

Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. (2 Corinthians 6:2 ESV)

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A TEACHABLE SPIRIT

PSALMS 25. 4, 5

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This morning I would like to share something from God's Word, a guiding principle that really transforms who you are, as a person. It is very interesting as a Pastor, to begin to take care of, to begin to minister to people in the church. You begin to find out that all kinds of people, come to the church. Lot of people who come to church, sometimes say, "*These Pastors are all the same!*" But, all these people who come to church, are so drastically different! One of the principles I have learnt working with people is, some of the people who do really well in life, are not necessarily the greatly talented, are not necessarily the greatly anointed, are not necessarily the most gifted! Lot of us simply deceive ourselves. You have every small thing to offend you because you are receptive to the word, but you don't know what to do with it after that. Because if I receive that word on forgiveness, and if I am teachable, the first person God will change is me! And that is hard. The problem with the teaching, be it on love, forgiveness, giving, or whatever it is, the problem is not that the teaching is bad, but it will cause me to change. **Teachability involves change in your heart.**

Every great teacher comes to that phase in life. In my real life, I had the principles, but I was not transformed. **Teachability has very little to do with principles.** Knowing the principles means that you are highly knowledgeable. **Teachability is the ability to allow your knowledge to sink into the soil of your heart; and it transforms you as a person.** It transforms your thinking, it transforms the way you think, it transforms your decisions, it transforms so many things of your life.

The bible says, *Teach me Oh God to number my days.*

If you knew the day you were going to die, will it make any difference? Honestly, I don't think so. I know many people who know that they have only weeks to live, or months to live. Have their life changed? No. Doctors speak of prognosis of a particular disease. Say, for example, if a patient has osteogenic sarcoma, doctors will say, 3 months to live. Do you know what is it that changed? They begin to pray more. What will be their prayer? "*Lord, heal me.*" The problem is not whether He heals you or doesn't heal you, it changes how we live. So the issue is not whether our life will change, but the issue is with what is in our soil. Is the soil hardened, is the soil good, is the soil soft?

Look at the difference between Jordan and Israel. We can see that, as we fly over these nations. As we cross Jordan border to Israel, the land that looked arid, barren and dry before, changes to greenery. The same soil is on both sides, but the difference is what they do with their soil. Israelites have found a phenomenal way of planting and cultivating, that you plant anything on that soil, it will grow! The same soil is on both sides, except that the difference is in who owns the soil. The same seed is sown on this side, the same seed is sown on that side. The problem is not on the seed. The problem is not even with the receptibility, because the seed that is sown, falls to the ground, but, the problem is what the ground does with the seed.

Teachability is the ability to do something with what you have received. I am amazed at the seeds that fell by the wayside, because nobody takes responsibility for that part of the wayside. As someone said, everybody's business is nobody's business. **Teachability - how do we transform the soil, from the soil that does not receive the word, into a soil that knows how to receive the word?** You will never be able to transform the soil. **It needs a critical ingredient called humility!** Teachability is founded not in your inheritance, or the ability to receive the Word of God. **The foundation of teachability is a humble heart.** Because teachability is going to hurt us, is going to get us uncomfortable, is going to get us out of our comfort zone. Teachability is going to bother us, because it asks us to be transformed from who we are into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

One of the greatest challenges to teachability is not knowledge. Many people think one is teachable because of his education. Actually it is not true. Somebody who has gathered lot of education can also be extremely teachable. I know people who are highly educated and highly teachable. And, yet there are others who have gathered very high education and are talking about rockets and evolution. So, teachability has very little to do with your education. **Teachability has to do with the humility of your heart with the extreme amount of education you gather.** Some people gather lot of education and are still teachable.

One guy who went to the moon and he was looking through the space station through its windows, at the blue marble globe, earth lit up by the Sun. Then he said, *"I am looking down from the space station to the amazing blue marble earth and yet I know that my little thumb can block it's view from my sphere of vision."* And he went on to say, *"I don't know a man can say, sitting where I am sitting, looking down at this earth, I don't know if a man can say there is no God."*

Teachability has very little to do with the amount of information. Teachability has a lot to do with humility. A man who does not have humility, will not have teachability. I tell my leadership team, if somebody makes mistakes or have accidents, it's fine, just forgive them. But, the day they become unteachable fire them. You can teach somebody who doesn't know everything, an ordinary person who says, *"I don't know every thing, but I will learn."* On the other hand, someone who is highly experienced, who says, *if you do what I have learnt to do then I will be on your team."* Not only

unchristian circles, but the world around shows that teachability is such an important principle of the kingdom of God.

One day a man came to Jesus and said, I want to follow you wherever you go. Jesus looked at him and said, "*Foxes have holes, birds have nests, I don't have a place to rest myself.*" Another man comes and tells Him, "*I want to follow you; but, let me go, bury my father and then I'll come.*" He looked at him and said, "*Let the dead bury their dead, you follow me.*". Are you willing to trust me and receive the instructions that I give you, so that with these instructions you can have transformed life? That man said it was a hard teaching and he walked away.

A third person came and said to Him that he was willing to follow Him. But, Jesus said that unless he sold everything that he had and gave to the poor he could not follow Jesus. That man struggled to come after Jesus because he had a lot of wealth.

Teachability has nothing much to do with what place in life you are positioned. **Teachability has lot to do whether you have a heart to grow, from where you are to where God wants you to be.** One of the great challenges of teachability is the condition of the heart. Many children are teachable. But, teenagers are different. For them everything and every person are wrong, except them. But, as they grow older, they learn to appreciate others, even their own parents. Once they grow older and they themselves become parents, they understand that, what their parents used to advise them, was true! At that teenage age, we think we know everything; suddenly money is coming into hands, we know how to spend that money.

Teachability has very little to do with the amount of knowledge.

People suddenly becomes unteachable when they get offended Because you are hurt, you become unteachable. In leadership, there is another principle that I follow. When you teach people, when they join the team, they are able to handle conflicts and offenses faster. So, in Trotb, when we get people, in the early days, we used to teach them. As the years went by, I realized that we teach them how to handle conflicts, before the conflicts come. Because once the conflicts come, then people are really hurt and nothing makes sense. It's so true that many times, we are more teachable before we are offended. Because offenses make us unteachable. If you are offended with somebody, I assure that area of your life, will get stuck up. Because, offense is like a cancer. It leaves you as an unteachable person. Offense gives you a superhighway of emotions and you want to scream or cry or shout and truly you are unteachable.

The problem is, we think we are teachable. Bible says *Teach me Your ways, Make me to know your ways, Oh God.*

Psalms 25:4,5

Make me know Your ways, O L ORD ; Teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; For You I wait all the day. (Psalms 25:4, 5 NASB)

Literally, here the Psalmist is crying out to God, "*Lord, teach me, Lord, teach me.*" And when we receive that word into our heart, it makes us teachable. David was a teachable person. We know that after committing the sin with Bethsheba, when Prophet Nathan comes to him and tells how a rich man takes the only lamb of his poor neighbor and kills it to cook supper for himself, David becomes indignant. But, when Nathan tells him that, that man is David only, he falls to the ground and asks for forgiveness, "*Lord, Have mercy on me.*"

Teachability is the ability to keep the heart soft.

The first type of seed that fell on the wayside - the birds ate them.

The second type of seed, fell on the rock. The Bible says that they quickly sprouted. Sometimes when we first hear the Word of God, when some one says, "*God is calling you to ministry*", we immediately say, "*I want to serve You Lord, I will step out.*" But when somebody offends you, you get offended and step back. It is not because your not receptive, neither is it because you are not that kind of person, nor is it because it is hard to serve God, but because you have to prepare your heart to be teachable, to have good soil, so that when challenges come, the Word of God has grown inside of you and you can handle them! The Word of God needs to grow well in you, so that you can handle challenges.

The seeds that fell on the rock, when the Sun came up they were scorched and they died!

The Bible talks about a third group of people- the seeds that fell among the thorns. They also grew along with the thorns. Praising Jesus in your difficult situation, thorns around you and you are going down. When they grew up, the thorns began to choke them. We are teachable until somebody chokes us! Teachability has very little to do with choking. **When you are teachable, you imbibe within you the ability to handle the choking.** I know there are thorns on every side. *People accuse me or somebody shout at me, some body criticize me. Teach me Oh, Lord that I will be a stronger person. Teach me that I will be a man of God, that I will have the wisdom how to handle this. Make your ways known to me, Oh, Lord!*

Psalms 25:5 says

Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; For You I wait all the day. (Psalms 25:5 NASB)

Teachability has the ability to receive, imbibe and assimilate truth inside your heart. Some people don't assimilate truth. They receive emotions - *What I feel right now is my truth.* That is not teachability, that is just being emotional. So, when God brings truth inside your heart, there is an ability inside of you to receive it. Truth just tells you to forgive that person, but emotions ask you not to. *I know it's hurting me, but, you say, I am forgiving that person.* You allow that default setting to change. *I am going to allow*

the Word of God to transform me. So, a teachable person will not allow the emotions to control him.

Bible says in **Phil 4:13**,

Rejoice in The Lord always and again I say rejoice.

It is a commandment. Rejoice - the word means, 'leap with joy.'

Matthew 5:11 says

"Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. (Matthew 5:11 NASB).

Bible asks us to rejoice and bless even when we are hurt and persecuted!

Teachability is not the amount of information you have, because if information was teachability, then the Pharisees were highly teachable! They knew what came before Genesis and what came after Malachi! They would could quote the scriptures. So, **gathering a lot of information is not teachability.**

Just have a look at the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. The Pharisee thanked God that he was not like the tax collector. He said, "*I pray, I give, I fast....*" - lot of 'I's! That is not teachability but pride, because **teachability is founded on humility.** The tax collector came and he knelt down. Bible says, he couldn't even raise his face towards heaven and he cried out to God, "*I am a sinner.*" God heard his prayer. How many of you know that God is not hearing most of the prayers of self righteous people? God loves to hear a broken sinner's prayer.

Bible talks about a teachable heart. It talks about how God wants us to give ear and be teachable. Lot of people are great hearers, but, are not teachable. Listening is very different from having a teachable heart. **Listening is the ability to keep your mouth shut and hear what is being said. But, teachability is listening with a humble heart, receiving that truth in your heart and allowing that truth to work in that soil.**

The third group of people are the seeds that fell among the thorns. And the seeds grew.

What were the thorns? **The thorns are three different things.**

They were firstly the deceitfulness of riches. The terrible thing about deceit is that a deceived person never knows that he is deceived. Bible says, deceitfulness of riches. So, when you fall in love with money, you are deceived in your love for money. You never know you fall in love with money when you are deceived. Giving is a grace. In 2 Corinthians 9, It says that the Macedonian church had a grace to give. From their extreme poverty welled up their liberality. So **their giving was not based upon what they had, their giving was based upon the condition of their heart.** Some very rich people can be highly unteachable. Some very poor people can be highly teachable. They just heard to give and they can.

Last week you heard the story of the the person who supported our ministry. He was a leper, a beggar, sitting outside Medical college Trivandrum! The only support we had in that time was from a beggar! Do you know what that mean? It puts us to shame. That man gave from his *extreme poverty which welled up to liberality*. So, that has nothing to do with the money you have. It depends on the condition of your heart.

Teach me Oh God, teach me to number my days!

Being teachable has a lot to do with our ability to receive instructions. Lot of us say we are teachable. But, if you really want to see you how teachable you really are, just look at your ability to receive instructions. If you will live carefully according to instructions, if you will understand the power of instructions and life will change.

Proverbs 1:2

To know wisdom and instruction, To discern the sayings of understanding, (Proverbs 1:2 NASB)

To know wisdom is instruction, To understand the word. **The Word of God is there to give instructions.** And our ability to receive what is being taught, to receive is to be teachable.

Proverbs 1:8

Hear, my son, your father's instruction And do not forsake your mother's teaching; (Proverbs 1:8 NASB).

It says, *Son don't forget your father's instructions.* It may not make sense at this point of life. But, at some time it may become useful. I am not saying everything our parents say is right. We have to discern them. Go back to the Word of God. Go back to the instructions. But, many people live by the moment. They live unteachable.

The second type of thorns is the cares of the world or the worries of this life. They heard the Word, but, worries come in. When the seeds fall among the thorns the thorns grow - the worries of the world. Anxieties come. You become worried and anxious. And they begin to choke that seed.

The third thing is the pleasures of life. *I love that pleasure, I want that pleasure, Therefore, I will go the way I want.* People can end up destroying their lives, because their hearts are hardened and unable to receive instructions or be teachable. Bible says, *Don't harden your hearts to the Word of God.* We like to receive the set word we like to hear. We like to hear about God's glory coming down, fire of God coming down. You don't know that when the fire of God came down, it not only consumed the sacrifice, but also destroyed Nadab and Abihu who were walking in self righteousness! So, they may not be open up in some areas they have been deceived and what God wants to teach them regarding it.

Teachability is not the ability to imbibe information but the humility of our heart to receive God's word. Keep a hold of instructions. Don't let go of it.

The Bible says that Adam and Eve were in the garden of Eden. It was picture perfect there. God had not left them to eternal damnation. In fact hell was not prepared for man. It was prepared for satan. It was not even on God's agenda. **God had not put man in a position of weakness, in fact God had put him in a position of success, put him in a position of ruling, to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth.** The only thing God left man with was the power to rule. God had not put him in a position of weakness, God had put him in a position of power. But, what happened was Satan came and spoke to Eve. God had actually asked them not to eat of that tree. Do you know, why? Satan said, "*He is just jealous that you will be like Him*". The problem was not whether they were jealous or not.

What did Adam and Eve do? God had simply given them an instruction. What was the instruction? Eat of every tree, except that one! They disobeyed God's instruction about the tree. Eve was standing near the tree and wondering why she can't eat from that tree after her encounter with Satan. *Why can't I eat, why can't I have that?* And that led her to the fall. Satan told her, "*Do you know why you can't eat? If you eat, you will be like Him.*" **The truth of the matter was that they were created in God's image, in His likeness. They were like Him.** They were in God's image and likeness! Satan told them that they would be like Him when they were actually like Him. And he offered them an unteachable heart. He offered them a choice - "*God doesn't want you to be like Him. Therefore He is not allowing you to eat of this fruit.*"

When Eve "saw" the fruit was good to eat and good to make one wise, she fell. The Bible says that the fear of the Lord is that which makes one wise. Fruit of that tree is not making one wise. It is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Knowledge will not make you wise. Knowledge makes you literate. What makes you wise? Fear of the Lord is that which makes you wise. **It is the fear of the Lord that is the beginning of wisdom.** Having met with the fear of God you have met the day lights of wisdom. **When you confront with the fear of the Lord, your heart becomes teachable, soften, you become wise.** When you have the fear of the Lord, you actually begin to have the wisdom of God.

Some were on good soil. They bore a sixty and a hundred fold.

The Bible says, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and to heed instruction will make you wise.* **To heed instruction is being teachable.** Adam and Eve were not thrown out of Eden for adultery. In fact, they were not thrown out for murder. **Adam and Eve were thrown out of the garden because they had just become unteachable.** The moment our heart becomes unteachable, we lose the protection and the blessing. The rebellious live in a dry land. If our heart becomes rebellious, we live in dryness. you can be in the midst of every brook and not get water. Pharisees were in the midst of power flowing all around them. The power of God was flowing from Jesus and people were getting healed, but the Pharisees were looking for ways to catch Him! You can be in the midst of paradise or the garden of Eden and you are complaining about God

because you are unteachable. God has given us everything required for life and godliness. The day Adam and Eve took that fruit, they lost the pleasure of walking with God and began to walk in rebellion and they began to have a hardened heart. The Bible says, *Because of their hardened heart the ground became cursed, the land became cursed, had to eat by the sweat of their brow.* All because they did not want instruction. They became unteachable. All because they did not consider the instructions of God.

Adam and Eve lived and died in pain and hardness. But one day Jesus came and said, *If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto Me.* He just gave one more instruction *If you believe in your heart and receive Him as Lord and Saviour, you will be born again.* The day you receive that instruction in your heart, that transforms your life, into what He has called you to be.