin Elizabeth is going to have a child in the sixth month." What is important here is Elizabeth by this time was incapable of having a child. Why did God delay? He delayed with Zechariah and Elizabeth, with Samuel. Why? As I understand it, when He delays we trust Him and when we trust Him we know it is He who has done it - not we who did it.

That's why it is easier for the Lord to work through the weak rather than the strong. The strong are confident in themselves while the weak, because of our lack of confidence, we tend to hold on to God. But I've seen in my own life as well as in many people - we out of fear that we'll fail, we pray like crazy when we do something. But after some time, when things are going right, we become a little confident and little by little we drop the dependence and express ourselves. Then the power of God becomes less in that ministry.

See how the angel explains everything in one verse:

*Luke 1:37*

*"For nothing is impossible with God."*

We can say, "The doctor said, the banker said, my relation said," - of course they said. But we are dealing with someone for whom no rule or law is a barrier for what He wants to do.

**We are dealing with a question: Who is God?**

I'm not asking you who God is, I'm not asking myself who God is - because we are having flawed answers. But I'm asking the scripture who God is.

**When you ask the scripture, number one it says that God speaks and out of nothing He creates.** Then an angel from God comes and explains it. Rules and systems no longer apply to God. If you have been nurturing your problem with care, nourishing it with worry, thinking about it, empowering it, giving it flesh and blood and believing that the problem is too big to be solved - kick it tonight by saying, "Nothing is impossible for God."

**We are dealing with the barrier of our mind.** The mind says, "This is too big, that problem is too great," and the angel says, "I have come from heaven to tell you that no rules apply to God." Why?

Because God is God. Tonight we are going to look at Him and not at our problem.

The third text we are going to look at is about a rich, young man who comes to Jesus and says, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus says, "Follow the commandments," and the man says he already does that. Then Jesus looks at him, loves him and says there's only one thing missing and tells him, "Sell all you have and give it to the poor." This man loses everything. How foolish - he didn't know that if you have Jesus then you have everything.

Tonight, that fool is here inside all of us. We won't let it go! We won't let our problem go, we won't let our sickness go because we are holding on to it thinking that's our identity and that's our value.

Then Jesus told the rich man, "It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." What do you mean by that? Why a camel and not a mouse or dog or lion? It is because a camel has a hump and so it's doubly sure that the fellow can't go through the eye of a needle. So He says it is impossible. I'm dealing with an impossible situation. So you accept it as impossible.

Then he says:

*Mark 10:24*

*The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!"*

He didn't give any comfort to the disciples, but he said, "Yes! This is impossible." So the doctor said that your sickness is beyond curing. Yes, it has gotten into the realm of the impossible. We are dealing with an impossible financial situation, impossible relationship in a marriage - the counselor says, the doctor says it is impossible. That's true, but look at the next verse:

*Mark 10:25-26*

*"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to go to the kingdom of God." The disciples were even more amazed and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?"*

That's a good question to ask: My problem is so big; who can save me from this? Who can solve my problem? Who can heal me? We have entered the realm of the impossible.

*Mark 10:27*

*Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible..."*

What do you do? First of all, relax. If you have an impossible problem then relax, because Jesus said, "With man it is impossible." If you're only dealing with the human level then it is impossible. Then he says,

*Mark 10:27 continued*

*"...but not with God; all things are possible with God."*

So everyone said, including myself, that it is not possible - until I came here. I'm fine with it not being possible with men; but not with God. I am now dealing not with men but with God. We are dealing with the God of the scriptures, not with your God or my God. If you don't do that we are stuck with our God. Because we have not seen a miracle in our life in a long time, most of our God is a miracle-less,

powerless God. That's why we need a breakthrough tonight.

**Mark 9:15**

*As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet Him.*

These people were starting to believe that if you go to Him he can fix it. He was coming with the mind and heart of God, He not coming with the mind and heart of the Pharisees or of this world. He was bringing the mind and heart of God and people were being touched by that power.

**Mark 9:16-18**

*"What are you arguing with them about?" he asked. A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not."*

Mark is the absolutely honest gospel because it's the earliest and didn't have any pretense. Mark said that they prayed for people and nothing happened. Today we have to admit that we pray for many people and nothing happens. That's why people say, "Pointless praying because nothing will happen." They also prayed but nothing happens. However, in Mark 9, before this incident, Jesus gives them the power to heal the sick and to exorcise demons - but this fellow won't go. Why doesn't this fellow go? The argument that took place between the disciples was not recorded but I can tell you the argument would have been, "That devil didn't go because it's your fault and not ours." Normally what people do is if something doesn't happen, we blame somebody else - blame the sick person, blame the victim, it's anybody's fault but not my own. That's what the Apostles were saying.

**Mark 9:19-20**

*"O unbelieving generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me." So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.*

The devil put on a show and said, "I have defeated everyone for the past so many years. I'm putting on this show for you."

**Mark 9:21**

*Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?" "From childhood," he answered.*

Let me give you a hint: The longer the problem, the stronger it is in your life; the longer the sickness, the more foothold it has in your life; the longer your weakness, the greater its influence over your life. That's exactly what happened here. That's why the Apostles couldn't handle it. This guy was entrenched. Heart disease, diabetes, cancer means you're entrenched.

**Mark 9:22**

*"It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us."*

**"If you can"**. Why did he say these words? Because he had a history of disappointment. From his son's childhood, he was taking this boy to people to be healed. He was taking him to doctors,

soothsayers, prayers, he was taking him everywhere. With each failure a layer of unbelief was built. So imagine if he had taken him to a hundred places, there are a hundred layers of unbelief in that man and the boy. These poor disciples who were just learning the power of faith were no match for the hundred layers of unbelief.

We are dealing with the same thing. We are no match for the layers of unbelief that rule our hearts. That's why some diseases won't go away, some problems don't go away, some weaknesses won't go away. It is entrenched inside us by repeated failure to deal with it. What can you do?

**Mark 9:23**

*"If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes."*

Earlier, everything was possible for God; nothing is impossible for God. Now Jesus brings it down to us and says that everything is possible for Him who believes - not just my God and your God that we have brought here, but the God revealed in the scriptures.

People like Padre Pio lived inside the revelation, they dreamt it, prayed it and lived it and they say one little word and a sinner is transformed, a miracle happens, a dead boy comes back to life because this one man had the revelation of God within his heart. The problem is within our minds, our understanding of God may be too weak to deal with the issues around us. That's why Jesus said, "Everything is possible for him who believes." Believes what?

**Mark 9:24**

*Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"*

I believed from my childhood but in my faith is an unbelief. "Jesus can't do this, God can't do that, this will never happen, that will never happen." Because of that, nothing happens. So we say, "Lord I believe, but help my unbelief."

The Lord freed that boy and look what happened:

**Mark 9:28**

*After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"*

Here is the answer:

**Mark 9:29**

*He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer."*

The word 'fasting' has been dropped in this translation because there is an argument about the manuscript, but the ancient manuscripts carry 'fasting and prayer.'

**Tonight I want to tell you about fasting.** Fast about your understanding of God, fast about the power of your sickness, fast about thinking that there is no answer and then pray. Pray what? Pray these promises of God: He says a word and out of nothing God creates. God can create something that didn't exist - even a part of your body because nothing is impossible for God. So we break the barrier, we fast on our impossibilities and we pray the promises: Nothing is impossible for God and everything is possible for him who believes.



There is this testimony I heard: I preached this very sermon in 2003, 14 years ago. I remember after I finished this, two weeks later, there was a man who came and stood to testify in Mabo. He was carrying his child and this is what he said: His son contracted dengue and was taken to the Ragama hospital and was there for four days. When he went to see the child on the fourth day, the doctor called him to a side and told him, "You'll have to make up your mind and be strong. Your son will be dead in a few hours. We have done all we can. He is on life support but he won't last another four hours." So this man cried and hit his head against the wall because he was losing his eldest son.

His youngest son who was standing next to him, tugged at his hand and asked, "Why are you crying?" Then he remembered: Nothing is impossible for God, and fasting and prayer. He fasted and prayed. He said, "I'm happy because Jesus is going to heal your brother." The small fellow was puzzled and asked him, "Then why are you crying?" The father said, "I'm crying because I'm happy about it." He fasted and prayed. He went inside the ward and the child was on life support and was being given oxygen. He went close to him and the child who was unconscious said, "Thaththa." The man stood up and declared to the whole ward, "Do you know that Jesus is going to heal my son?" What he did was he put Jesus on the spot. Two days later the son was given back to him, fully recovered.

What would have happened to me if the doctor told me that my son has only a few more hours to live? To my shame I will admit that I would have believed the doctor. From our childhood we have been educated to do this - the rational, the scientific, the logical, the understanding, the wisdom of the world is greater than simply believing in God. We are sophisticated Christians who also happen to be powerless and helpless in a crisis. So let's get off the high horses and thinking we are elite. Be elite if you like and live powerless lives; or enter into the heart of His power.