

# **GOD'S CALL**

## **Major themes in the Scriptures**

### **The wisdom of God (8)**

#### **Wisdom in creation of the body**

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The Lord willing, today we will consider the subject, “The wisdom of God” the eighth message, in seeking to appreciate major themes in the Scriptures.

A short summary of today’s message:

God is perfectly good and infinitely wise, but we often do not appreciate His wisdom because we are more affected by the state of our body and its inclinations than by the moral and spiritual meaning that God wants to bring about. This is seen in His wisdom expressed in His creation of the body of man.

We will seek the Lord to appreciate more of what this means.

We know that God has created us not just with a spirit but also with a body: our spirit dwells in a body.

Why is it God chose to do that? What is the significance of that; what is the helpfulness; what are the dangers; what are the problems; what is the potential? Why did God not just create us with a spirit?

As we read through the Scriptures, as we go through life, we appreciate that there is so much significance in terms of the body that we have. There are many different aspects that we can consider. Today, I will just concentrate on some major aspects that I see are very helpful and important for our appreciation.

First, let us recognize that not all bodies are the same. When we say that God has created us with a body, we must ask: what kind of body? God can create us in many different ways; it is not fixed – the body is not a fixed structure that has to be in that form.

Let us turn to **1 Corinthians 15: 39-44**.

**1 Corinthians 15: 39-44**

- 39 All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one *flesh* of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish.
- 40 There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the *glory* of the earthly is another.
- 41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.
- 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable *body*, it is raised an imperishable *body*;
- 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;
- 44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual *body*.

Here, with regard to men, the apostle Paul tells us that there is the resurrection of the dead and in the resurrection, we will have a body that is different from the body that we have now. We have now a natural body and if we are obedient to God, we are faithful to Him, we will have a spiritual body. The potential, capabilities, manner of functioning of the two are very different but there are similarities.

The apostle Paul tells us all flesh is not the same flesh: the flesh of men, the flesh of beasts, birds, fish, they are not the same; their abilities, their manner of functioning are not the same. Birds can fly; we cannot. Fish can swim; the lion can swim, but not to the degree that a fish can swim. So too for us, the body that we have is different from the animals, the birds, and they are made in such a way that is suitable for the purpose for which God has made us.

So then, what are some of these features that are important for us, why God gave us a body?

We know that God created man with the intention of helping us to develop the highest quality of moral and spiritual character. Bearing that in mind, as we understand this is His objective, how can God best bring this about?

It may be surprising to think that the best way that He has presented to us is to create us with a body. How can the body help us to develop the highest quality in the moral character?

Let us consider a boxer who wants to be a very powerful, capable boxer. Do you think that if every day, he were to train in a gymnasium and he were to keep on punching the punching bag, he will become a great boxer? Though he may have some skill, if he keeps doing that, his ability as a boxer may be quite minimal, and when he meets a boxer who has really trained in the right way, he may be very readily defeated.

So how do boxers train? First, they must find somebody who can spar with them. Yes, somebody who may allow them to punch but somebody who may at times punch them, and as he grows in his ability, he looks for better opponents.

An opponent is very important for training in terms of development of skill and power.

If a boxer were to box with all opponents who are very weak, he may feel very great: he wins every match. But when he does so with someone who is about his ability or better, then he will realize that he is not as good as he thought and he would have to train much harder.

Same thing in other fields of sport: whether it be tennis, badminton or in swimming, people improve when they learn to fight, to compete, to train, in a context of opponents who are capable. Of course, here we are not talking about a wrong spirit of competition in the Christian life, but we are talking about an opponent that can help us in our spiritual development.

Well, we know that Satan is a very powerful opponent; he is our adversary, he wants to destroy us. God allows him to remain in this world so that we can learn to fight against evil, the most powerful opponent. But how does the evil one work in a way that is effective?

We find that the body that God gives to us is a very suitable context for the evil one to work. He has great power: he can manipulate the body, he can stimulate the body, he can attract us in the body, he can threaten us, he can cause pain; there is much that he can do in this body that can draw us to evil, that can cause us fear, that can cause us to turn away from God. So, God creates us with a body that can be subjected to such threats and influences.

We saw in the Garden of Eden, Satan succeeded in tempting Eve through the body: she saw the fruit and she was attracted to it and Satan drew her to eat of that fruit.

It was physical and it affected the body. But this is where it is important for us to understand the deep relationship between the body and our spirit.

Our spirit can be very seriously and significantly affected by our body: The way we respond in this body will determine the quality of our heart, the quality of our spirit.

When Eve chose to give in to the desires of the body, the body died, it no longer could function in the way that otherwise it might have. So too for Adam, and when such a course of action is taken, changes take place in the body. And so Adam and Eve transmitted to us, his descendants, a body that is now more inclined towards the directions that Satan may want to tempt us towards; we become more vulnerable in that direction.

We now have an opponent that is with us throughout our lives on earth; every day we will face this opponent.

This body is called “a body of sin”, “a body of death”, and the apostle Paul tells us very clearly that we must not let sin reign in our mortal body so that we obey its lusts. This is a major aspect of sin: sin can reign in our mortal body because it has lusts, which means it has strong desires, and in this context in the wrong direction.

It does not mean that all inclinations and desires in the body are evil. In fact the body itself is neither evil nor good but it can draw us in the direction of sin if we give in to the inclinations without consideration of where it will lead us, without consideration of whether God is pleased with this course of action, without consideration as to whether we are doing so with the right motive, for a good purpose or otherwise.

This body is given to us not just as an opponent to train us, but the interesting thing is that when we learn to subdue this body – we learn to discipline this body – it can become our slave. If we do not do that, we will become a slave of the body.

So when sin reigns in our mortal body in that we obey its lusts, we are in fact becoming slaves to sin, slaves to this body. And many people find it very difficult to get out of various bad habits that they have, that they have indulged in, that they have given in to, because they have become enslaved.

The Lord Jesus says, "He who commits sin is the slave of sin", yet the apostle Paul tells us that when he disciplines his body, he makes it his slave, and that is how God intends for us: to give us a body where we learn to discipline it so that it will become our slave.

In **Romans 8: 13**, the apostle Paul put it this way:

**Romans 8: 13**

for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

So the practices, or the deeds, of the body, there are many that can draw us in the direction of sin and therefore the direction of spiritual death. But if by the Spirit we put to death the deeds of the body, we will live. This issue of living or dying in this context is a reference to the moral and spiritual: whether we live or die in the spiritual realm has very much to do with how we deal with this body.

We know that moral and spiritual character is developed within the heart; it is in the realm of the spirit. But then why is it that the way we live our lives is so much affected by what takes place in our body?

We know the example of the rich man who came to the Lord Jesus. He wanted to have eternal life. He was eager, he was sincere, and he very much wanted eternal life. The Lord Jesus told him about the commandments; he basically said, "I have kept them all; I have kept all the commandments." So, it would seem that his heart was right; it would seem that his character was good.

But then when the Lord Jesus said, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow Me"; when the Lord Jesus said this to him, immediately this man became very sad; he went away grieving. Why? Because: he was one who owned much property.

The physical has affected the spiritual. He very much wanted eternal life; he wanted to follow the Lord Jesus and the Lord Jesus was quite prepared for him to come and follow Him. But if he were to follow the Lord Jesus in the right way, his heart must be free to follow Him. But his heart was not free. His heart was bound up in his property, his possessions: he was enslaved by the things of this world, and so he went away grieving.

The Lord Jesus told His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven."

Why is it richness can be a hindrance to our lives, riches that we have can be a problem? It does not mean that riches will always be a problem. We can be very rich in the material sense as well as in the spiritual sense, but it is difficult. It is hard – not impossible. We need to exercise extra care when we have things in this world that are important to us.

So, we need to have a good opponent in order for us to be tested, to be trained, to develop. So as we go through each day in this body, we may find various situations of life that can help us to understand what is going on within us that can help us to develop.

The Lord Jesus said, "God is spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." This brings to us another aspect as to why the body is so helpful. But it does sound strange that God wants us to worship Him in spirit and yet He gives us a body. This may sound contradictory but in fact it is very important.

If you only have a spirit, it is quite easy for you to concentrate in the realm of the spirit. But if you have a body that can have many manifestations, that can be very attractive and enjoyable in this world or that can cause much pain and anguish in this realm, it may be very difficult for you to concentrate on the spiritual.

Bear in mind the apostle Paul indicates to us that this body that we have now, it is sown a perishable *body*... it is sown in dishonour... it is sown in weakness... it is sown a natural body. This is the body that we have. So if we dwell in such a body, we will constantly be affected by these features.

A perishable body: Sometimes, we are so impressed with our own abilities that we may not realize that we are so perishable.

People may develop strength, abilities, skills in this world and they may be very confident of what they have achieved. But what are these? The apostle John tells us what is in the world: the lust of the flesh... the lust of the eyes... the boastful pride of life; these are basically manifestations of the body in a spirit that is moving in the wrong direction.

The lust of the flesh is what the evil one will encourage in this body. There are many things to enjoy; we can be excited, we can be attracted to many things in this world and the evil one is very capable in this realm and people can be very absorbed in these things.

Likewise, the lust of the eyes: there are many things to see, there are many things we can enjoy looking at throughout the world, and we can be very absorbed in these things.

So too, the boastful pride of life. Here, the word "life" basically refers to more the physical life - "*bios*", from which we have the word "biology". It is in the physical natural realm, biological sense.



We have abilities, we can be intelligent, we can be capable, and we can take pride in these things.

So people dwell in these areas and spend most of their time and effort nurturing these things.

But bear in mind that they are perishable. One day you may be so powerful and capable; the next day you may be totally incapacitated. The person who has so much power in the flesh may suddenly find himself totally disabled, in pain, in anguish; the body so very uncomfortable, he can no longer enjoy the lust of the flesh. He may grow blind or he may lose his eyesight to a considerable degree that he can hardly see; he will not be able to enjoy the lust of the eyes. And he may develop dementia, and where would be his boastful pride of life? He may not be able to think so clearly, he may say things that are not sensible.

And so all these things can just perish overnight. Why is this the case? It is because God has given us such a body: a perishable body.

When Adam and Eve sinned against God, God said this to Adam: "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field; by the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

What did God mean by that? God created man in His image and God is not dust. God is spirit. So what did He mean by that? He was referring to the body. God created Adam in His image but gave him a body and this body was taken from the ground. This body is basically dust, and it will return to dust. So all the efforts that we make to build up this body, to treasure it, will all go back to the ground.

Well, as someone said, "The paths of glory lead but to the grave". The glories of this world, they all lead to the grave.

So how can that help us? If we recognize this, it will help us to be very careful how we treat this body, how do we deal with it.

Remember that although it is made of dust, although it is perishable, yet it can transmit spiritual life and meaning if it becomes our slave.

Where does that life come from? Not from the body – the life comes from the Spirit; the life comes from God.

If we look at the bird, if a bird flies to you and lands on your shoulder, what is the significance of that? It is just a physical event; there is no spiritual life involved. The bird is not bringing any spiritual life to you, it is just landing on your shoulder; there is no real significance in the spiritual realm.

Do we realize that if we do many things in this body, it is just like the activity of the bird or the bees, the lions killing their prey?

But if God commands the raven to bring the bread and the meat to Elijah, does it bring life? Yes, the life comes from God; it is God's care for Elijah, and as Elijah receives the bread and the meat, if his spirit is positive, he will receive life from God because the life of God comes with this physical event. And this is what we need to appreciate deeply.

God has given us this body to help us to differentiate between the physical and the spiritual. The physical does not have moral and spiritual life; it is in the spirit that there will be moral and spiritual life. So, we need to differentiate. If we concentrate our lives on the realm of the physical then the spiritual will degenerate.

Another aspect that is very important is to recognize that the body helps us not only to see the difference between the physical and the spiritual, but it also helps us to recognize where life comes from and for us to learn to depend on God in all the things that we do.

It is so easy for us to do many things even in the name of Christ, even in the name of spiritual service, without depending on God, and if we do that, it will be just like the activity of the bird flying about, of fish swimming in the water, of a lion killing its prey. There will not be spiritual life and meaning if what we do has no significance in the moral and spiritual realm; it is just a physical activity. Worse, if there is a spirit of self-centredness, pride, arrogance, then we bring death with it in the things that we do.

So, there is no life in the physical realm; the life comes from our heart. So when we recognize that the life ultimately comes from God, it will help us to be more conscious to depend on God in everything that we do.

It will not be based on whether we can or we cannot in the physical realm. Yes, somebody may have fallen down, you have the physical ability to help the person get up, but if that is all that you do, it is just a physical act and there is no meaning in your heart, then it is just a physical act, which a robot can do.

But if you help the person to get up because of compassion, because of love, you do it in a spirit of dependence on God then spiritual life is imparted in that situation. And if the person is receptive, that person can receive spiritual life to help to respond to God.

That is how ministry takes place. There must be life and that life can and should accompany our physical actions.

So whether we can or cannot in the physical realm is not the primary issue. The primary issue is: What does God want of our lives and are we depending on Him? That is the reason why we need to pray without ceasing, we need to pray to Him at all times and depend on Him. Otherwise, we will speak in our self-confidence, we will contribute in accordance with our natural abilities, we will seek glory for ourselves and we will not bring life to people.

So, God gives us a body to help us recognize how we need Him.

How do we know that we need Him?

Very often many people may find that they can cope with many things, so they may not need God. At such a time, sometimes God in His grace brings difficulties, problems, suffering, pain, to help them recognize their need of God. Sometimes they find themselves so totally helpless and they find the need to draw near to God.

But it does not have to be in a context where we are self-confident before God can do that. God in His grace can help each one of us appreciate this principle, whether we fail or do not fail, because we come to see more clearly the importance of our dependence on God, that we are totally helpless without Him.

This body that we have can bring us great enjoyment; it can also cause us very great suffering. So how do we respond to such situations? The way in which we respond to these situations will determine the quality of our hearts.

The apostle Paul went through many difficulties in life and he understood increasingly how meaningful, how important it is always to look to God, always to depend on Him and always to maintain the right spirit.

Let us turn to **2 Corinthians 4: 7-12**.

**2 Corinthians 4: 7-12**

- 7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;
- 8 *we are* afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing;
- 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;
- 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.
- 11 For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.
- 12 So death works in us, but life in you.

The principle of death must first apply, for us to find life. So for our own spiritual development, we need to practise the principle of death for our own development. In the context of our seeking to help others, we also need to practise the principle of death in order to help them, but there is a difference in the emphasis.

In **Romans 8: 13**, the apostle Paul said, "...if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live". So this principle of death must first be applied in our lives, to put to death whatever is negative that is a common practice in the body, that is to say, we have to deal with the self-life. When we deal with the self-life, we will grow, we will live; and we do that by the power of the Spirit; we discipline the body so that it becomes our slave, that it will obey us in following the will of God.

But if we want to help others, we also have to practise the principle of death and in this regard, this principle of death must be applied even when we are not sinning.

The principle of death applied to the Lord Jesus when He went to the cross. He never sinned but He died so that we may live.

So too, for us: If we want to serve effectively, we must also learn to die so that others may live.

So here, the principle of death is not primarily a question of dealing with sin in our lives, but the principle of death here has to do with the spirit of self-giving, of giving up what we may properly have but we give up because of our love for others.

The Lord Jesus rightfully belonged to heaven; He should be sitting on the throne in heaven, but He gave the glory of heaven up for the sake of coming into this world to suffer for us, to help us. And even after coming into this world, He could have lived a very effective life of victory, but instead, He gave up His life to die on the cross to suffer on our behalf to help us.

Spiritual ministry has this element. If our spiritual ministry does not have the element of our self-giving for the sake of other people then it may not be significant in terms of the ministry of life. The apostle Paul says, "...always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body". He is referring to the body.

What is the meaning of the "dying of Jesus" in our body? The Lord Jesus already died on the cross. Yet the apostle Paul is saying that if we live our lives the right way, we will be carrying about in our body the dying of Jesus. What he means is the spiritual principle involved.

The dying of Jesus has to do with the spirit of self-giving where we suffer for the sake of the well-being of others, we forego what we may properly have, and we are also prepared to go through all kinds of difficulties, pain and suffering in order that others may be helped and receive the life of God. When we do that, when we have that spirit then the life of Jesus will also be manifested in our body. That means life will come to us from the Lord Jesus and it will be manifested in our body and from this body then life can be transmitted to the people that we are seeking to help.

“For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death works in us, but life in you.” So as death works in us, as we give our lives to God, then life can work in others, they may receive God’s life as a result. This body is very important in helping us to appreciate and to transmit that life, if it becomes our slave.

Then this body is also very important in helping us to develop a deep oneness with God. As you have seen, God is spirit and yet this body can help us to develop a deep oneness with God.

Many people want to be one with God, they love God, they want to be true to Him, they want to be true disciples but often it is very difficult to do so because we are affected by the body.

The Lord Jesus told His disciples to watch with Him in the garden of Gethsemane. They fell asleep; their body could not take it. There was not enough spiritual strength to sustain them in that situation; the body was not properly disciplined in the spiritual realm. Yet these same people could stay up all night catching fish; that was not a big problem for them; they could do so many a time. But in the garden of Gethsemane, in the context of spiritual pressure, they could not keep awake; they fell asleep and the Lord Jesus told them that they must pray then they would not enter into temptation.

So the lack of prayerfulness in our lives will contribute significantly to the weakness of spirit and the difficulty in disciplining the body. The more we learn to pray and depend on God, the more we will be able to discipline this body.

So the apostle Paul says in **Philippians 3: 10**:

**Philippians 3: 10**

that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;

This is an expression of the apostle Paul's longing, desire, determination, and commitment to be one with the Lord Jesus.

And how is this oneness expressed? He says, "...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death... ". All these aspects have very much to do with the physical realm. The apostle Paul saw the risen Lord Jesus; he knew about His ministry. He came to know about the power of His resurrection, the power of the Holy Spirit. He entered into fellowship in suffering with the Lord Jesus because he understood the meaning of the cross. He was conformed to His death in identification with His love for mankind. All these led the apostle Paul to live a life of much suffering because he wanted to be a true follower of the Lord Jesus and these aspects that he mentions here were very much expressed in his body.

So we may say in the comfort of our room, "I love God with all my heart. I am prepared to do anything for Him." But then in our day to day lives, we may be spending our time basically seeking the things that we like, following the ways of the world, fulfilling the desires of the natural man and yet when we come to God in prayer, we may say we love Him, we are prepared to do His will. When we do that, then we may deceive ourselves to think that we are growing when we are not.

On the other hand, we need not be discouraged if we are genuine in wanting to live for the Lord but we find that we fail in our daily lives; we find it difficult to be conscious of the Lord, we tend to follow the world. If we are prepared to learn, the Lord will teach us and He will give us opportunities to put into practice these issues, but we must not shrink back, we must be prepared to trust Him and to follow Him. And that is how we develop character in the context of our daily lives. Situations may seem "non-spiritual", but the impact on us can be deeply spiritual, whether for good or for ill.



In a situation that seems totally physical, the evil one may be very strongly present to draw us into the world. In another situation that is also apparently physical, God may be seeking to develop our hearts in our devotion to Him. If we are conscious of that, then we will not allow this body to move according to natural inclinations.

**Galatians 6: 17**

From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus.

Why did the apostle Paul say that? What is the meaning of “brand-marks” on his body?

From what I know, in the past, when people own cattle, they will use a hot branding iron, put it in a fire and press it on the body of the cattle and they will leave a mark there which shows whom the cattle belongs to. It is painful but it is basically permanent: The apostle Paul could be saying this.

“I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus.” How did these brand-marks come about? Through suffering, pain, difficulties, persecutions because he stood for the Lord Jesus, he suffered for Him; that was the cause of his brand-marks: the scars of the battle. He was not just saying he believed that the Lord Jesus was good and he would like to follow Him. He was prepared to go with Him, forsake all things in order to be His disciple and whatever suffering, pain, difficulties that came his way, he did not shrink back, he was prepared to go through it and so he bore on his body the brand-marks of Jesus. This was a testimony, a mark, that showed that Paul belonged to the Lord Jesus.

It is a meaningful expression and this can be true of each one of us. If we are prepared to follow Him, the Lord Jesus may ask: “Do you really want to belong to Me?” and if we genuinely say, “Yes,” then He may say, “Okay, this will be your brand-mark.”

And that brand-mark may not be one event; it may be a whole lifetime, all that you need to go through in order to identify with Him, to be one with Him.

Well as we think of this body that we have now, we see that it is a perishable body; it is also sown in dishonour, in weakness and a natural body. These are various aspects that we will face every day as we go through life. We must not be surprised; we must not expect that these things will just go away. This is an opponent that will be with us throughout our lives; we must learn to make it our slave.

However, there is something wonderful to look forward to.

In the future, if we are faithful to Him, if we love Him, we will have a spiritual body, an imperishable body, a body of glory, a body of power; a wonderful body.

We see a glimpse of that when the Lord Jesus rose from the dead: He had a spiritual body, a resurrection body.

In the fiction, we know the character Superman had great powers. He was supposed to have come from a planet called Krypton and having come to earth, he became invulnerable: bullets could not pierce him; he could fly at great speed; he had great strength to overcome the enemies. Do we not want to be like Superman? I certainly would like to be.

Well, I believe the spiritual body that God will give to us will be far superior to that, far better than that of Superman. It will be a body that can have great power, it can move at great speed, it can appear and disappear, it can change forms and the wonderful thing is that it will not be an opponent; it will be a servant, it will be a friend, it will help you to express all the good things that you want to do.

This is a body of glory; it is a body that is imperishable. It is a body of power; it is a spiritual body. It will help us to express our love for God; it will help us to fulfil the purposes of God.

Now we are dwelling in a body that restricts us greatly. It is just like a person living in a house where all the windows are very dirty. As you look out of the house, everything outside looks black and dirty, when in reality, it could be very bright and beautiful. But because you are in that house, dirty house, you see everything that way.

Spiritually, we dwell in this body and if we do not subdue it, it will be just like a dirty house and the way we look at life and things around us will be in the wrong kind.

But when we have a spiritual body, we will see things very bright and clear and beautiful – the way that God intends it to be – and it is very likely, though not specifically stated, but I think it is very likely that the quality of the spiritual body that we will have will bear a relationship with the quality of our hearts, the degree of our faithfulness to God.

The apostle Paul says: “...star differs from star in glory”. Even in the spiritual body, they are not all the same; God will give it a body as He sees fit: what is appropriate, what is suitable. Some may have a body that can help them to govern five cities; some may have a body that will help them to govern tens cities, or other jobs and assignments that God may give and that can also vary as we develop. Just as your physical body can grow weaker or stronger, it is likely your spiritual body can also grow weaker or stronger, depending on your manner of response.

We are moral beings; whether on earth or in heaven we remain moral beings. We will still have our moral choice; we can still respond to God in varying degrees of quality.

But it is very important that we respond well now because this is a very, very good context for us to develop the best quality possible. Let us not miss this opportunity because it may be very difficult to recover if we go the wrong way.

I see that God is a very, very wise God, and His wisdom arises in association with His moral perfection. He has done all this for our good. He wants to give us the very best but we may not realize it, so we may complain, we may grumble, we may say, "Why must it be like that?"

But if we understand His intentions, we know what He is seeking to accomplish, we will worship Him, we will express our love for Him, we will trust Him, and we can go through life together with Him in a meaningful way.

So if we want to live our lives well and fulfil God's call in our lives, we must learn to appreciate the wisdom of God in His creation of the body of man and seek to function in our mortal body according to what God wants to accomplish and work together with Him gladly and in faith to fulfil His will.

Our time on earth is very short. Whether you live for ten years or you live for a hundred and twenty years, it is still very short.

We have the whole of eternity ahead of us. Let us take care that we live each day of our lives very carefully, prayerfully, because every choice that we make will have an effect on our moral character, on our relationship with God, on our place in the kingdom of God. Every choice that we make while in this body will not only affect our body, but it will also have an effect on our spirit.

So let us appreciate that while we have an opponent with us, it is meant to do us good.

It will help us to be more vigilant, lead us to train hard to be good, it will also help us to remember that the physical is different from the spiritual, and to concentrate on things above, not on things on the earth.

It will help us to recognize our need of God each moment – His life is the basis for our living – so that we depend on Him each moment.

And all this should help us to develop a deep oneness with God that we may be truly His friend whom He can trust, that we can be so identified with Him that He has the freedom to impart life to us and to call upon us to do His will, however difficult it might be.

Let us then come before the Lord and ask Him to help us understand these issues more deeply, so that we may live well according to His calling and His purpose.