

“Then James and John the sons of Zebedee came to Him saying, We want You to do for us what ever we ask. And He said to them, what do you want Me to do for you.

The PRICE Of LEADERSHIP

By Gbile Akanni

They said to Him, grant us that we may sit one on Your right hand and the other on Your left in Your glory. But Jesus said to them, you do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink? And be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They said to Him, we are able. So Jesus said to them you will indeed drink the cup that I drink and the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized. But to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give. But it is for those for whom it is prepared” Mark 10:35-40.

As we considered the above scriptures in the last edition of LIVING SEED, we saw that leadership is a good and noble responsibility to be desired, as much as one understands the purpose of God, and the sacrifices it entails. But of a serious concern to us, were the several aberrations and misconceptions about leadership, that have characterized the Church presently in our generation- the clamour for the glamour and carnal glory.

We are, however, further led in this edition to consider this request of James and John. This time, it is to critically look at the response of the Lord Jesus, because in it, the Lord revealed to us what looks like a qualification and a condition that every one desiring to have any part in God’s work, must go through, in order to be acceptable for either any responsibility or any leadership position.

“...But Jesus said to them, you do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink? And be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They said to Him, we are able. So Jesus said to them, you will indeed drink the cup that I drink and the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized...”

According to Jesus, there is a cup, and a baptism that every aspiring servant of God must compulsorily drink and be baptized with, before heavens may agree to include his or her name in the heavenly records. Yet, even if you drink of the cup and go through the baptism as John and James swore

to, it still does not guarantee an automatic appointment to a leadership position, though it is certain that no man will occupy any form of leadership position, without having passed through this basic qualification of the cup and baptism.

The CUP and the BAPTISM

We will now undertake to study what that baptism and cup are which Jesus offered all disciples, as a compulsory condition to meet, in order to be part of God’s ministry team that will bear His glory into revival. But it is to be done not with an eye on the carnal reward that seems to be flipped before our faces. Remember Jesus said,

“...You will indeed drink the cup that I drink and with the baptism I am baptized with, you will be baptized. But to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared.”

We are exploring this cup not because we just want to know it, but because we want to drink it. Appointment or placement in ministry, whether to preach to thousands or to two, is not the issue. And I pray that you will understand that genuine revival is not the one that emphasizes the ‘man of God’. So if you are still quietly praying about ‘my ministry’, and how you are going to be known all over the country, maybe you need to ask God to deliver you from it. That attitude may scare God away from you. Revival has nothing to do with preaching ‘big’. It has all to do with God working through men. When revival comes, men are forgotten and Jesus increases. When revival comes, men go for God rather than for themselves. When genuine revival comes, people will do silent earnest labors. As great as the revival in the New Testament was (those revivals which we read about in the book of Acts) it was amazing that it did not emphasize any human being; neither was the result of that revival named after any person. Nobody particularly possessed the ministry that arose out of that revival. We did not read about clash of personalities, rather we only saw service. A medical doctor dropped his instruments and was just ‘recording’ behind other men. A great theologian like Paul, who could speak Greek, submitted to Peter, a fisherman. James, who was not even an apostle, headed the church in Jerusalem such that in council meetings he was the Chairman. Apostles like

Peter had to sit down and wait to be appointed by James whenever he, Peter, wanted to make contributions.

As long as there exists dark spots of the flesh and egoistic individualism in your personality (which spots are always the point of contention and disappointment in God's work) God cannot release any tangible measure of His sacred trust into your hands. All such impurities of the flesh must be extracted. A blacksmith working on an iron tool must melt it severally in the furnace, to extract whatever is not cohesive with the original metal itself. He then soaks it in a liquid; to cause the metal to come together as a component (by contraction). He repeats this process several times to ensure flexibility and increase of the tensile strength of the metal. This process of firing and soaking resembles the kind of Baptism and Cup our Lord prescribes for any disciple, who truly desires to win God's approval for appointment into a position of servant leadership in the Body of Christ. A candidate for leadership must possess first and foremost a wholeness of life, symmetry of character and integrity. Integrity here has to do with a life that is every wit dependable, predictable and projectable. Integration is the sum (or sigma) of every tiny variable of life to make a continuum: an unbreaking, non-cracking, regular, cohesive and beautiful personality. Everything in him and about him is integral with what he says and does. Every segment of his life –be it his matrimony; or his secular life or sacred life; his playtime or business time is congruent with his overall outlook in life, and none is repulsive. All has been tempered and tamed in this process of the cup and the baptism.

For John and James, they only saw the seat on the right and on the left. They never envisaged the processing, the training, the taming and the testing that qualify men for those leadership positions. They may appear vacant for a long time; God does not just fill them up with any available person, unless he or she has met this 'Cup and Baptism' conditionality.

Jesus frankly told John and James: **“What you are asking for by aspiring to come to sit at My left and right, you don't understand. To ever become eligible at all, are you ready for the Cup? Are you ready for the Baptism? Are you ready for the smelting in fire? Are you ready for the soaking into the deep waters? This is the only way we can confirm whether or not this instrument will not fail us on the day of battle.”**

We shall now explore what this cup and baptism actually stand for in our preparation for spiritual service. I pray that God will help you to come along, and actually to plunge your self into this, so that you can emerge from this baptism a usable instrument in His hands, in your generation, in the Name of Jesus.



The Sufferings That Produce Human Experiences...

This is the first of the baptism that any man seeking to become an instrument in God's hand must pass through. All notable men, both in Scriptures and in contemporary history, bore testimony to this ingredient in the dealing of God over their lives. Peter, James, and all the other apostles eventually had this baptism of suffering. Even the latecomer, apostle Paul declared:

“Moreover let us also be full of joy now! Let us exult and triumph in our troubles and rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that pressure and affliction and hardship produce patient and unswerving endurance. And endurance (fortitude) develops maturity of character, that is, approved faith and tried integrity. And character (of this sort) produces (the habit of) joyful and confident hope of eternal salvation.” Rom.5: 3-4(Amp)

The Example Of Jesus...

Let's check Jesus' own experience from the book of Hebrews chapter 2. You will remember that Hebrews chapter one is a very beautiful epilogue of the glory, the power, the

anointing, the position, the name and the ministry of the Lord Jesus. And if you love to read, you may stop in chapter one just gazing and marveling, as you see the greatness and superiority of this Man. But one thing that I discover is that there is a process, which Christ Himself went through, to gain that position and to walk in it.

When you leave *Chapter one* of *Hebrews* where it talked about all the glories of Jesus... the superiority of Christ over the prophets and how God had given Him a name that is above all names, and how angels are to bow to Him and all that...and move to *Chapter 2*, you will immediately see the making, the moulding and the preparations of the **“Son of man.”**

“But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the Angels for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” Heb. 2:9 (KJV).

“But we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, so that through God’s grace He should die for everyone. We see Him now crowned with glory and honour because of the death he suffered.” (Good News).

“But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.” (NAB).

“But we are able to see Jesus, who was ranked lower than the angels for a little while, crowned with glory and honour because of His having suffered death, in order that by the grace (unmerited favour) of God (to us sinners) He might experience death for every individual person.” (Amp).

But we see Jesus:

This is very strong! We see the example of Jesus. We see what God did to Him, to make Him who He is today. We see the way He went and the path He trod to become the author of our salvation. It is not a thing that God has not done before. He did it to His only begotten Son, even Jesus who knew no sin.

What did we see in Jesus? He was deliberately made lower than the angels for a little while. This must be so hard for Him, who created all things, including the angels. He was made lower than the works of His own hands. Why? What for? It is that He may by the grace of God taste death for every one He would later bring out of death with life; out of darkness with light. The baptism with death was a necessary price for Him to bring forth much fruit and many sons unto glory.

There is something more than this aspect of our own salvation. Look at the last part of that verse...

“... We see Him now crowned with glory and honour because of the death He suffered” (Good News).

...But we are able to see Jesus... crowned with glory and honour because of His having suffered death.

This “because” is a very strong reason we must also see. His being crowned with glory and honour was not arbitrary. It was as a result of what He had gone through. It was because of His having suffered death! This is very illuminating. It runs across the Scriptures. *Phil 2:8-9* confirms this same matter in another way:

“And after He had appeared in human form He abased and humbled Himself (still further) and carried His obedience to the extreme of death, even the death of the cross!

Therefore (because He stooped so low) God has highly exalted Him and has freely bestowed on Him the name that is above every name...” (Amp).

God was only responding to a conditionality Christ had met. **“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him...”** As a result, God on His own part as well has exalted Him to the highest place and given Him the name that is above every name. The name God gave Him above every other name in heaven or earth was not because He is the Son of God, but because of the death He suffered. When God was ready to appoint Jesus as the king, and Captain of our salvation, it became necessary for God to subject Him to this process. There was no short cut to the throne, even for Him. It was not because of sin that this conditionality was necessary, for Jesus was one who knew no sin. Look further with that Scripture:

“For it became Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” (Heb 2:10 KJV).

“It was right and proper that in bringing many sons to glory, God (God from whom and by whom everything exists) should make the leader of their salvation perfect through his sufferings.”(Phillips)

“And it was right and proper that God, who made everything for his own glory, should allow Jesus to suffer, for in doing this he was bringing vast multitudes of God’s people to heaven; for his suffering made Jesus a perfect Leader, one fit to bring them unto their salvation.” (Living Bible).

The first thing to note here is that it was right and proper for God to allow Jesus to pass through this process of suffering.

NO CROSS NO CROWN



Even though Jesus was the only begotten Son of God, and without sin yet, for God to exalt and crown Him with the highest Glory and honour, He had to earn it through the thorny path of suffering... to the extent of death. If Jesus needed to go through this path, would God spare you?



It was not a mistake. It was not contradictory to God's Holiness, neither to Jesus' sinlessness. It was fitting.

"It was an act worthy (of God) and fitting (to the divine nature)..." (Amp).

This act was worthy of God. It did not contradict God nor did it paint Him as ungodly to so do, when it came to the matter of making Jesus the Leader that fits our need and is best suited to be the Pioneer and Captain of our salvation. It was also fitting to the divine nature. It was not wrong. It was actually proper and fitting for God to do this to Jesus. And if this was right, proper, and fitting for God to do to Jesus, who proved a beloved Son, do you think it so wrong and grievous for God to subject mortal men like ourselves to that baptism and cup that will give us a place in His service? If for Jesus – a man who received the anointing without measure – with whom the Father was well pleased, it is still proper and right to subject Him to this cup of suffering, in order for Him to bring many sons to glory, how do I intend to become a channel in God's hands to bring and lead many men unto salvation if I keep dodging and evading this necessary cup? Though He was the perfect Son of God, God still needed to make Him perfect when it came to becoming a leader, a pioneer and a captain, through sufferings.

When God wants to make you a leader that is fit to lead others to the kingdom of God, it is proper for Him to subject your life to death and suffering so that you might be a perfect and correct leader fit to lead others unto heaven. I used to think that Jesus was automatically the Saviour of the world. I did not know that he had to "become" a Saviour. When He was born, God already saw His destiny and said, **"you will call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins"**. But in between the announcement of Jesus' destiny at His birth and the actualization of it, there was a process that made Him to become a saviour. If Jesus was

not an automatic leader as soon as He was born, and that it was not automatic for Him to save people, do not expect anything like that for your own self. And do not be wary of the process of becoming what God desires and designed you to be. Do not keep dodging and running away from the process otherwise in another ten years, you will still be on the same spot. Prayer is good and we should pray more. Yet, we need to open our mouths and tell God to take us through the process. When you finish reading this message you should stand up deliberately and tell God to take your hand and lead you through the process for becoming a leader in the family of God.

"For it was an act worthy (of God) and (fitting to the divine nature) that He for whose sake and by whom all things have their existence in bringing many sons into glory should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect. (Should bring into maturity the human experience necessary to be perfectly equipped for His office as a high priest) through suffering." Heb. 2:10 (Amp).

There is a minimum quantity of human experience that you need before you can become a leader. It is a pity that in our own present day churches, untested and un-baptized boys are the founders and presidents of ministries. It was not miracles that qualified Jesus for leadership. It was not a supernatural demonstration of power that put Jesus there as a perfect pioneer leader. God decided and told Him, He cannot save people or be allowed to handle an issue that He had not experienced. He could not be imposed over people that have more experiences in life than Himself. He would be speaking beyond His life. Mary out of whom Jesus had cast out seven demons was sent to go and proclaim the resurrection message... She was going to tell those that participated in casting out her demons (the disciples) that she had seen Jesus. Did they believe her? No! Why not? She could not be a

leader because she lacked the maturity in human experience. The two brothers from Emmaus, also came to preach, did people believe? No they did not. Why did they not believe? Nobody knew anything about them. As such Jesus had to come Himself. No man can lead others beyond where he himself has reached in his walk with God. This is the predicament we are having. Our leadership development is very slow. Some of us do not appreciate God's own content of making a leader. That is why He may still be waiting for whom He can send.

People you can influence are people of your own level. So the Bible tells us that for Jesus to be able to bring many sons unto God, it was necessary that God should make Him perfect. The word perfect here means maturity in the human experience necessary for a perfect equipment of his office as High Priest. But the only way to bring that to happen is through suffering.

So Jesus told Mr. James and John, if they wanted to sit by His right, and to sit by His left, over and above men with grey hair, they needed to get into the school of suffering. The school of suffering is the school of leadership. It is not a Bible school. Let us stop deceiving ourselves. A Bible school certificate does not make you a spiritual leader. (I do not want you to quickly say, "Yes sir", because you are feeling too proud to go to school. That would be another manifestation of self). The college of suffering was the college of leadership training.

Jesus already had the divine nature. But He needed the *human experience* to lead human beings. There are two components that make for spiritual leadership: the divine nature that comes by the anointing, and the maturity of human experience for you to become a perfect leader that will fit you for that office.

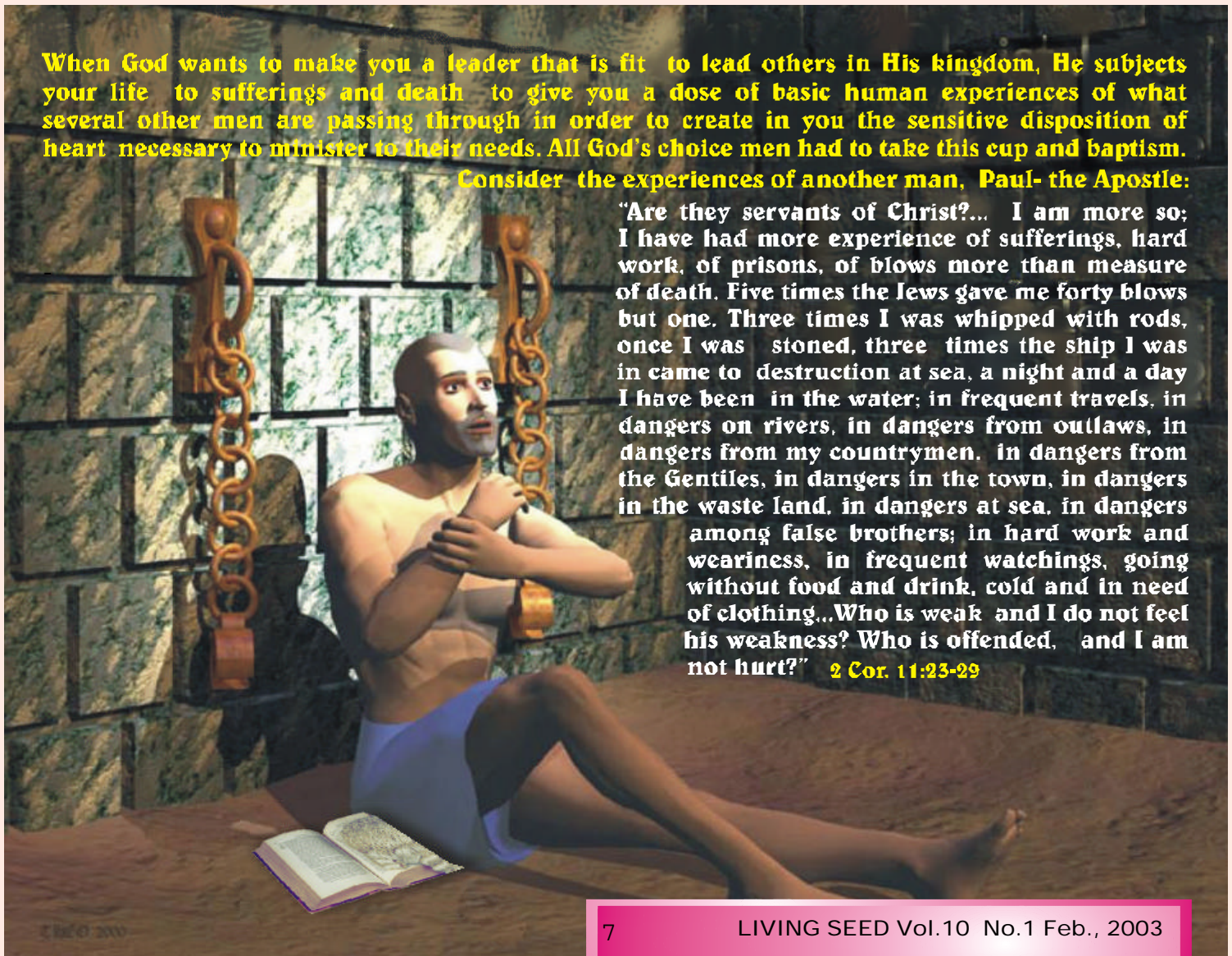
Let's move down to vs.17

"Wherefore it behoved Him in all things to be made

When God wants to make you a leader that is fit to lead others in His kingdom, He subjects your life to sufferings and death to give you a dose of basic human experiences of what several other men are passing through in order to create in you the sensitive disposition of heart necessary to minister to their needs. All God's choice men had to take this cup and baptism.

Consider the experiences of another man, Paul- the Apostle:

"Are they servants of Christ?... I am more so; I have had more experience of sufferings, hard work, of prisons, of blows more than measure of death. Five times the Jews gave me forty blows but one. Three times I was whipped with rods, once I was stoned, three times the ship I was in came to destruction at sea, a night and a day I have been in the water; in frequent travels, in dangers on rivers, in dangers from outlaws, in dangers from my countrymen, in dangers from the Gentiles, in dangers in the town, in dangers in the waste land, in dangers at sea, in dangers among false brothers; in hard work and weariness, in frequent watchings, going without food and drink, cold and in need of clothing...Who is weak and I do not feel his weakness? Who is offended, and I am not hurt?" **2 Cor. 11:23-29**



like to [His] brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things relating to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people;”(KJV).

“For this reason He had to be made like His brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people”. (NIV).

“This means that He had to become like His brothers in every way, in order to be their faithful and merciful High Priest in His service to God, so that the people’s sins would be forgiven.” (Good news).

“It is evident that it was essential that Jesus be made like His brethren in every respect in order that He might become a merciful (sympathetic) and faithful High Priest in the things related to God, in order to make atonement and propitiations for the people’s sins”. (Amp).

Do you see God’s process of making Jesus the leader, which He is? I may want to ask you, **“Will you (not just by word of mouth) like to enrol?”** If you have understood by the books that in between where you are and your destiny, there is a process, rather than just wishing to be a man of God, and wishfully asking for revival to come, why not ask the Lord to enrol you in the college of spiritual leadership– the college of suffering. We have several colleges like College of Agriculture, Education, and Medicine etc. But this is called the college of suffering. And its certificate is the Certificate of Leadership. It is not a paper certificate written with ink. This kind is the one engraved on your life known and read of all men. Even this is not conclusive because there are other colleges like the College of Obedience. As soon as James and John made the request to be made to sit at His left and right, Jesus said, **“Will you go through the college?”**

“It is evident that it was essential that Jesus be made like His brethren in every respect in order that He might become a merciful (sympathetic) and faithful High Priest in the things related to God, in order to make atonement and propitiations for the people’s sins. For because He Himself (in His humanity) has suffered in being tempted (tested and tried), He is able (immediately) to run to the cry (assist; relieve) of those who are being tempted and tested and tried and who are therefore being exposed to suffering”. Heb 2:17-18 (Amp).

For Jesus to be merciful, for Him to be compassion-

ate, and to know how it feels to be a man, so that on one side, He might be able to respond to the needs of men, that did not come by teaching. He had to suffer temptation. He overcame temptation. He was tempted at all points but without sin so that He can be faithful to God. The making of a leader is quite a matter! God does not overlook it. Whereas the office of the High Priest is one thing; Jesus could not occupy it, until He had to be made like His brethren in every aspect. It was necessary for Jesus to be made like His brethren in every area of experience, in order that He might become a merciful, sympathetic and faithful High Priest in the things related to God. It is clear that unless He was deliberately subjected to this process of formation, though the office is available for Him, He would be incapable of performing in that capacity.

God’s making of a leader is not the calling of a name or a bogus title. Leadership in God’s church must not be by official status. The man must be made, constructed, prepared and equipped to bear the challenges and responsibilities of the office. It is what He has become (or rather ‘came to be’) that matters, rather than what He is called by title. What a man is in his life is more crucial in leadership than what he does officially. Any one who knows how to speak or analyse the Bible can do preaching, but to be a leader demands experience of life, that far outweighs the challenges facing those being led. It must be a life that actually has gone ahead in experience. And even for Jesus, God regarded it as essential to allow Him be subjected to everything that men are subjected to. He became ‘a brother’ to all of us in all our afflictions and weaknesses. God allowed Him to be tested and tried at all points like as we are. It was His victory in those trials and temptations that now conferred upon Him the right and the ability to lead men.

God does not place men in the office of leadership, who are incapable and incapacitated to perform because of the deficiency of their life and the insufficiency of their own personal exposure to the Cup and Baptism. It is this Cup and the Baptism that crystallize within a man’s life such gems of grace that he draws upon to provide leadership for the flock.

The character needed for the particular office in leadership is what God takes time to build into a man while the charisma and the instrument of office can be placed on him just in a day. Many men struggle to acquire the instrument of office, the scepter of ministry, while they lack the intrinsic character needed for such an office.

Look at God again preparing even Jesus for the office of the High Priest, after the order of Melchisedek. To be in that office, He must be merciful, sympathetic, considerate and caring. He must possess genuine feelings of compassion for the weak and the helpless. He must be familiar with the

pangs and the yearnings of men's hearts. It must be in His own life also to feel sympathy. It is not just for Him to act and perform some duties of mercy, He Himself must be merciful. He must have something intrinsic to Him that easily responds in compassion. This for Jesus was not automatic. It was not natural to Him. He had to be trained to become sympathetic with sinners. The only way is for Him to also suffer temptation at all points. All the assault He went through in various ways at the wilderness, in the hands of the Pharisees and the scribes; in the hands of disciples, traitors, like Judas Iscariot; misunderstanding and blackmail that came His way, were all designed curriculum to inculcate within Him and to carve out of Him, a merciful, sympathetic, compassionate leader. He was not only endowed with power from on high, He was also lowered into the baptism of trials and temptations.

Hence *Heb. 4: 14-16* could now attest of such a High Priest we have in Christ Jesus.

“For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities...”

vs 15, KJV

“For it is not as if we had a High Priest who was incapable of feeling our weaknesses with us, but we have one who has been tempted in every way that we are, though He is without sin” (JB)

Two matters are important here: one is that a man could occupy a post in which he is 'incapable', 'unable' to perform the requisite life function of the office. He may make efforts, but he is structurally incapable. But our own High Priest (Jesus) is not such a man- but we have one who has been tempted in every way that we are! He is experienced in all that now troubles us. He is capable of knowing what we are going through. He needs no one to describe it to Him theoretically. He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He is not a leader because He is foreign to us. 'Foreigner' to men's situations cannot be a right and appropriate leader. Men will even flout his authority due to his innate ignorance. He can be fooled to take wrong decisions. He can be carried away by mere exaggeration of a problem, since it is completely foreign to him.

The second issue is His qualification to lead us! Confidence in His own experience, where He had been victorious is very crucial. Though He was familiar with all our infirmities in that He Himself had suffered being tempted, He would not be a leader if in it all He was a victim like ourselves. If He Himself is still struggling and battling with His own personal weaknesses, how can we trust Him to help us out of our own. This is the inherent weakness of the Aaronic Priesthood. The priests themselves, by life, were weak and were weaklings. They must offer atonement offering first for their

sins, before they could think of helping others. They never finished with their own infirmities all their lives; hence their usefulness to those they led was very minimal. But our own High Priest is the one without sin, despite all the temptations He went through. He thus has the right of leadership on these two counts.

Let me emphasize this again! Leadership hinges on two anchors: one is identification and familiarity with the led in every way. This means to be 'a brother' in all afflictions; to have a first hand experience because you have been there before. You have gone ahead of the brethren in every thing in which you are asking them to follow you.

The second is of equal weight. It is to be a winner, a conqueror and a victor out of all the rubble. Yes, men can see the traces of the dust; but they must also see the track record of your consistent victory. This must be engraved in your life and character. You need not announce it. It is evident all over your life.

Christ had to meet up with these two anchors of leadership conditionality. He was trained for this through the temptation He suffered.

My beloved brother and sister, do you aspire to serve God in any effective way among the brethren? This Cup and this Baptism are essential for you. Leadership qualification will not come to you by the frivolous laying of hands of visiting preachers in conferences. It is not by the pouring of anointing oil! It is not even by the word of prophecy of aged men like Simeon and Anna the prophetess. They may speak as the Lord gave them utterance. What to do is to keep it in your heart and quickly resume this process of divine preparation for the fulfillment of your destiny. Jesus had to be made a merciful and a faithful High priest. He suffered being tempted so He knows the pains of temptation. As such He can help those that are being tempted. But much more important, He knew how to say no to temptation and maintain righteousness so He can speak for, and to God. He could insist on God's own standard and say, **“Brother, this is the will of God. I went through it. I know it is paining you. It pained me too, but I never disobeyed God”**. The making of such men as instruments of revival, is God's major focus. You could be praying and saying, **“Lord, use me.”** Yet, God's answer will be, **“Yes, I will answer that prayer. But my answer is the Cup and the Baptism”**. When you have gone through living without money, you might be able to stand up and talk to the girls that are compromising their faith, or are going into wrong businesses because of economic crunch. You will be a faithful Pastor to say **“Sorry, I also lived like that for three weeks. There were very many temptations. There were temptations for me to renew old friend-**

ships. **But I said no. How can I be unequally yoked because of money? And God saw me through. Do not disappoint God; God will see you through as well**". You will be a faithful minister to Him who has appointed you. Suffering, as a process of training spiritual leaders, is a compulsory part of the Cup and the Baptism.

Baptism of Trials And Temptations

What is the other baptism that any man hoping to share a part in revival labours must go through? It is the Baptism of temptations as a test for strength. It is a test to discover weaknesses so that they can be removed. And He had to be tested at all points as we are. But rather than fall, He stood. In *Matt. Chapter three*, Jesus Christ received the Holy Ghost. Heaven was opened to Him after He was baptized in water. Then in *chapter 4, verse one*, the Holy Spirit led Jesus, to be tempted of the devil. The Holy Ghost Himself can lead you into the wilderness for this necessary trial. And the chief examiner in the wilderness is Satan, the devil. And the Holy Spirit seemed to say, **"I've brought my candidate. Please, test him."** And the Spirit will sit somewhere waiting for you to finish. It is the process of becoming an effective leader, and minister. And the Bible said, **"Being tempted 40 days of the devil and in those days Jesus ate nothing."** The devil battered Him here and there, just testing for any weakness. And I tell you sir, God will never take you to battle as a sword or as a battle-axe until He has first of all handed you over to the cruel tempter who will tempt you without mercy, to see whether there is a point of weakness where you will disappoint God later.

Remember, God led the children of Israel after they left Egypt into the wilderness. What was His reason? He wanted them to go through the test, so that He would know the type of people they would be when they faced the battles of Canaan. There was a shorter route. But He decided that they should not go that way because they might run back from Canaan to Egypt again if they omitted the necessary wilderness experience. So He took them through the wilderness. God knew there was the Red Sea. He was also the one who went and stirred up Pharaoh to pursue them. God went and mobilized Egyptians with their chariots behind them. It was very tight and frightening, yet it was their first baptism to see where they would turn to. He was training them to look up. They were hedged in; the Red sea in front, Egyptians at the back, hills on the left and on the right. Some immediately began to suggest that God just wanted to bury all

of them en-masse. But all this was for God to introduce Himself to them and to teach them the Biblical way of crossing hurdles in God's service. He was training them to overcome fear.

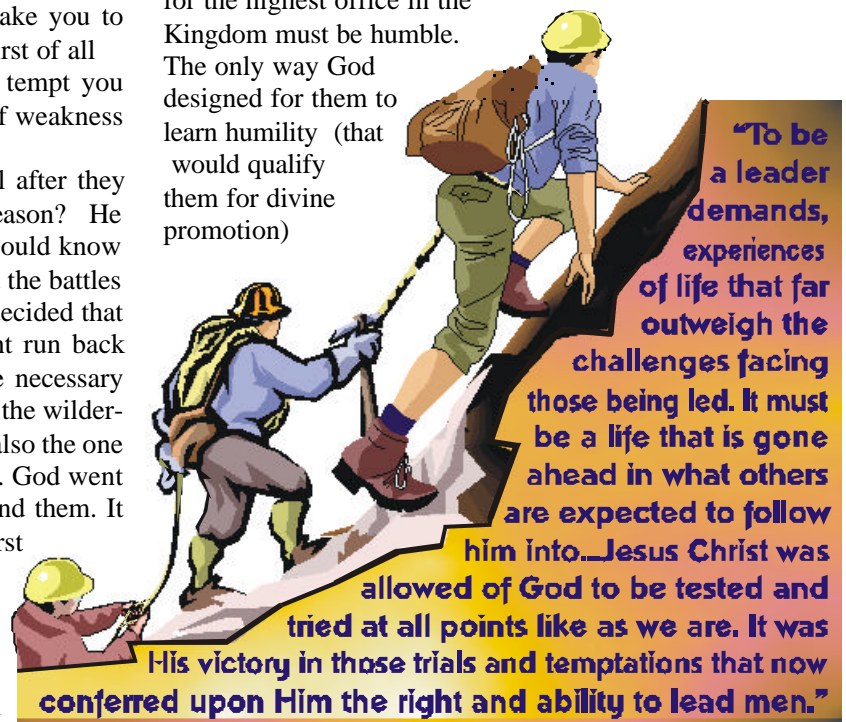
When God delivered them (as they walked through the Red Sea on dry ground) they danced and danced. It was not the dancing that was God's primary aim of this arrangement. It was that they might have a reference point in their walk: Ebenezer stones of memorial in their stories and testimonies to recall in the face of other battles, especially the battles in the land of promise.

As they passed through the Red Sea and they saw the massive destruction of their enemies, God desired to carve into their hearts His power to save and to deliver.

"And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord." Deut 8: 2-3.

This is an apt summary of that training process at the tail end of their wilderness journey. Let us highlight few points here, to illustrate this testing: A man who will be fitted for the highest office in the Kingdom must be humble.

The only way God designed for them to learn humility (that would qualify them for divine promotion)



was to put in this wilderness journey. They could not accumulate wealth on the road. Of necessity they had to travel light. No one was allowed to settle into anything. The pillar of cloud may settle for three days or three weeks before it lifts up for onward journey. No one could predict where the cloud might rest and grant them an abode, and for how long. They lived a pilgrim life; they ate pilgrim food. They could not engage in any business with the citizens of the country they were passing through. What a training God designed for His people so that He might do them good in the end. They did not take theoretical lesson on humility. He actually humbled them for forty years, in the hope that it would become their lifestyle.

He tested them to know what was in their hearts. It is this baptism of trials and testing that God uses to reveal the vivid condition of men's hearts. It reveals areas of weakness that need urgent attention. It is not at the land flowing with milk and honey that you can locate a man's heart. The wilderness is designed to bring forth the very obscure aspects of men's hearts.

He wanted them to know by life and experience that man shall not live by bread alone but man lives by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. This is a necessity for any man in God's service. It is essential. No man can actually bear God's burdens among men, unless he has learnt to live by God's word. But God's method of inculcating this into their lives was not to organize a Bible Teaching Conference on "Living by the word". It was to allow them to hunger and to come to the end of their bread of wheat. He now responded with a Word: **"In the morning you shall eat bread"**. There was no farm, no new harvest; no bakeries; no new changes. But in the morning "manna" lay round their camps. "Manna? Manna?" was their question: What is it? The word "manna" meant (in their own native tongue), what is this? No one knew what it was. As they picked it up, roasted, baked, fried, boiled, pounded it, for their varieties of meals; they kept asking the question; Manna? Manna? It was nothing but the word that proceeded out of the mouth of God. This happened every day for forty years, so that this singular lesson may be carved into their hearts and personalities. This was God's choice of preparing them for the Promised Land. It would take a daily waiting to catch "manna". No one could keep any of it over night. You were not sure of what to take tomorrow, unless you would depend on the Word of promise **"in the morning there shall be bread"**. It took this rigorous training to learn "Living by the word". Bible study of three hours may look great, but I doubt if that is all it requires to raise a man of faith fit for leadership in God's house.

The Cup and Baptism is what all God's choice men had to take to step into the place where they stood for God in

their Days. There are certain tests that will come to you, not because God does not know that you have a need. He wants to test whether you will break in the face of such a need. He is going to test whether you have developed that spiritual stamina in the face of difficulties. My friend, I will ask you as Jesus asked them: **"Are you able to drink the cup and be baptized with the baptism?"** If you say yes, you are able; He will say, **"You will indeed! So follow me."** And I have been praying that you are not just reading for information. We must need say, **"Take me through the cup, take me through the baptism."**

The Bible said the devil tempted Jesus at all points. But the joy of my heart is that the same Bible said, **"Jesus returned in the power of the Holy Ghost."** Anointing does not become power until you have gone through the wilderness of testing. And from that point, **"His fame went everywhere"**. But that Scripture also said, **"But the devil left Him for a while till another opportune time."** I must tell you that the test for spiritual leadership does not come once and for all. It comes in stages and in grades. So let us note here: there is a Cup and there is a Baptism. All who aspire for leadership must set themselves ready to partake of these.

Daniel, Samuel, Job, Japheth, Deborah, Esther, and several others were men and women of like passion as you are. They did not shun the discipline of the LORD. They subjected themselves to this cup and this baptism in a measure. They affected their generations because they were individually affected.

Do not let where you stand today in your walk with God become your destination. There is a yonder with God... a place where men are cut for spiritual responsibility in God's service. God only offers this cup and this baptism to those He loves and desires to use in a definite way. Who is interested in this matter? Yet, it is not for the sake of posts and positions at the right hand or the left hand. It is to become an eligible candidate for spiritual leadership in the body of Christ, for service among His people. Do you long to become a minister of life unto men? Do you desire to be used to drag men unto the Kingdom of God in their hundreds and thousands, then bend down and ask for this cup.

**Make me a battle-axe,
Kept, Lord in Thy quiver,
Tried, trimmed, sharpened in Thy furnace,
Meet for my Master's use.**

For further study:

- (i) THE PRICE, PLIGHT, AND PERILS OF THE ANOINTED
- Gbile Akanni
- (ii) WHAT GOD LOOKS FOR IN HIS VESSEL.
- Gbile Akanni
- (iii) SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY - Watchman Nee.



By Terwase Targema

A story is told of a father who on his deathbed called his children with one sole aim of teaching them the force of togetherness. He is said to have given each a dry slender stick to break. Each broke his/hers effortlessly. He now gathered many of such sticks together in small bundles and gave to each to break. It took more efforts for each to break though the small bundles of sticks, but they were broken all the same. Finally he gathered all the sticks together in a big bundle and gave to the strongest of his children who tried all he could but could not break the bundle. The old dying father finally told his children the lesson we must all learn: "even weaklings bundled together are enough to stand against any force".

Divine Wisdom For Teaming

And the Lord God said it is not good that the man should be alone: I will make him a help meet for him." Gen 2:18.

Our father in Heaven said this after He had given man the work of dressing and keeping His garden. It was Him who discovered that it was not good for the man to be doing this divine assignment alone. This was well before the fall by which untold weakness was introduced into man's life. He was at this time in God's image hence perfect and well able to exercise his dominion over the creation of God. The idea of

bringing another person to help with a given divine assignment was neither an emergency nor a remedial measure to make up for one's weakness. It is not necessarily because of your insufficiency or your inability that you need to work with others in the vineyard of our Father, God. Even if you were perfect, it would still not be good for you to be alone in what you are given of God to do.

Distinction should be made of the nature of the devil, Satan; who alone heads and runs his system of demonic government. We are told he was ranked together with two other archangels, that is consistent with divine nature, but the devil bolted out to stand alone.

Have you bolted out of a team in which you know God brought you in to help do His work? Why resemble the devil? I see this, *Gen 2:18*, having a broader sense of a teamwork beyond marriage of husband and wife. Even though marriage also is a team for God's service for those who are born again into God's own family; God has demonstrated that it is not good for His servants to be alone in His service by building up teams around even those that were not married.

"...The Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them"Acts 13:3.

It is clear from scripture that Paul never married (*1 Cor7:8*) and perhaps Barnabas also (*1Cor9: 5-6*). Al-

though God would have Paul be without partnership of a wife, yet He would not leave him without that of a yoke fellow. Both Barnabas and Paul were very anointed individuals yet God would not allow them to work each on his own. They were capable of doing it successfully if God willed it so. However, God's will for man is not to be alone in the work of ministry. Alone, a spice does not bring out the taste and texture of God's dough for divine service. We know that they separated after sometimes, but unto teams; and even at the end Paul finally discovered his need of Barnabas' work. The wisdom of the original divine arrangement for any God-given service is partnership. Scriptures are very quiet about Elijah's marital status but not of his ministerial partner. While He never bothered with marriage, our Lord Jesus expended much of His ministerial time and energy on raising His team.

Check very carefully, who, however anointed ever ministered alone in scriptures and succeeded – Samson? No! Samson failed before he started, even though greatly anointed. As soon as ***"...The Spirit of the LORD began to move upon him at Mahaneh Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol. Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines."*** *Judges 13:25; 14:1*. The move of the Spirit of God on

Samson had only begun, not yet steady with him, and he went down. The move was yet "at times" and from this time he took a downward trend to his doom. His going down to what would kill him was very early in his ministerial life. Remember it was a woman that finally killed him. He failed before he began.

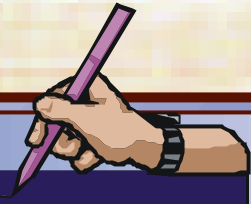
Characteristics Of A Strong Team

A good team must reflect the characteristic similar to the Godhead. The greatest team is the divine trinity. It is amazing how this team functions in another-centeredness, rather than self-centeredness. This is the first and most important characteristic, if a team will achieve a common vision.

Dr Sid Buzzel et al, commented that the three persons of the Trinity worked together in perfect harmony to accomplish our salvation as brought out in *Eph 1:3-14*. Studying that scripture and several others the work of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit in salvation are individually distinct but never complete without the others. In summary, **the Father initiated our salvation**, (v 3-6) **the Son accomplished it** (v7-12) and **the Holy Spirit made it real in our lives** (v13-14). None of this aspect of salvation is inferior to the other nor could stand on its own. None of the persons of the Trinity did anything with the mind to outplay the others. Rather, each competed to portray the other as having done it all.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the

Editorial



You are welcome. This edition marks another turning point in the growth of LIVING SEED. The full color and the glossy cover are all part of our Father's further investment to make this an endearing blessing to you and the Body of Christ at large.

Our burden for this edition is to consider the core- courses of God's curriculum for fashioning men who must bear responsibility in the kingdom. As we studied Jesus, we discovered that sufferings, trials, and temptations are the essential ingredients in the divine moulding of men's character to fit them for leadership.

MINISTERS' COLUMN confronts us with God's wisdom and bulwark against the powers of darkness... It is not necessarily the making of an individual into a "mighty lone ranging star"... but the building of a team of ordinary men and women fortified by the strength that unity in Christ supplies. *"I will build My CHURCH and the gates of hell shall not prevail..."*

BEDROCKS repackages for us God's purpose in Christ Jesus- it is much more than the healings of our bodies or deliverances from one long list of occurrences to the other- rather, it is the whole of one's life that is "bent-over" and needs "STRAIGHTENING OUT". This, God does when we come under the hands of Jesus in discipleship.

In THE OTHER SIDE OF GOD, several sages bear testimony to the sovereignty of God in choosing how to be glorified in our individual lives and situations- He may choose to deliver from predicaments in response to our agonies and tears, or better still, may calculatedly ignore our feelings in order to bring about a much bigger and fruitful divine purpose- but in it all His grace will be available.

In A DECISION, Daniel, a young man with rare combinations that dwarf the C.V's of present day youths: (Cuteness, poise, outstanding intelligence, plus a royal blood running through his veins...) chose rather to inherit eternal life by an unbending consecration to his Lord and creator than to preoccupy himself and become conceited with earthly ephemerals... What is your decision?

We prayerfully send these (and others more) across your way to assist you on this race for eternal life. Remember, this generation is counting on you, the host of Heaven is watching, and the Lord is waiting to receive you!

I am your sister
Ene Aideyan

earth. Now the earth was formless and empty darkness was over the surface of the deep and the spirit of God was hovering over the waters and God said, let there be light and there was light.” Gen 1:1-13.

This account of creation would portray God the father as the creator and He is. Even the presence and works of the Spirit, (v2) and the Word, the Son here (v3) looks assisting and secondly. Even in this account the team functioning of the three persons of the Godhead is clearly evident. In *Ps.104: 30* in the account of creation again; it was as if God

Once upon a time, Samson was the strongest man on earth_ No Phillistine could withstand him. But he worked with no team and he raised no team.



Then the Phillistines teamed up with a woman and removed his two eyes. And that was the end of Samson!



wanted us to know that even though He was the one we saw as creating the creations, we should know who actually did it:

“When You send Your Spirit they are created...”

See God the father leaving us with the sense that creation was done by the Spirit. Before we could settle down with that conclusion the New Testament portrays the picture differently again.

John 1:1,3,14-17 leads you to knowing that the Bible is talking of Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the father.

“All things were made by him: and without him was not anything made.” *John1: 3.*

The picture shifts to the son as the creator of all things (*Col. 1:14-16*). Rather than each trying to underline His own contribution in creation, it is no problem to the others for creations to reveal as the work of any of the Persons of the Godhead.

We had noted that individualism in the service of God is inspired by the devil. He could not work in the team of the three archangels. This is, however, the quiet characteristic of several ministers in the service of God. Every thing they do must have their names boldly printed on it. Should any try to play down their prominence in a work, they would rather break away. People name Christian works after their names and so register them. What they do must not be lost into another person. They must sign every letter they write in the ministry structure, not because they want to claim responsibility for any implication but to gain prominence and be known and heard. We need to check the spirit behind all the quiet struggles even to be known and heard by you as an individual, when you could safely have done all you are doing under a corporate name or even the name of your leader. You fear he will be known while no one will ever know you are there?

You are certainly a weakening factor of the team you are working with.

The second characteristic of good team is that it must have a common vision to achieve – all members must find themselves working towards that one overwhelming vision. One of the best teams in the Old Testament was David’s team. To me it is only second best to Jesus’ team. One overwhelming characteristic of David’s team we wish to consider for our learning is the singular purpose for which those mighty men were mobilized of the Lord. The singular purpose was so repeatedly reported of them as if seeing any of these David’s soldiers, you would immediately read on their faces this one purpose of their pursuit.

“All these men came in battle array to Hebron with the single purpose of making David king...”

1Chro 12:38 (Study Group Bible).

The David’s team was composed of many people. Going by the figures available they were approximately 340,000 soldiers, even though this is clearly an under statement since only officers are numbered of the tribe of Isaachar. The team was also made of very mighty warriors who could clearly command a troop of their own. For example, officers from the Gad were

“Experts with both shield and spear, Horn-faced men, swift as deer upon mountains- the weakest was worth a hundred normal troops and the greatest was worth a thousand. They crossed the Jordan River during its seasonal flooding and conquered the lowlands on both the east and west banks.”

1Chro 12:8,14,15.

There were some among that army that withstood the whole army of Philistine all alone and earned a name. I am not sure they were just intimidated by David’s fighting skill and were there to

learn under him as to stand on their own tomorrow. What made this great army in number and might to come to be committed to making David king shows what must happen to any team for it to achieve its purpose.

“They were all eager (anxious) to see David become king instead of



The devil loses when Christians team up against his kingdom

Saul, just as the Lord had promised.”

To discover that all were eager to make David king is a witness to the inner mobilization of each of the team members. Nobody was following the persuasion of another person. Every member of this team had come to make the matter of making David the king as a personal project to be achieved in his lifetime. They invested their time

and personal resources in this not as a national project yet, but theirs personally. Each wanted to be a kingmaker. David did not provide even the food they ate and what they drank. People from far away Isaachar, Zebulun and Naphtali brought food on



THE MINISTERING TEAM

(Continue On Page 31)

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“Straightened Out”

By Sade Akanni

“Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, “woman, you are loosed from your infirmity. And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.” Lk13: 10-14.

The above scripture raises certain issues that need to be drawn out for our edification and admonition so that we can stand and walk straight with the Lord without any crook-

edness. It happened on a Sabbath day as Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues that He saw an unusual sight. He saw a woman who was bent over and could in no way raise herself. She had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years. The first thing to note in that scripture is that Jesus was not the first person to ever preach in that synagogue without seeing that woman.

Jesus Saw Her...

She must have been a regular member there for people to know her with that infirmity for eighteen years. Yet preachers preached but never saw her. Some might have seen her, yet they did not see her. They did not see her situation. Their eyes of compassion were not opened to see her and be touched by the feelings of her infirmity. That in itself is an infirmity of a kind in a preacher. Many times we have been given opportunities to preach. We go, we preach but we often do not ‘see’ the people; we are not touched by the situation of the people. All we are concerned about is to preach and so we preach as some one beating the air and wasting punches. We preach into the air and nothing about the people touches us. And since nothing in the lives of the people touches our hearts, nothing from our lives touches them too. **“Deep only calls to the deep.”** It is the depth of compassion we have for the people and how much of their situation touches our hearts that determines how much we could affect the people by the help of the Holy Spirit. This is a challenge. What is the purpose of preaching if not to touch people’s lives and save them from their troubles whether physical or spiritual?

Paul says,

“Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight not as one who beats the air.” 1 Cor 9:26.

It is a waste of grace, a waste of heaven’s resources to preach without a compassionate heart that can see people in their infirmities and touch them with a heavenly touch. Yet, it is quite possible to be such a preacher, dry, hard-hearted and graceless, only concerned about what to gain and not what to impact on the people. There are preachers who are not touched by the infirmities of the people but are definitely touched by the pockets and the cars of the people. As soon as they mount the pulpit to preach, what they see is the dressing of the people and any other thing that could show how fat their pockets are. And so the preacher summons strength and psychology to cause them to bring out what is in their pockets, not what is in their hearts. The preacher has power to collect their offerings but no power to heal them of their infirmities and set them free from their sins. Brother, sister, man of God, are you such a preacher? This is a great infirmity of a kind. It is a definite blindness of the purpose of God for redemption.

That is enough a matter to raise a cry to heaven about. While teaching, Jesus 'saw' that woman. He saw her infirmity. We need God to touch our eyes afresh so that we may see people as the Lord sees them, in their real situation. There is need to pray for a restoration of spiritual sensitivity of the pulpit to the true condition in the pew.

She Could Not Stand Straight

Considering the condition of that woman, the Bible says, she was bent over -she was bound together-and could in no way raise herself up. "Bent over..." by whom? Certainly by the devil... by a spirit of infirmity. What a wicked spirit! You can imagine someone bent over like this. Imagine the agony that woman went through everyday for eighteen years!

There are many people who have been bent over like this. You may have been bound together even physically in your body like this woman. You may have been experiencing stiffness in neck, your back or even your legs. Or yours may be other kinds of physical infirmities that have bent your life over. You may have looked for help in many quarters. But there is only one touch you need: a touch from Jesus. If you want to cry at all, the only cry you need to make is to the only One who could help you and release you from that bondage: Jesus Christ the Lord, the Healer. People who cried out to Him for a touch received it. Even those who do not cry out for whatever reason still received His touch as soon as He saw them. How I pray you will cry out! And how I pray you will be in a position where He will see you and touch you. You do not have to remain in that situation. You can receive His touch even now if you are willing, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

The woman in this story did not cry out. We are not told the reason. She probably had sought for help in many places. But as she could not find any, she resolved



There are very many cases today of people who are "bent over" and are unable to stand straight any more. Their own infirmities may not be physical... Some are "bent over" because of sins and despicable habits. Others are struggling with bad characters that have reduced them in the household of God to handling menial things and have thus become unusable to God. And yet others there are who are bent double by debts and credit... Still others that timidity and fear have pegged their lives below what God has ordained for them to step into. And there could still be others that grief and sorrow have made them unable to lift up their heads.

to take it as her fate in life. She decided to even keep going to worship God despite her situation. Her physical infirmity was not enough to stop her communion with God. What a love for God! What a woman of faith! No matter your physical infirmity, cry to the Lord

for help. He will hear you. But while the infirmity lasts, never allow that to weigh you down and hinder you from fulfilling your spiritual obligation to worship Him and serve Him. Just as it happened to this woman, it could be there that the Lord would meet you, see you and touch you.

The infirmity of your own life, may, however not be a physical sickness. It may be that of sin. Do you discover as a married woman that you are quarrelsome and highly irritable? Any time you are considered for a higher service in God's work, there are always people to give a truly bad report about your character. And so even though you are ten or twenty years old in the Lord, you can only be allowed to touch menial things, ignoble things in Kingdom service. That sin is gradually binding and bending you over so that you cannot raise yourself up. You need help. Or have you been bound together by the sin of immorality? You may be single or married or even a widow but you commit immorality secretly and even publicly. Do you find yourself reading immoral books or engaging in immoral thoughts? Do you practice masturbation or lesbianism, young lady? You know it is wrong? You might have even prayed about it but you have not been able to stop it. You are already bent over and you could in no way raise yourself up. You need an urgent divine intervention lest that sin binds you, hand and feet, and casts you into hell fire any moment from now.

Your own infirmity may be that of debts. You have become accustomed to borrowing and you are engaged in it so much that you are neck deep in it. It has started bringing you into shame already and you are unable to lift up your head in the society; yet you still find yourself continuing to borrow. You even borrow in order to settle other debts. When people counsel you to stop borrowing and be contented with what you have, you find scriptures to support your action, and silence them. You are already bent over and if you do not cry out to God for help, you will never be able to

raise your self up. Even your children will suffer from this infirmity of yours when you die.

Perhaps the infirmity that has bound you and bent you over so that you are unable to walk tall and straight as a child of God is timidity. As a woman, you know what God is asking you to do. You know the grace that has been deposited in your life as a child of God for the Body of Christ. Your husband may even not be against your usefulness in Kingdom service. But because you are timid, you keep dodging the inner prompting of the Holy Spirit every time. Outwardly, it looks like humility but it is timidity. You are so shy, so fearful inside that you are becoming unavailable for holy use. Now people have started packing you aside and are already forgetting you. You were meant to grow tall in the Body of Christ but timidity is cutting you short. You are already bent over and you can in no way raise yourself up. You need help.

Could it be the death of your husband that seems to have bent you over? You keep sorrowing over this and your grief multiplies day after day as if you will never walk straight again. You might have even experienced a lot of ridicule and oppression from people so much that you despair ever being able to raise up yourself and lift up your head again in the society. You need a touch from the Lord. Instead of sorrowing and giving up, you can cry to Him for help and yield your life into His hands. You can even do as the woman in this story did, worshipping and serving God.

You may have been bent over as a result of barrenness and already you are unable to raise up yourself and walk straight in your husband's family and even in the society. The touch you need is not of any man but of the Lord. Or is it Satan that has bound your head and bent you over? Do you keep experiencing one demonic attack or the other in your dreams or even in the physical realm? You need divine help. The touch you need is that of Jesus, not of herbalists or witch doctors, not even of any man.

She Was At The Right Place

We are told in that scripture that when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him... (Vs.12). Whatever is the thing that has bound you together and bent you over, the important thing to do is to be where Jesus will see you. If that woman



No matter the condition of your physical infirmity, cry to the Lord and He will help you. But while the infirmity last, continue to serve the Lord...never allow the infirmity to hinder your obligation to give the Lord an unconditional worship

had stayed at home on that day, she would have missed her miracle. You must ask God to help you to be at the right place at the right time. It takes God's help to achieve that. Blind Bartimeaus was at the right place on that day when Jesus was passing by and he received his sight. Zacchaeus was at the right place where Jesus would pass through; he had the right attitude and desire. When Jesus got to the place where he was, He lifted up His eyes and saw Zacchaeus. Suppose he had stayed away as a **'big man'** (the chief tax collector) on that day, he would have missed the deliverance he needed from his sins and the salvation of his soul. You must be at the right place at the right time. Besides that, you must develop and have the right attitude of worship despite your situation. You must have an attitude of humility before God. Do not be too proud to go to the Lord for help. Your attitude must be that of expectation, always waiting for the Lord to act on your behalf. The Lord says, **"But on this one will I look. On him who is poor and of a contrite Spirit, and who trembles at My Word."** Isa 66:2b.

She Came To Jesus

For Jesus to see you and turn His attention to your life, you must have the right attitude and be at the right place. When Jesus saw her, He called her to Him. It was after she came to Him that Jesus healed her. Ever before you receive the healing or deliverance you need, you need to obey His call. He is always calling people to Himself .He says:

"Come to Me all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt 11:28).

"Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him..." Rev.3:20.

Your first need is to come to Jesus. It is not healing. It is not lifting up your head. It is because you are not really with Jesus and in Him that the problem, that oppression and that bondage came into your life. He is calling you to Himself up till now. Come to Jesus. Yield your life to Him in absolute surrender. You know what that means. Allow Him to save you and be the Lord over your life. That will be the end of that trouble. David said in the book of Psalms that the Lord is his glory and the lifter up of his head. He will lift up your head again. He will straighten you out.

As the woman obeyed that instruction and came to

Jesus her own part of the matter finished. The Lord Jesus began to play His own part. You have a role to play in securing your deliverance. Yet that role is not difficult. It is not what a man cannot do. Why do you linger? What Jesus will do in your life is what no man can do. Even you yourself have not been able to do it, just as that woman had never been able to lift herself up. What has hitherto been impossible for you is what only God can do. And that is what He wants to do. But in order to secure your agreement for Him to do it, you must come to Him. You must confess that sin or those sins to Him. You must humble yourself before Him. Come to Jesus. Leave the company of sinners. Leave your shell of unbelief. That woman left her seat, she left where she was and came to Jesus. You must do the same. Leave ...and come to Jesus. That is what will make Jesus touch you with a lasting touch.

As she came to Jesus, He said to her “**woman, you are loosed from your infirmity**”. The truth is that you are already bound in your situation just as that woman was. You cannot loosen yourself. You need to be loosed and that is what Jesus wants to do. He spoke the word of deliverance to the woman: ‘**you are loosed from your infirmity.**’ You also need a word from Jesus. You need to hear Him speak to you the word that will bring about your deliverance.

“He sent His Word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.” Ps 107:20.

God does His work by His word. Even to create the heavens and the earth, He spoke His word. To heal people and raise the dead, He spoke to them. When the woman with the issue of blood touched His garment and was made whole, she wanted to escape quietly. But to perfect the healing, Jesus sought to make her come to Him. When she did, He spoke to her.

You need a word from the Lord. It is His word (The truth) that will make you free. There are many words written in the Bible about healing. Yet, you may confess all of them and you will not be healed. Why? It is because the Lord has not spoken **it** to you. There is a word He will particularly speak to you that will finish your problem. Listen to Him and receive instruction from His mouth.

She Came Under The Hands Of Jesus

The Lord Jesus Christ went a step further. He laid His hands on her. That means a lot. He may need to use another brother or sister to place their physical hands on you and pray for you before you can be made whole. Do not resist the Lord. Once you come to Jesus, abandon yourself in His hands. He knows what to do. In this scripture, though, I



To heal that woman, Jesus laid His hands on her... Jesus wants to lay His hands on you too- to straighten out your life. Until you are under the hands of Jesus in a discipleship relationship, your life will never be correct, and then you will never be useful both to God, and to man!

am seeing more than a physical laying on of hands. Jesus wants you to come under His hands before your life can be straightened out and your head lifted up. Your problem needs more than praying and casting out devils before you can be completely free. The Lord wants you to come under His hands, under His tutelage and learn from Him. He wants you to learn His lifestyle. He wants to fill you with His word. When a demon is cast out of a man, the Bible says, “*When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came’.* And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.” Lk. 11:24-26 (NKJV).

WHEN Jesus saves, heals or delivers you, demons are sent packing.

He cleanses you and puts your life in order. There and then you experience a rest. Yet that is not enough. If you stop at that level, your miracle will not last. You need to come under His hands. You need to start learning His lifestyle. You need to start filling your life that has been swept and put in order, with God’s word. Our hearts must not be left empty, lest the devil comes back to you in full force. You need to immediately start learning His ways. You must come under His hand and learn of Him. That is discipleship. After receiving His rest as stated in *Matt 11:28-30*, the next thing you must do is to take His yoke upon you and learn of Him. That is what will make your rest a permanent reality.

She Glorified God

Jesus laid His hands upon her and immediately, she was made straight and glorified God. You also shall be made straight as you follow these instructions. Your rugged life, your crooked path shall be made straight. Your head that is bowed down and bent over shall be lifted up again in JESUS' name. But you must also glorify God with your life hereafter as that woman did. Some received miracles from the Lord this way but went to beer palour to celebrate them. Some just went back to their old ways of life after being granted rest by the Lord. That is not the will of God for setting you free and lifting up your head. It is so that you may glorify Him. Do not glorify self or the devil with it. Your life must begin to bring glory to the Lord henceforth. You must go and sin no more. Stand now and begin to live right. You must boldly turn your back at whatever led you into that condition that bound you together. You need to take your stand now and begin to live right.



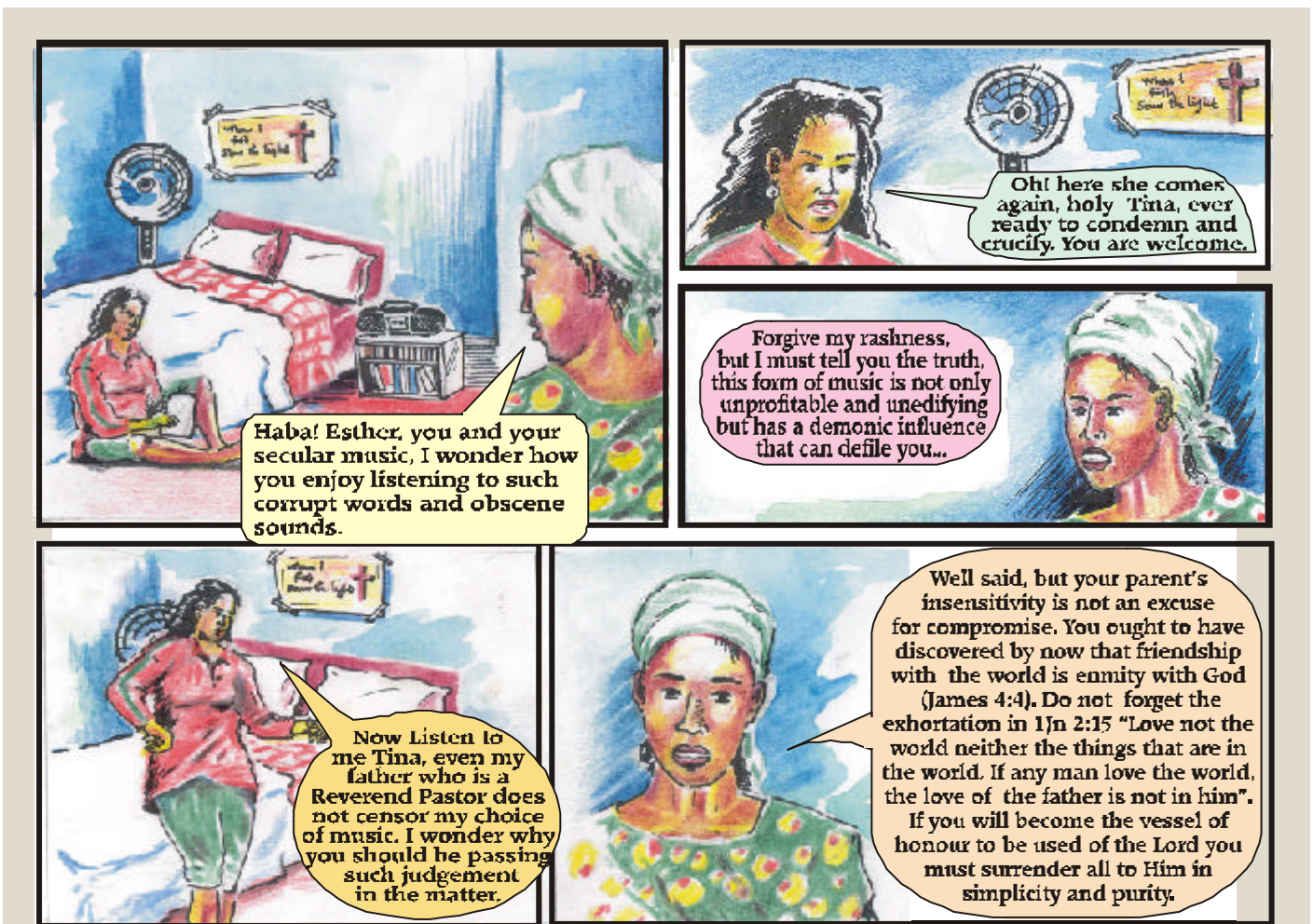
You must also glorify God with your deliverance. You must not go back to your old ways and manners- living for yourself and the world system.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matt 5:16.

Begin to glorify God in your heart, with your mouth and with your life. Do not be shy about it. Let the fruit of righteousness fill your character. That is what will bring glory to the Lord.

“By this My Father is glorified that you bear much fruit...” John 15:8.

Your life must produce godly fruit and a righteous character henceforth. That woman immediately glorified God. She was not shy about it. The whole congregation knew that day that she had become a different woman. Why will you conceal what the Lord has done? You also, begin to glorify God as soon as you are made straight. Glorify Him with your lips; glorify Him with a completely changed character, a godly lifestyle. That is what will make your salvation, your deliverance and your rest a permanent experience. You also will soon become an instrument in God's hand to bring others out of their troubles. Praise the Lord!



The Other Side Of God

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands for the living God"

Heb. 10:31.

"For our God is a consuming fire"

Heb 12:29

"If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning furnace, and He will deliver us from thy hands oh king.

BUT IF NOT, be it known unto thee oh king that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up".

Daniel 3:17-18

"Knowing therefore the TERROR of the Lord we warn men..."

2 Cor 5:11

"...Behold the Lamb of God"

John 1:36.

"...The Lion of the tribe of Judah." Rev 5:5.

These and several other references abound in the word of God to prove that God is not just what we think, He is but more than that.

Several years of interactions with some Christian friends; some new converts, some very old experienced Christians, have shown that there is a popular side of God that most Christians associate Him with. I have done that before now. That popular side I would like to refer to it as the 'positive and the good' side. There was a time I thought and also believed that no evil can happen to a child of God (for example things like accident, failure in examinations, barrenness, poverty, suffering etc) except those living in sin. I thought that it was only sin that brings these upon brethren. But in these my few years of walking with God the story is different. God is bigger than what I

thought, He is deeper than I understood, He is higher than I knew and wider than I imagined. There is another side of God that is not clearly known to many. So I have quietly drawn this conclusion in my heart that, any person desiring to make heaven who does not know this other side of God, may give up the pursuit of God on the way.

Many things happen to Christians that our human understanding and reasoning may not justify God: and when these experiences come we query God with questions like "how can?" "Where was God?" "What is my sin?" (At such points, you find Christians looking for what to confess, they may even start confessing that which they did not commit). They think like I thought, that it must always be a kind of sin that brought the undesirable experience.

Now I know better. It is not always so. The journey to heaven is long and diversified. If any man is intending to make this journey to a successful end, then he must count the cost. Has it ever occurred to you why an HIV/AIDS victim who was infected while living in the world (unbeliever) but during the illness repented PROPERLY and yet this illness

defied all prayers? Why is it that a child of God will make very sincere prayers before starting a journey, sometimes even going for or returning from preaching engagement, and yet have a ghastly motor accident? Why should armed robbers have access to a man of God so much as to attack and sometimes even kill him? Why should children of God experience barrenness that has defied all medical and spiritual approaches? These are questions that used to bother me. Now I know better; that God is just being God.

One day Peter asked Jesus a question. He said "**Lord we have left all and followed thee**". Jesus knew that Peter had not finished asking that question, but knowing where Peter was going, He answered and said "**no man who has left mother, father, lands, etc will go unrewarded but right in this world, he will have fathers, sisters, lands etc and PERSECUTION**". Persecution is strange on this list. It does not fit in at all. We are looking for blessings, why should we have persecution? Strangely enough, it was Jesus who said it. If it were another preacher like Paul, we may say it is wrong doctrine. But

By

Emmanuel
Akaahimbe

God had said concerning Jesus in **LK 9:35**, “**This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased, HEAR YE HIM**”. Dear friend, did you hear that? Why should that which we expect to bless be prophesying persecution, suffering and hardship for us? And heaven did not query that doctrine, instead we are told to give attention to this truth, “**hear Him**”. Brother, has your relation ever fallen sick and you prayed and fasted while the illness grew worse and ended in death like it happened to king David in *2Sam 12:15-19*? You may want to explain that this child was the product of adultery but what about your relation?

Let us consider the case of Daniel and his friends in the scripture quoted above. It was the service of King of kings that would not allow Daniel and his friends to compromise their faith to the image that was set up. Daniel and his friends seemed to know this God deeper than us; they understood him more, they knew him better; they knew the other side of God. When they were threatened with death, they made a resolve. They told king Nebuchadnezzar to his face that this God that they serve is all-powerful. Just as He has power to deliver from fire, He has power also to allow fire to consume. They said that the God whom they served was able to deliver them and He would, **BUT IF NOT**... Daniel knew that, there is an ‘if not’ with the God they served. This is the complete knowledge of God. This is that other side that I intend to discuss here.

Brother, I know that you know God to some extent. You may have known only one side of Him, the popular, positive and blessed side. You may have known Him only as the water of life; you do not know Him as the **CONSUMING FIRE**. You may have known Him as the gentle Lamb only; you need to also know Him as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Do you only know Him as the

loving Jesus? Let me also announce to you that He is **TERRIBLE**.

You need to know also that the same God who blesses, promises persecution and suffering.

“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.”

1 Peter 2:21.

You wake up every morning claiming all the blessing and prosperity that you know about but never claiming a single suffering, a perfect example which Christ left for us to follow in his steps. Your Christian experience remains shallow until you know this other side of God.

While there are records of men who walked with God so well that He called them friends, Abraham for example, yet, He is a terror, an angry lion when He notices evil. His face is against them that do evil. God is a friend of the righteous man but a terror to the evil worker. How are you preparing to meet this God? If you walk in righteousness, you are sure to meet him as the gentle lamb whose blood washed away your sins and qualified you into His presence and brought your name in the Lamb’s book of life; but if you persist in secret sins then be ready to meet a Terror; He is a consuming fire.

When Daniel knew that there was an ‘if not’ with his God, he made up his mind not to fear the fiery furnace nor the lions’ den. He knew that if he did not die a glorious death, he would die a shameful one. He knew that one-sided knowledge of God was not sufficient for this great journey to eternity.

I hear some sisters saying to this my all-round God, ‘**if He does not give me a husband next year, I will backslide**’. To whose disadvantage? When you backslide, you only depopulate heaven and populate hell. Daniel knew that he needed the balanced

knowledge of God to go to heaven. How many ignorant brethren have fallen by the way side because they met some “if not” on their journeys to heaven? Be ready for more of such experiences. This is a core course for every child of God.

“And Asa cried out to the LORD his God, and said, LORD, it is nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power; help us, O LORD our God, for we rest on You, and in Your name we go against this multitude. O LORD, You are our God; do not let man prevail against You. So the LORD struck the Ethiopians before Asa and Judah, and the Ethiopians fled.

Then Asa brought silver and gold from the treasuries of the house of the LORD and of the king’s house, and sent to Ben-Hadad king of Syria, who dwelt in Damascus, saying, “Let there be a treaty between you and me, as there was between my father and your father. Here, I have sent you silver and gold; come, break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel, so that he will withdraw from me. And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said to him: “Because you have relied on the king of Syria, and have not relied on the LORD your God, therefore the army of the king of Syria has escaped from your hand. Then Asa was angry with the seer, and put him in prison, for he was enraged at him because of this. And Asa oppressed some of the people at that time.

And in the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa became diseased in his feet, and his malady was severe; yet in his disease he did not seek the LORD, but the physicians. So Asa rested with his fathers; he died in the forty-first year of his reign.”

2 Chr. 14:11,12; 16:2, 3, 7, 10, 12,13.

King Asa's encounter with God was first on this popular side of blessing. God gave him victories in battles, gave him riches, made him popular and gave him a name. But then he decided to misbehave; his possessions dispossessed him of God. He began to depend on his money to make a way for himself. He provoked God to anger, and defied all warnings. Then he met a terrible angry Lion. God will be as gentle as a lamb with you until you touch sin. He will immediately change His gentility to hostility. Do you know this side of God?

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them.

And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.

Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents.

And likewise he who had received two gained two more also.

But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money.

After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’

His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I

have gained two more talents besides them.’

His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed.

And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.’

But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed.

So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest.

Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.

For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.

And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Matt 25:14-30.

This is the story of the three servants of the king. The first two who did what the master wanted met a gentle smiling Lamb, but that lazy one, who only wasted the master's resources – this waste is not that he used it on himself, but that he did not make profit, was the capital offence- met a terrible master. God has not left you without a talent. Waste here does not imply loss of capital. He brought back the capital intact.

But for not making profit he saw the other side of the Master. What are you doing with the talent in your hands?

Daniel said “... **‘If not’** I will not serve your image”. Daniel meant that his serving God was not conditional, his serving God did not depend on if God would supply all his needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus. He meant that whatever happened he had chosen heaven and would not exchange it for any thing; not even his life.

“And Jacob vowed a vow saying, if God will be with me and keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God.”

Gen 28:20.

This Elder also at this time knew only the God of *Daniel 3:17*-the deliverer, he did not know the “but if not” of verse 18. His knowledge was not balanced then. In his ignorance he even gave God conditions if he must serve Him. He began his relationship with God on “IF” whereas Daniel began with “but if not” – that no matter what happened, he was going to continue with God and would not compromise. Jacob's bargains were bread (food), raiment (clothes) and journey mercies (safety).

Dear friend, I do not know what conditions you have quietly set in your heart as your basis for serving God. The Lord could give you all these and even more, but He may also in His wisdom choose not to give you any of these and He will still be God.

Let us take a critical look at Jacob's list of conditionality. Is it food that would separate you from knowing and following hard after this God? **“Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God.”** May be you have judged God as a failure and have started working out your own ways of sustain-

ing yourself. You have possibly gone even to Egypt to fend for yourself, or you are just considering taking this dangerous step to Egypt. God said to Isaac, go not down to Egypt, sow in Gera and you would reap. When Isaac obeyed, he met God's blessing. But much more than that I wish you could ask help from God to follow on even if you sowed and did not reap.

Do you remember Elimelech, the husband of Naomi? Famine drove them from the land of God, Bethlehem of Judah into Moab, a land that its foundation was built on a very terrible fornication. Father fornicating with daughter, the kind that even non-church goes abhor. Is that a place for a child of God to go for help? I do not know your peculiar experiences. I pray that you do not behave like Jacob who would only come to God on his own terms.

His second condition was raiment. Even if Jacob could not do without food, he should be able to do without clothes. Sisters, are you like Jacob who cannot serve God because you lack changes of raiment? This only proves you are not a serious minded follower of Christ. What can you not leave behind in order to go with the Master? When you are experiencing this kind of situation, God may only be introducing you to the other side of Him. Your soul is more precious than raiment. I wish you could come to the point where you can make a bold declaration like brother Paul the Apostle that **'nothing can separate me from the love of Christ'**. Whereas for Jacob food, raiment, and insecurity, attacks etc can separate him from Christ, for Paul nothing. Are they going to different heavens?

Paul the Apostle gave a long list of the sufferings that he went through. In summary he described them as LIGHT affliction. Now see the details of what Paul called light affliction:

"From the Jews five times I re-

ceived forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

In weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." 2 Cor 11:24-27.

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory". 2 Cor 4:17.

Dear friends, would you refer to this long list of troubles as light affliction? If not, what then did Paul see as to regard the whole of these troubles as nothing to disturb his journey with God? Paul did not charge God with wrong for allowing him to go through any of these long lists of troubles. He simply knew that this is the other side of God. Do you suppose that Paul, the Apostle, went through all of these because of his sin? He that blesses also said we would have

persecution as a necessary addition to our blessings on this journey.

Those who came into faith only to collect the goodness and mercy at the end of every fellowship and nothing is taught about the other side, may not go far on this journey. They may backslide like the children of Israel who were too much in a hurry to get to the land of milk and honey. While God had it in His mind to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, the same God also took them through a long road full of all kinds of experiences. They got to some points on this journey and there was no water to drink, at other times there was no food and they cried and sent their hearts back to Egypt. The same God would give milk and honey; He may also at other times withhold these and instead cause severe thirst and hunger. Jesus then said,

"which of you intending to build a tower sitteth not down first and counteth the cost whether he have sufficient to finish it?"

Lk. 14:28.

While you are thinking of making a journey to heaven, Jesus' earnest advice to you is to sit down FIRST and think. This journey is not cheap. It has a price attached to it. In this case the price is the understanding of the other side of God. If you lack this understanding, you may meet too many dangerous surprises on the way. Sometimes you see this God whom you serve, blessing another Christian whom according to your rating is not even doing too well, while you who keep night vigils and hold crusades here and there may seem to be forgotten. Yet, God is God, and His thoughts are much higher than ours. He has many ways of dealing with His children. He has two sides. Get ready, pray hard and equip your heart for this experience. If you have narrowed God in your heart before, make adjustment for the other side of God.

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BIBLE TEACHER:
Bro. Gbile Akanni

Unbelief – An Evil Cover

"But He said unto them, 'why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?'" Mark 4:40.

Unbelief casts a darkness of blanket on my soul. It draws and siphons from my heart the promises. It erects artificial hurdles and abstractions on my path... it shouts at me "yours with God is finished. He has abandoned you. You can not see His face again". .

Unbelief melts the heart and demobilizes me from rising to the challenge of stepping into my call. It makes the place of communion a dread...

It sponsors dryness and drought into the soul; it threatens with imminent failure. Unbelief makes vision blurred and makes the heart shrink unto certain narrowness... unbelief makes a man to move in circles... moving round and round the same imaginary mountains. Unbelief makes a high mountain of a little mound. It emphasizes the height of the "Goliath" as giants and reduces the grace and gift of God in a man's life to the size of a "grasshopper"...

Whereas Faith sees giants as mere bread! Faith sees God as the God of all, which He actually is. It conceives great vision for invisible day..

Unbelief focuses on feelings and sights! It makes God, what to be felt, rather than the constant, everlasting personality who is omnipresent and omnipotent... Unbelief is the tyrant that ties your soul down unto utter impotence! It threatens my every step with gloom. It brings before my eyes, those casualties on the way; it re-echoes in my ears the lamentations of wounded ones. It lowers and tunes off the songs of feeble men like me, who through faith have overcome; it exaggerates the magnitudes of my helplessness while obscuring the strength, which is mine in Christ.

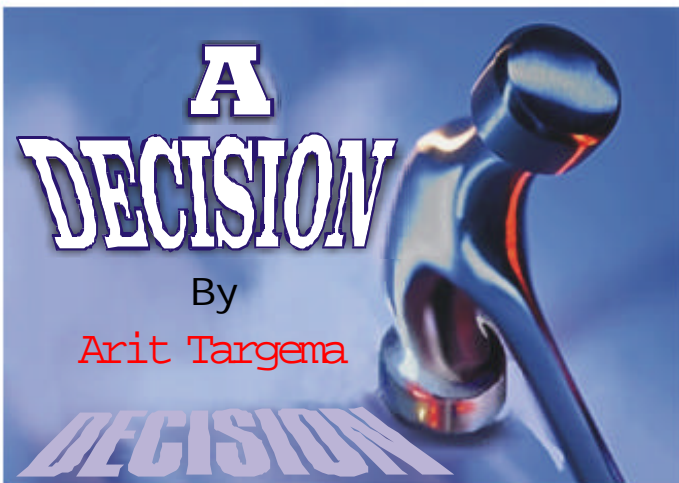
Unbelief comes to me again and again, in my pilgrimage. Just when I have come through a battle, it comes again, to sit me down in a corner of depression! When I thought I will never have to doubt my Father's love, unbelief comes in quietly... with questions, upon questions... why? How will it be? When and where will you get this? Who and who will stand by you? .. Unbelief will not allow me recall the past mercies and miracles... it will bluff off all my reviews of God's faithfulness in times past...

A man that cannot remember his history will not locate his present position and cannot see direction for his future. He finds himself in a vacuum; battered here and there with the winds of doubt and uncertainty... in this lies the strength of unbelief. It makes me forget the history of God's dealings and casts a mantle of darkness on my hope for the days to come... all, just to drag me into despair and depression! Unbelief is the tool in the hand of Satan, the devil. His ministry is to cover and make the glory of God unseen to saints... He makes me feel my Father is no more there.

Unbelief will not allow God do great works for a man and in a man. It will hinder the Spirit of grace from breaking forth... it is the net that traps men who otherwise would have been great for God... Unbelief cripples and makes a man bent over, not able to lift up himself... unbelief is evil! It is like spitting on the Father's face. It prolongs a 40-days' journey and makes it 40-dry years... unbelief and rebellions are friends! Sometimes it offers it self as the reason for reluctance to obey!

O Lord; I have seen the fiery dart of the enemy aimed at my soul. It is the fiery dart of unbelief... Grant me this day, the shield of faith to quench it as it comes... I feel the tenderness of my soul. Every dart inflicts a bleeding wound. I need a shield today! It seeks to isolate me! It seeks to obsess me with seeming problem. It consumes valuable time from me.

It makes me bear about a disquiet heart under my breast... it punches my joy and makes me dreary... Oh Lord, my heart slips back so easily unto unbelief. Imperceptible unbelief robs my soul of its calm. Anxiety about anything (even if it be God's work) is a reflection of unbelief. It only wastes me away...



As an undergraduate I used to watch from afar a Theatre Artist not with a special admiration though, she loved to wear a T-shirt with an inscription **BRAIN PLUS BEAUTY**. She normally felt very good in it but what drew my attention to her was that a combination of beauty and intelligence was enough to keep Jesus away from her. The story of Daniel has never stopped being interesting and challenging to me. The Bible spoke of him as a young man who met the qualification of king Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and was admitted into the King's Royal College. And the king's order was:

"...To bring to the palace some of the young men of Judah's royal family and other noble families, who had been brought to Babylon as captives. Select only strong, healthy, and good looking young men. Make sure they are well versed in every branch of learning, are gifted with knowledge and good sense, and have the poise needed to serve in the royal palace..." Dan. 1:3-4 NLT.

According to the order, the criteria, which Daniel met, were a young man from a royal family, very good looking, intelligent, and with a good poise. You will agree with me that he was a boy with a rare combination. Any young boy or girl who finds himself or herself with just one or two of these qualities belongs to a class. A high class and he or she moves with such an air of importance that says, "**mind how you handle me**", that you must be careful how you handle him or her. This air of importance is extended to God, the creator of all. The gift He has given us has made Him too small to deserve our honor. The question the Bible asks is:

"What do you have that you did not receive?" 1 Cor4: 7b.

Can you please stop for a while to think about what you have that you did not receive from none other than the Lord? So what have you been doing with Jesus? For most of the problem is not that you have not taken a step to receive Jesus, in

fact you have, but the few gifts the Lord bestowed on your life have become the blockage to your total surrender to Jesus. But Daniel was different, and God is lifting him for you to see, so that we will not be ignorant or have any excuse to give for withholding our lives from Jesus having a full control. Right from the initial stage of the chapter 1 of his life the scripture records;

"But Daniel made up his mind not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given them by the king..." Dan 1:8 NLT.

Family Background

Right early in His life Daniel had taken a decision to keep himself for the Lord. If it's in our days we will say he was born again. He did not stop at that but took a step forward not to defile himself even though he was faced with a difficult situation, yet a captive, a handsome and intelligent boy. As a captive, the fear of the master's fury was enough to make him bow his head in compromise. As a handsome and intelligent boy he would have sought to impress every body around rather than stand his ground of righteousness and be brought to shame. He threw all these seemingly genuine reasons abroad and preferred to honour the Lord. He has left a mark for us to follow. Several reasons the devil makes us to consider which have left us victims of spiritual failures come because you have not yet taken a decision, your mind is not yet made up to **'Live for Him who died and rose again for you.'** But now it's not too late. A decision now can save the impending failures of tomorrow. What to do as you take a decision now is to sit down to carefully check what are those things you have that make it difficult for you to obey God wherever you are. Could it be the consideration to live up to a family name is a very possible reason that you are not able to submit your self to the truth of the word of God that the spirit of God gives you a special privilege to hear and learn. As you take a step of obedience your heart shouts you down, asking what do you expect people will think about you as you take this foolish step? People around you, show care and concern, call you aside and try speaking sense into your head. They warn you do not follow this poor, confused and frustrated so called born again. Your parents also shout at your behaviour that is bringing disgrace to your family. All these might make you to draw back. But remember that even Jesus when he decided to take the cross and told it to His disciples, Peter did call him aside, out of concern and love, to warn Him against such a dangerous step He was going to take. But Jesus told him

"Get behind me, Satan! You are an offence to me.

For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.” Matt. 16:23(NKJV).

The care that emanates from the consideration of the things of men is not sponsored to you by the Spirit of God. And every friendship with the world or the things of men places you at enmity against God. So you have no excuse for your flamboyant lifestyle, lack of humility and submissiveness just because you want to please your family. Moses had a family name to live for, a throne to guard jealously and occupy in due time. But he

“Choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, for he looked to the reward.” Heb 11:25-26.

May be there is no reward that you are seeing with the eye of faith and expecting to receive on that great day, that is why the treasures of this world are holding sway on your heart and you cannot take a bold stand for Jesus. Note the scripture says, **“Not many nobles are called...”** (1Cor. 1:26), yet it does not mean that men and women with noble background are not called. It is just that they are not many. So if you have had the rare privilege of hearing a heavenly call why delay? Your refusal to heed the call of God unto missions because your mother cried that you would bring disgrace to the family is not genuine. Suppose you died after graduation, would it not have been a greater disgrace? Why live to bring disgrace to the name of Christ and grace to your family name? It’s not worth it.

Good-looks

How often people have expressed surprise and disappointment that you a beautiful girl or handsome young man belong to that born again group. This disappointment of the world has led to modernization of Christian standard. Children who have once received the “right to become children of God”, have lost that right because they sought to lower that standard to gain approval and acceptance by men. Jesus says of hypocrites who seek men’s approval;

“...Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward...”

Why waste your time receiving reward from men, to where will you take their reward? It would be foolish to allow the good gift of good looks, beauty or handsomeness, which the Lord graciously bestowed on you to be a reason for you to stray away from your savior and Lord. Women like Sarah



ARE
YOU JUST
BEAUTY
PLUS BRAIN
BUT NO
JESUS



and Rebecca, and Esther, the Bible specifically noted that they were beautiful. Yet their beauty did not give them a reason to dishonor God. Rather they gave God his rightful place in their lives and became submissive to all around them. So what are you doing with your good looks to bring glory to God? Have you made up your mind not to defile yourself by eating (making use of) the meat of this world; whatever be their names: call it make – up and make down, half-naked dressing, yielding your bodies as instruments of for-

nication or adultery, to pass exams or get a job or promotion? Have you taken such a decision? The daughters and sons of Satan are using their good looks to make several ready for external punishment in hell. What profit is yours bringing to the kingdom of God? For fear of loosing face do you keep quiet and allow that unbelieving man to kiss you, or fondle with you. Do you keep silent when that adulterous woman is making eye for you to lie with her? Why don’t you speak like Joseph did to Potiphar’s wife?

“How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God.” Gen. 39:9b.

Why will you not speak out and say, “I am a child of God I cannot afford to condescend to this level of filth and sin against my Father.” Why do you keep quiet to save your face until you lose your birthright? The devil has had enough victories, take a decision today before the Lord and plead with Him for mercy upon your life. He will certainly pardon and receive you. He will much more show you the true beauty: His word says:

“Let your beauty be the hidden person of the heart, the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God”. 1 Pet 3:4.

God will take time to teach you by His spirit the way into it as He sees your sincere readiness to please Him with your life.

Intelligence

Ability to reason rightly and analyze things well is another possession that could dispossess some young men and women of heavenly inheritance. Whenever the truth of God’s word comes during Bible studies or personal quiet times, our intelligence wakes up to analyze and put in perspective what we hear such that the spirit of the word is lost and an opportunity to possess the life of Christ is lost.

God gave whatever intelligence you have to profit your life. He did not give it so that it can kill you, but rather that the glory of God might burst forth out of it and men will

see it and give praise to God. Have you allowed praise to God? Daniel did, king Nebuchadnezer a heathen king worshiped God, because of Daniel's intelligence. Has yours puffed you up to become so proud that you consider it a shame or being a "Jew boy" to follow the instructions of God? Have you become so intelligent that the word of God cannot benefit your life because you will argue about every truth that you are taught until the spirit of God passes you by? Paul was such an intelligent young man before his conversion; his mind was so sharp he could manipulate the existing laws of the land to cut off the heads of those who called on the name of the Lord Jesus. To obtain permit to travel around and deal with (persecute) Christians everywhere they ran to hide. But when God's mercy appeared to him, he bowed and could only ask:

"My Lord what would you want me to do? Acts 9:6.

From then onward his intelligence was laid down at the feet of Jesus. You have been taught to die to yourself, to deny yourself and pick-up your cross to follow Jesus, but your reasoning has denied you enjoying this truth ever since, will you lay it at the feet of the Lord and decide to follow him anyhow and anywhere he leads you? Do not delay.

Poise

The boldness and ability to face anybody or crowd may be another thorn that might choke a Christian to death. You know you possess that quiet confidence and dignity to stand before people to speak. What a treasure to face everyone around you with the gospel of repentance. To pray for anybody anywhere. Daniel used his poise when king Nebuchadnezer rose to kill together with their families, these wise men that could not interpret his dream, to deliver all those men from death as he confidently approached the king. Do not let this gift God has bestowed on you to be spent only on political rallies, only for entertainment and for other frivolous activities that have not eternal consequences.

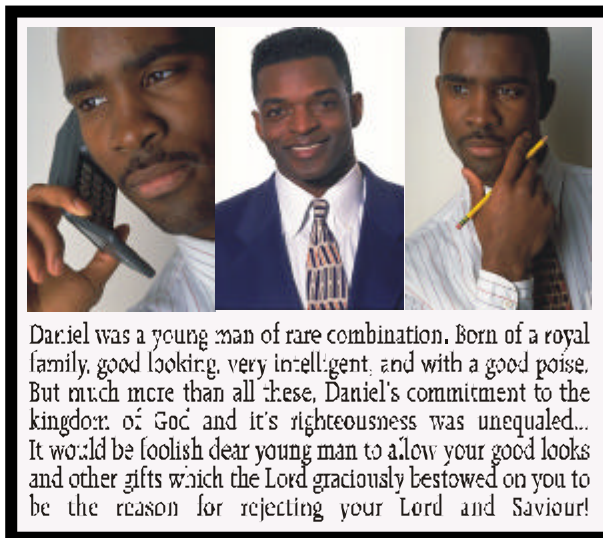
Captivity

Daniel was in captivity despite all these good qualities of his. Yet this was a strong factor, which could have stifled his faith, and snuffed out all the standard of life God had taught him before now. But Daniel had made up his mind not to defile himself.

He simply took courage and approached the chief Eunuch with his request. God backed him up and he was able to maintain his standard and integrity before God. Yours may simply be that you do not have the privilege most people around you do. This has become a limiting factor for your spiritual growth, as you cannot arise with boldness to obey the truth of God's word that you have been taught. Fear of being an outcast has overwhelmed you and you have hidden your standard of Christian life. Before long you discover that you have quenched the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit in your heart and you are getting along well with the crowd. You are unfortunate. God warns that none of us should be-

come profane like Esau who for one morsel of food sold his birthright and was rejected by God. (*Heb.12: 16-17*).

When you quietly started abandoning your quiet times with God, for fear that your roommates will mock at you. You endured the stench of cigarette smoking and strong drinks so as to feel a sense of belonging with friends, you never planned to become a smoker like them but what has happened now? You are visiting their girlfriends and boyfriends with them; you did



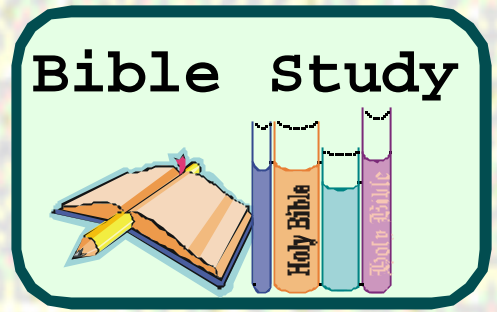
Daniel was a young man of rare combination. Born of a royal family, good looking, very intelligent, and with a good poise. But much more than all these, Daniel's commitment to the kingdom of God and it's righteousness was unequalled... It would be foolish dear young man to allow your good looks and other gifts which the Lord graciously bestowed on you to be the reason for rejecting your Lord and Saviour!

not dream that lust would swallow you up to the extent of keeping sin partners called a civilized name of boyfriend/girlfriend. But today you have committed sin not once or twice with them. **"A little leaven leavens the whole lump."** You have forgotten this. But the Lord is calling on you to arise from this point.

Beauty, intelligence and noble background are not tickets to take you outside the will of God. Every good and perfect gift comes from God and He gives it to achieve His pleasure for your life. Do not frustrate this purpose. All you are, and have must bring profit unto the kingdom of God if your life will have a sense of fulfillment. If your life has already strayed in disobedience and lacks submissiveness to His will, God has lifted Daniel's life for you and I to learn from and be corrected, do not fail to heed this challenge. God wants your life like His to bring blessings to several others who are less privileged to learn what you are opportuned to be exposed to. As you surrender, the Lord will help you to keep step with His ways.



Ministering THE WORD Effectively



God's major instrument for affecting men (apart from the life of the minister) still remains His word. This inevitably introduces two dimensions of labour that whosoever is called of God must pursue in order to make a foolproof of his calling. First, the minister by definite life experiences must know the Word (as we studied in the last edition), and secondly must be able to minister the Word effectively. This second part, we will here study under two broad sections: (A) Receiving the Word, and (B) Imparting the Word.

Receiving the Word

As ministers of God's Word, we have the need of receiving divine oracles each time we stand on the pulpit to confront men. This need leads many unto much study, rigorous researches; many of us maintain fat libraries of books and great sermons of great preachers forgone. Some claim messages of other men and just deliver as a parcel... Saturday nights and early Sunday mornings are usually tedious for several pastors and teachers as they approach the "D-day and the T-time" of sermons delivery.

Many of us have several experiences in this ... Homiletics and "making of a sermon" are inevitable courses in theological institutions... we need to bow before the Lord again at this moment; to the Great Teacher of all times; the Great Pastor and Bishop of our souls, who taught men continuously without break for three days "as one having authority and not as the scribes" - even Jesus Christ, the pattern Servant and Minister - to show us what we need to do to touch and receive divine bread from the table of presence, to break before the hungry multitude sitting eagerly on bare grass...

Looking for these grasses to turn to grace and their wobbling knees strengthened to run the heavenly race. They come eagerly to hear the "Word of the Lord" and the "Word from the Lord" each time ... may we not just turn them away to go fend for themselves in the towns and cities of worldliness because "we ourselves are here in a desert place" desti-

tute of fresh, divine, potent and fiery unction from above. As we consider few things here, I implore you to pray and look up unto God for an impartation of divine wisdom on your life in Jesus' name.

1. REVELATION KNOWLEDGE

i. What is revelational knowledge? How does it differ from native, cumulative experiential knowledge? *Gal 1:11-12*

ii. Describe briefly in what various forms you have encountered a revelation of God's Word before.

A revelation of God's Word is like the breaking forth of the eggshell, that the live chick may emerge and fly out. It is like cracking the hard shells of the Bible letters, so that inner yoke, fresh and powerful may come forth, into our spirits. It is seeing into what is normally hidden away from the ordinary casual reader.

iii. What is its nature? What must we look for in any revelational knowledge of God's Word, in order to rely on it?

**BALANCE; WHOLESOMENESS;
CONFORMITY WITH THE WHOLE
PURPOSE AND COUNSEL OF SCRIPTURE;
RELEVANT APPLICABILITY;
GOD'S GLORIFICATION;
EDIFICATION OF BELIEVERS.**

"...a light (an insight; an opened eye) that shineth in a dark place, until the day is dawn, and the day star arise in your heart." 2 Peter 1:19-21.

Every true revelation of God's Word must impart Christ and conform us to the same image of Christ our Lord in a continuous, growing manner.

2. FINDING THE WORD FOR MINISTRY

Jer. 15:16, Prov. 4:20-22.

i. We must seek the Word out of all the volumes of contrasting scriptures: *Mark 4:21-25.*

The scriptures have been used (by God) to preserve, conserve and keep His Word, such that it does not spill and splash here and there, and thereby get wasted. God Himself is willing to make manifest His Word unto us:

What did you discover in *Mark 4:22-25* and *Isa 28:9-10*?

ii. Ask, seek, and knock on each Scripture you encounter, in prayer until the inner yoke breaks forth unto you. *Luke 11:9-13*.

iii. Turn inward to the Teacher and Revealer within- the Holy Spirit. *1John2: 27, Jn14:22b, 16:13, 1Cor2:10-14, 2 Cor3:15-18*.

This turning must be moment by moment. True revelation can only be kept in and with the spirit. Just like the snail withdraws into its own shell once the atmosphere is not familiar and conducive, so the Word withdraws back into the shell once it is taken out of the spirit - realm.

iv. Trap the Word with your candle (spirit) and blow on it until it becomes aglow with flames unquenchable.

Prov.20: 27, 4:20-26, 22:1-7.

(a) Meditate on it gathering all your thoughts around it, until your whole soul is overwhelmed and aflame. Reserve your thoughts always for the Word to fly upon. *Matt.6: 19, 25; Phil.4: 6-9.*

(b) Put it into action: practice it before preaching it. *Acts 1:1, Luke1:1-4; 1John 1:1-2.*

(c) Make notes and build personal altars around God's Word and dealing with you.

Gen.14:18, 1 Sam.7: 12, Heb2: 2.

We need to come again and again to the Lord for the revelation of His Word, so our barn may be full of bread and our quiver full of arrows. Read *Matt13: 52*.

Imparting The WORD

The essence of being a minister of the WORD is actually to serve men with the divine oracles, and administer it (as a nurse does the drugs to the patients) until it produces desired heavenly result in their lives.

A ministry of the WORD cannot be said to be "fait - a compli" until it has brought a change in lives, a build -up in character and conformity to the image of the Master Jesus. In this aspect, we shall explore practical ways of holding forth God's Word to men either as individuals or in congregations for effectiveness. May the LORD grant each of us His counsel in Jesus' Name (Amen).

1. UNCTION AND UTTERANCE

i. What is unction? What is utterance? When does an unction become utterance?

ii. How do we secure utterance? What are the characteristics of a conducive atmosphere for free utterance in a meeting?

(a) **OPEN DOORS OF MEN'S HEARTS**

TOWARDS THE MINISTER.

(b) **FAITH IN THE HEART.**

(c) **SPIRITUAL WORSHIP.**

(d) **PRAYERFULNESS.**

Why do we create this necessary condition before sowing our seeds? *Hos. 10:12; Jer.4:3*. What does it mean to sow among thorns, stony grounds and wayside grounds? *Luke 8:4-16*.

iii. What are the hindrances to divine utterance?

How can one lose utterance during a sermon or message? What is your experience in this...? Is there any way out?

iv. What is the burden of the WORD? How can it be usefully discharged?

2. SERMON MAKING AND DELIVERY

i. What are the parts of an effective sermon outline?

What about making notes and extempore preaching?

What is the role of the Holy Spirit in making a sermon? *Isa.50: 4-7*.

ii. What steps must we take unto effective sermon delivery?

1 Cor.2:1-7, 12-13, 1Thess.2:3-8

* **PREPARE YOURSELF; HOW?**

* **PREPARE THE AUDIENCE; HOW?**

* **MANAGE YOUR EMOTION AS NECESSARY... HOW?**

* **BE FOCUSED; BE PLAIN, BE SIMPLE;**

BE DIRECT; BE ILLUSTRATIVE;

* **BE CONFRONTATIONAL WHEN NECESSARY;**

* **BE AUDIBLY CLEAR; BE GRAVE! BE URGENT; BE SERIOUS.** *Tit. 2:7-8*

iii. What are the things to avoid on pulpits? *2Tim. 2:23 - 26*

(a) **FOOLISH JESTINGS AND GISTINGS.**

(b) **FABLES AND UNFOUNDED TESTIMONIES.**

(c) **IMPOSITION AND INTIMIDATION.**

(d) **VAIN BABBLINGS AND SLANGS.**

What we are handling is divine. It is eternal, it is grave. Ministers must not act like cowboys.

iv. When should a message stop? How do we drive "home" and "in" the nail?

3. THE ALTAR CALL

i. What is an altar call? What purpose does it serve?

ii. What are the basic ingredients of an effective altar call?

(a) **Pointed** (b) **Active** (c) **Conclusive**

(d) **Not beggarly!** (e) **It is always instructive...**

Examine some altar calls in the Scriptures.

Acts 2:38 - 40; Matt.3: 7-12

4 . MONITORING A MESSAGE

We are stewards of the mysteries God has graciously given to us. We must therefore be ready to give account of every bit of it (1Cor.4:1-2). Jesus told the disciples: "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost". What a solemn injunction to every man who is in the ministry of God's Word.

- i. How can we monitor a message lest men vomit it?
Prov. 25:16, 27.
- ii. What does it mean to gather up the fragments of a message? What are the fragments by the way?
- iii. What does the "baskets" stand for?.

THE MINISTERING TEAM (Continued From Page 15)

donkeys, camels, mules; vast supplies of food. Each mobilized food for himself from his brethren.

"And there they were with David three days, eating and drinking: for their brethren had prepared for them."

I see a team who might have caused even God to wonder at their commitment and dedication. For even though the Word of God says "**Nobody goes to war at his own expense**"; these ones, because of the overwhelming singular purpose on each of their hearts went to war at their own cost. It would look as if the weapon of battle was also a personal undertaking of each member. They were not going to encumber David with any personal demand but to make him king.

"All these men came in battle array to Hebron..."
1Chr 12:38a(New Living Translation).

"These also are the chiefs of the mighty men whom David had, who strengthened themselves with him."

It was interesting to see what mobilized them so entirely. Yet, it was certainly not David or anything about him; not even an inner hope of any reward to when he would be king. Humanly speaking it was too risky to identify with David at this time. David was in hiding because of Saul and anybody Saul learnt aided David in a little way paid with his life. There was more hope for death sticking with David that time than reward. What mobilized each and every one of them was the personal response to the Word of God concerning Israel.

"These also were the chiefs of the mighty men whom David had who strengthened themselves with him in the kingdom, and with all Israel to make him king, according to the word of the Lord concerning Israel."

The Word and will of God concerning Israel drew these mighty men. More than David as a person, they saw

5 . PROBLEMS OF IMPARTING GOD'S WORD

- i. Lack of utterance.
- ii. Lack of receptivity and openness.
- iii. Clumsiness on the part of the minister.
...Too much to say within too little time.
...Scattered thoughts.
- iv. Planlessness and ambition.
- v. Unstable congregation.

What are the ways to tackle these problems?

Beloved, we must now pray to the LORD of the harvest to teach us and grant us the anointing of the Holy Spirit in this crucial aspect of our services in the vineyard. We commend you to the Lord Himself, our Master, to lead you further into an effective ministry.

Bow your heart at this point and pray.

the will of God concerning Israel. They were only keen on David because David was the will of God for Israel. It was not a small vision of a hero that captured their hearts. They were neither hero-worshippers nor empty sycophants but people deeply committed to the Word and will of God for the land of Israel. When they followed David at the risk of their lives it was because of the embodiment of God's vision David stood for. When they submitted their personal potentials of becoming something by themselves, and yielded all their capabilities and abilities to making David king, they were on the final note submitting to God Himself. This must be the highest binding and driving force for the individuals of a team and the team itself. The vision of what God is doing – it does not matter yet who must be at the center of it – is the basis of every work. One must begin to understand the overwhelming purpose of God for his life in order to fit into what God is doing and to understand the Word of God for such a purpose.

The kingship of Jesus, even though already concluded and no longer debatable and unchangeable, is under great and keen contest. Anywhere and at any point and at any time that God is putting together a team, it is primarily to effect the kingship of Jesus over His enemy and those under the enemy's control. He must be king in the hearts of men. God is committed to raising a people who have seen this great vision, who must be bounded and bundled together for life and with their lives to enthrone Jesus as king in this generation. Small and individualistic interest for those who have heard the Word of God must give way for selfless, dedicated and sacrificial service to make Jesus king in the nations. Is this the sole reason for your labour? Then go on the Lord will sustain you. And you who are labouring for self-interest, remember Samson and change your ways