

The journey into the wealthy place

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Each moment of my life is filled with God's grace, mercies, and love. I cannot help but confess God's sovereignty, Lordship and favour upon me and my family each day.

To see a person picked from a dunghill and set on a table with the princes is only by the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in my eyes. I will forever remain grateful to Jehovah, the Almighty God who saved my soul and has raised me up from the dunghill.

God will surely bless my family members who understand God's call upon me. They made the atmosphere at home both conducive and comfortable for me to concentrate and have my quiet time and also do this writing.

I will never forget those times they would remind me, mummy, it is time for your quiet time.

To many others who encouraged me, gave counsels and even corrections at intervals. I say you will never lose your bountiful rewards from God.

To God be the glory.

INTRODUCTION

Dear fellow believers in Christ, how has it been with you? By this I mean how far are you progressing in your Christian life, which is your journey to the wealthy place? Some believers have even forgotten that they are on a journey, that they are pilgrims on this earth, that their Christian life is a journey. Yes, it is a journey, for it has a starting point and a destination as well.

So, how are you getting on in your journey to the wealthy place? To the place of abundant life in Christ. Are you living with eternity in view? Are you living as if in this life only we have hope in Christ? If so, then we are of all men most miserable (1Corinthians 15:19) The truth is that our Christian journey goes beyond this present life into eternity.

Has your own journey been hectic and dreary? Full of struggles and turmoil? Have things turned upside down beyond every human control? Do you feel like giving up your Christian faith? Are you frustrated already?

I have good news for you – that is, that if you persevere and fix your eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith, you will enter into the abundance of God's life that you have never known before. Also, remember you are still on a journey and have not reached your destination, therefore you should keep moving.

A passenger in transit does not stop midway his journey nor cease to move on his journey simply because the roads are bad or because it is raining or for whatever reasons. The person is determined to get to his destination and fulfil whatever obligation or assignment he has to accomplish, no matter the pains, difficulties and uncomfortable experiences he might have on the way.

Naturally, we deem it fit to endure with great hope and expectations or rather, overlook when for instance our promotion in the office is delayed by our employers. We join the queue when there is much traffic, for we can't fly over it. In the hospital, we wait patiently for the doctor to diagnose us very well and proper medications given.

Now, how be it that we refuse to endure afflictions, persecutions, trials, chastisement and of course hard times, with great hope too, when it comes to

our Christian journey! This is more especially when we know that these things are allowed by God for our ultimate maturity.

When you choose to learn some lessons from your mistakes and keep your gaze on the Master, those lessons you glean from the errors of your past could serve as a stepping stone unto your climbing greater heights in the Lord. The issue is: will you be patient enough to learn what the Lord may be teaching you from your past mistakes. To enter into the fullness of God's plans for you, there is a price to pay. This price may include being patient – waiting and doing it with joy. This is food for thought. He that has ears should listen to what the Spirit of God is saying to believers at this time of the end.

The truth is that we all want the fulfilment of God's promises in our lives but refrain from the sacrifices required! For instance, how would you explain this – you are asking and believing God for material blessings and increase, then all of a sudden you receive a letter from your director in the office saying that you have been fired! What a paradox! Isn't it? It does not look like what a good God will permit to befall His child, one may say. But then, on our journey to the wealthy land, such instruments of purging (afflictions, trials, disappointment) are bound to come. They are "necessary evils" that the Holy Spirit takes a believer through, to season and prove him or her, so as to make them ready for the Master's use.

As we continue on our journey into the wealthy place, we should keep this truth deep down our hearts – that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28) When you look beyond the cross, you will see the joy.

For in-depth revelation, proper understanding and a deeper relationship with God, you may have to pause now and ask the Holy Spirit to take you through the pages of this book by Himself.

God bless you

NgoziAnyora
January 2016

ONE

WE ARE ALL ON A JOURNEY

A journey is an act of travelling from one place to another, especially when they are far apart. It can be long or short, but regular. A journey can be forward or backward, upward or downward, progressive or retrogressive or even circular.

Commencement of the Christian journey

The true journey of a believer begins when he surrenders himself to the Lord and receives Christ into his life as his personal Lord and Saviour. From that moment, this person has started a new journey, a journey to the wealthy place, even though he may not be quite aware of that.

So, brethren, we are all on a journey. The Christian life is a journey! A journey from death to life, from darkness to Light, from destruction to restoration! A journey from hell to Heaven. A journey from miserable place to a wealthy place!

Yes, we are all on a journey, this journey is from condemnation to commendation. A journey from Christlessness to Christlikeness, which is our promised land, the wealthy place.

Your Christian life is progressive, upward, forward when you are growing in the things of the spirit and are determined to follow the way of God. When you make up your mind to obey the word of God and follow the voice of His Spirit in all areas of your life, then you are making a progressive, forward journey into the wealthy place.

Backward, downward journey occurs when one lives his or her life outside the will of God. When a Christian does not obey both the word and the voice of the Lord, then that person's journey is retrogressive. There is no spiritual growth.

The circular type of journey is even the worst type of Christian journey because the person appears to be making some movements in life but it is neither progressive nor retrogressive.

The person is just rotating round and round a limited spot. The scripture described the person this way:

“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou were cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth” (Revelation 3:15 – 16)

So the Christian making a circular journey is a lukewarm believer. This spiritual condition calls for immediate change towards a life of total commitment to God by giving heed to God’s word and voice.

May I remark at this point that anyone who has not yielded his will completely to the Lord, Jesus Christ and is still living his life as he chooses has no place in this journey yet.

For you to benefit greatly from the message of this book, I advise that you stop at this early stage of reading and confess your sins to the Lord Jesus and invite Him into your life as your personal Lord and Saviour – that is if you have not done that already.

Reconcile with your Maker, then every other of His plans for you on this journey to the wealthy place shall be revealed. He, God will then lead you by His Spirit along the path of life and give you proper direction to the wealthy place. When you do this, you have then started on your journey too – to the wealthy place.

What is the wealthy place?

You may be pondering in your heart, “What is this wealthy place to which we are going?” It is the place of the commonwealth of Israel, (Ephesians 2:12) where God has stored His great wealth for us all.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all SPIRITUAL blessings in heavenly places in Christ”. (Ephesians 1:3)

So, what is the wealthy place? It is a place of divinely exalted life where we enter into our inheritance in Christ, as sons and daughters of the Most High God. It is a place of spiritual maturity where we become like Christ Himself.

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive, But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Ephesians 4:13 – 15)

At that realm, we become so close and intimate with the Lord Jesus that we become inseparable from Him. That is the realm of union with Christ. It is those who come here that receive the fullness of all that God has promised His children in this present life – both spiritual and material. Such people will also reign with Christ in the new world to come.

The wealthy place is a place of inexpressible intimacy with God. A place in His presence where God allows one to experience and share the deepest heart of Him. It is the place of glorious spiritual rest where our Shepherd makes us to lie down in green pastures and enjoy His rest, for in this life, there remaineth a rest for His people (Hebrews 4:9-11). Come, let us go into the wealthy place, for a Christian is not yet complete until he has come into this place of fullness of the wealth of Christ.

Simply put, the wealthy place is the Inner Court. All along, we have been busy with the religious sacrifices and activities of the Outer Court. We have also been restless in the ever – busy place of the outer court. Now, God wants us to get inside! Time has come for us to get into the Inner Court where the glory of God’s presence is waiting to cover our life and make us perfect. It is there, in the Inner Court, in the most Holy place, that God is waiting to make us become like His Son, Jesus. That is the place we are called to come. This is the journey we are making – to the wealthy place.

Are you ready? Are you ready to follow the Holy Spirit as He leads you on this spiritual journey of life? Are you willing to submit to His leadership over your life? This journey is only for those who are willing and obedient. The choice is ours to make.

Choose ye between life and death.

It is recorded in the book of Deuteronomy chapter 30 verse 15;

“See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil”.

Beloved, we have the free will to choose either life or death. The choice is consciously made, for when we choose to keep the commandments (word) of God and walk in His ways, we shall have life and good things. When we persevere and make progress with the Lord in this journey, the end result is life. On the contrary, when we retrogress in our walk with the Lord, probably because of various distractions, worldly pleasure, we may likely meet evil and even death in the end.

Some people, even Christians, have opted to go back to their own gods (self – will) because they feel that life is hard on them. They think God is too slow to answer their prayers or that He has totally forsaken them. They forget the truth in the word that God has said He will never leave thee nor forsake thee (Hebrews 13:5) These people have forsaken their first love. Their love for Christ and things of God has gone cold; and we know how difficult it is to restore a backslidden Christian. For this reason, we have been warned in the scripture;

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost; And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame” (Hebrews 6:4 -6)

The end of such a person is usually tragic. The Lord Jesus Christ made it clear to us in Luke 9:62;

“No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God”

This place says, it is either we keep our hands steadily on the plough and move forward, or we pull our hands from the plough and look backward. There is no “on the fence” Christian. It is either you are hot or cold. It is either you are a believer or not. It is either we are in or out. The choice is entirely ours to make. No one else can make the decision for us that is why God would hold us responsible for what happens to our souls at last, because the choice is made by us!

Beloved, may I ask you at this stage, what happened to the zeal with which you started the Christian journey at first? The zeal and the boldness which enabled you to denounce and reject sin? What has happened to it? Has worldliness, self

– will, carnality taken your zeal away? Do you still follow the steps of the Master? Do you truly live with eternity in view?

The Apostle Paul alerted and admonished the Galatians with these words;

“Are you so foolish? Having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (3:3).

Brethren, perseverance is needed on the journey, therefore you must persevere to have life.

Have the desire to succeed

As I mentioned earlier, this journey could be forward or backward. When a believer is making a forward movement, he is progressing. In other words, he is climbing the different steps on the spiritual ladder towards the wealthy place. He is drawing nearer and nearer to God each day of his life. He is following the leading of the Holy Spirit. This soul is really prospering (3 John: 2)

A person on a progressive journey is ever determined, committed and optimistic. He is also willing to bear any cost it will take to get to his destination.

Yes, we know quite alright that a good success is from God, but determination is one of the basic requirements for that success. Could you imagine a student who has examinations to write saying, “I will make it this time around”, yet he is not making serious efforts at his studies! We all know that God is always there for us, but He will not come down to read for that student. That is not to say that we are saved by our works. We are saved by grace, but grace is not laziness.

In our covenant relationship with the Lord, we have our own responsibility and God has His own part to play in the fulfilment of that covenant. God has released His grace to us,

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men” (Titus 2:11).

He has given us His ability which works in us to make the impossible situation possible. The point is that there must be a desire, hunger, determination and of course commitment to the Lord in order for us to succeed.

You see, God does not force Himself on anyone. The choice to continue or to withdraw from this journey is ours to make. I will advise you to continue no matter the challenges on the way, until you enter into the Promised Land.

TWO

DISTRACTIONS ARE INEVITABLE

Brethren, as we keep moving on this journey into the wealthy place, distractions are bound to come. Many things come our way to take us away from God. Some of these distractions are caused by ourselves and some are allowed by God to test the level of our commitment and intimacy with Him. (See Deuteronomy 8: 2 – 3)

So, anyone on this journey should expect distractions, by way of temptations, pressures, and adverse circumstances to come his way. It is normal for such things to come, to test our resolve for the Lord and for the journey. The Lord, Jesus Christ told us in the book of Mark chapter 4, that people who have stony hearts do not allow the word of God have root in them. These people easily get offended when affliction or persecution arise because of the word they heard.

They become easily distracted from the journey.

Some believers are also easily distracted by pleasures of life. When things ‘go rosy’ for them, they get caught up planning, arranging and enjoying their newly acquired wealth that they have less time to fellowship with the Lord. They set out to acquire more and more riches at the expense of their soul. Riches, if kept in its proper place is used to serve God but when it starts to drift us from the source of that blessing, it becomes a problem.

Whichever way it comes, we should hold onto the faith we have in Christ, so that despite all odds, all contrary situations and circumstances, we should continue in total obedience to God’s will. That is how to be successful in this journey – trusting God and holding on to His will (word) at all times.

A time came in my life when I was faced with so much distractions that almost drifted me from the Lord. In answer to my heart cry, the Lord said this to me;

“The best way out of distractions, the only way to overcome them is to keep focused on Him and move forward with Him”.

To overcome distractions, we should continually (daily) feed our spirit with the word of God, get lost in what God is working out in our lives, hand our circumstances over to the Lord and keep looking unto Him. We have to get to a certain level in our walk with God when we decide that whether our circumstances are good or bad, we will continue to follow Him. The more connected we get with the Lord through fellowshiping with His Spirit and studying the word and the more concentrated we get into God's own will and ways, the less of distractions we see.

What fare do we pay?

The token fare to pay on this Journey is total obedience, total yieldedness and absolute submission to the will of God.

This is the little bit we are required to pay. Few years ago, the Lord asked me to resign from my secular job and called me into full time ministry work. Initially, I struggled with this instruction. I asked the Lord questions upon questions regarding our feeding, accommodation, health and general welfare. Those days we enjoyed free medical care and lived in the staff quarters. So I asked the Lord 'how would the medical bills and house rent especially be paid since there is no monthly salary again? He said something to me which turned my eyes completely to Him. The Lord asked me, 'which one do you prefer? Falling sick and enjoying free medical care or receiving and enjoying the Lord's divine health? It is life for you to enjoy the Lord's divine health. To be candid, God does supply all our needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)

The truth is that the real price to cover our journey from our present position to the position where God wants us to be, has been paid by the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. I think the only aspect left for us is to align our own will and plans to that of God, believe and obey His word, follow Him patiently and watch Him do what He knows how to do best, which is to beautify and perfect our lives.

As we keep walking with the Lord in obedience, we are simply telling Him that we accept and appreciate Him for the finished work which He did on the cross for us.

Don't join mid – way believers

There is this popular song I know, which goes like this;

“Until I see Jesus, until I see my Lord, I will never, never stop my journey half way, Halleluyah until I see Jesus”.

This is actually a song of commitment to follow the Lord till the last day and of course into eternity. But we all know that most of the time, this song is easier sung than done. In our sober moments, we sing and promise God of our everlasting love for Him, we pledge our loyalty to Him and how we would follow Him till the end of our lives. Ironically, we forget all that so soon when problems come our way! We often end up lamenting “but why me, Oh God?” Brethren, the truth is that no one should settle and relax at any level of ones Christian journey nor even claim to have attained it, when he has not got to his final destination.

The Apostle Paul remarked in the book of Philippians Chapter 3:

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before. I press toward the mark for the prize of high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (vs 13 – 14)

Therefore, it is very dangerous to stop over for whatever reason, on this journey to the wealthy place. When we stop midway, our visions for heaven are lost, our garments are defiled and our faith is compromised.

For this, Our Lord Jesus Christ told us in Luke 14:25-28 to count the cost of following Him. In other words, we should consider what it takes to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ first before embarking on the journey.

Are you willing to deny yourself of your worldly pursuits, titles, ambition, and pleasure? Are you ready to take up your cross and follow Jesus daily? Are you also going to forsake all that you have, place your relationship and love for Him above all others? Worthy to note is that this condition is not optional as long as we have decided to come under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

The truth is that if you are truly hungry for Jesus and willing to inherit eternal life, He will always help keep you on the right track. The ministry of the Holy Spirit does this for us whenever we ask for His help.

You remember that Abraham stopped midway in Haran. He dwelt, relaxed and tried to establish there, but there was not the Promised Land! And because it was not the land of promise, there was no total fulfillment of the promises of

God for him there. God's promises are not fulfilled when the journey is still halfway. The crown of glory is for the overcomers who get to the end of their journey. No athlete, no matter how popular he is, wins a trophy for stopping a race midway. The trophy remains for only those who have run the race well and have completed their course. It is for the overcomers! (See Revelation 12:11)

The Israelites also stopped midway at Shittim. There, they compromised by committing whoredom, complained and murmured against God and they died in their thousands. (Numbers 25:1-9). It is dangerous to embark on a journey unaccomplished. We should hold firmly on the Lord Jesus Christ and at the end be able to echo the words of Paul in 2nd Timothy 4:7-8 which read,

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing”.

Therefore, let us persevere to run this race till the end so that we could receive our full reward from the king of glory. Amen.

On which road are you?

It becomes very imperative to stop and ask ourselves, ‘on which road am I plying? Which way am I truly taking towards eternity? As Christians we are faced with two roads – The Broad way and the Narrow way (Matthew 7: 13 – 14).

THE BROAD WAY: The broad way is the way that seems good to man but the end is destruction. (Proverbs 14:12) It is the way of sin, self-will, worldly pleasures, and carnality. The patronizers of this way are filled with the spirit of “let us alone, I know what to do” (Exodus 14:12). The world system operates on the broad way.

The broad way appears attractive but it leads to death. The Spirit of God is not on this road. The users take their decisions, make plans, and do things independent of God. Most of their decisions are self – centered. The Lord warned us that the services of those on this road will not be accepted nor rewarded. Those on this broad way will be rejected by the Lord on the last day. They served the Lord quite alright but not according to the will of God! And so the Lord said of them on the last day.

“I never knew you, depart from me you that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:21 – 23)

You seriously need to review where the road you are on right now is leading to. Will that road lead you to heaven or will it end you up in hell? The way we speak, the motive behind our actions, our conduct, all these matter a lot as we make our journey into the wealthy place. Perhaps, you are not sure on which road you are, then turn to the Holy Spirit and sincerely ask Him to reveal to you your spiritual position with the Lord.

If in the dream He shows you are on an express road driving without control for instance, it is an indication that you are on the broad road. Then repent of whatever secret sin or unholy lifestyle you have been living and turn wholly to Jesus to lead you into the proper way, which is the narrow way.

THE NARROW WAY: The narrow way is the way of the cross. It is the way of denial of self. It is the way of Calvary. The narrow way is the way of death – death to self, death to worldly pleasures and its system of operation. It is the way of Christlikeness. This way is so narrow that it does not appear attractive to ordinary human eyes, but it is the way to heaven. Our Lord and Master walked on this road and He has asked us to walk on it too. It is the way of discipleship. It is the path of life (Psalm 16:11)

The narrow way is full of trials, persecutions, afflictions but Jesus delivers the users out of all afflictions and leads them to heaven at the end. Jesus Christ is not on the broad way but on the narrow way. Only few people find this way because it is strait and narrow. You can choose to be one of the few who find the narrow way that leads to life.

“Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:14)

Most Christians are not patient to tread this way. They start off their journey with zeal and fervency to follow the Lord but when there arises temptations or trials as a result of the word they have heard, they fall away.

Those who still harbour one secret sin or another cannot be on this road. Those full of pride, greed, envy, bitterness, jealousy, and unforgiveness do not ply this road. It is the way of holiness. The lifestyle required on this way is that of love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control. This is the only way the Lord Jesus Christ permits us to take in life so

that at the end of our life on this earth, we shall be with Him in eternity. Are you ready to walk on this road? All you need to do is to submit your life completely to the Lord Jesus Christ and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Make a wise choice

We have the choice of either following the way of God's will or the way of self – will. God's will involves total submission and complete yieldedness to the word of God while self – will entails self-seeking and man-made easy ways. So which road have you chosen to take to your destination today: God's will or self – will?

I must advise that if you have decided to go God's way the rest of your life, and knowing fully well that He is in control of the journey and not you, then you should never complain and murmur against His lordship over you. He is the Alpha and Omega, so allow Him to initiate the journey and accomplish it as well.

The Israelites committed their greatest sin when they complained and murmured against God. They opted to go back to Egypt (a place of bondage where they were delivered from) to continue in temporal 'pleasure' rather than enduring to have the full manifestation of the promises of God. No wonder God gave them over to a reprobate mind and sent leanness to their soul. (Psalm 106:15) Oh, may the good Lord never send leanness to your soul. It is a tragic condition of life for anyone. If you have decided to follow Jesus, then leave the world and follow Him. Ensure that nothing comes in between Jesus and you. Even when your journey is rough, look up to Him, He is there with you. Embrace and submit to God's will now that you are still alive. We have no more time to waste!

God inspired the recording of this account in the Bible to reprove and to correct us.

“Now all these things happened unto them for examples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1Corinthians 10:11 – 12)

I observe that there is much desperation all over the world these last days. Everyone is desperate and anxious to fulfil his “dreams” and nobody or rather very few care to seek the Author of visions Himself for a perfect fulfilment. The

truth is that there is no total fulfilment nor inward peace outside Jesus Christ. It is extremely difficult to fulfil God's purpose for your life on this earth without involving His Holy Spirit. Our Master told us that without Him we can do nothing (John 15:5)

Many believers think that God is either hesitant or not willing to work out great miracles for them. Therefore, they resort to human wisdom and worldly ways of solving their problems, blaming God for their impatience. The word of God says in Matthew 16:26;

“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

From experience, I have proved God and found Him faithful and timely too. He comes in at the nick of time – never late; never early. He comes just at the right time! The closer you draw to God, the better you know Him and His ways. You cannot know Him when you are far away from Him. Draw closer to God in fellowship through the Holy Spirit every day. Make out time to be in His presence and study the word daily. That is life. That is the way out of every emptiness of life.

Decide today to take the right direction on your journey and resolve to make it to the end. The right direction is the way of God's will. Whether your way is rough or smooth, resolve to follow His will, obey His voice and you will surely make it into the wealthy place. Always bear in mind that at His own time, He makes all things beautiful. As you keep following Him, the Lord will surely make all things beautiful in your life in Jesus name.

THREE

A CHRISTIAN JOURNEY EXPERIENCE

I would like to say that some of the points mentioned in the previous chapters will be expounded and given further explanation in this chapter.

As children of God, we should note that the road map or direction to our destination is with the Lord Jesus Christ. It therefore becomes very imperative for us to heed the word of God which said that we should look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. (Hebrews 12:2) If He authors (begins) our faith, He will also lead us to the end of that faith. That is why we noted earlier that a Christian's journey experience starts when he receives the Lord Jesus Christ into his life. This is the first step to take so as to receive the power of sonship to take one through this journey. (John 1:12)

You cannot say you have started this Christian journey until there is a true experience of salvation and the Lord's finished work of redemption on the cross becomes a reality in your life, and is no longer an illusion.

At this time, this Christian has surrendered his will, thoughts, choices, emotions, everything about him, completely to the Lord. Do you know what it means to surrender? It means to yield totally, to give up possession of say your right, title or claim – you submit all to Jesus. It is at this point, that this person has actually started the journey to the wealthy place. For him, the journey has now begun.

Let us view this journey experience in the light of this revelation which the Lord granted me some years ago. The things I will share in this chapter will actually consist of revelations the Lord granted me to explain this journey. Here is the first one.

Vision of how I wandered away

In that revelation, I was in a big mansion (as it was called in that very revelation) with few other people. It was a mansion well built, with many rooms and the activities done there were well organized and properly directed. Everything was done in an orderly manner and there was total calmness and peace all over it.

Suddenly, without giving thought to my action, I decided to leave the mansion. I did not just know the reason for my leaving, yet I kept going. When I got to the living room, I saw the Master of the house (as He was called). He was seated, adorned in royal apparel and was a beauty to behold. Surprisingly, I did not stop to acknowledge, pay obeisance nor even greet the Master who was actually the head of all in the mansion. I just passed Him and off I went.

Another surprising thing was that this Master of the house did not call me back. He saw me leaving the mansion but did not ask me where nor why I was leaving. He left me with my decision to leave the mansion and of course I left.

Outside the mansion, I felt relieved and free (false freedom as I was later meant to know) I felt free to live my life as I wanted and was no longer under the Master's control.

Next, I saw myself suddenly running to catch a bus which was plying a road. Inside the bus was my bag filled with my clothes and money. I ran so much to catch up with the bus, shouting and beckoning on the driver to stop, all to no avail.

I woke up from this dream, shaking and trembling, with this thought – “the mansion I had left, and now my possessions I have also lost!”

Meaning of the dream

Eventually the Lord explained to me that the big mansion represented His presence. We are called to dwell in the presence of God, for it is only in His presence that we would have full joy, full satisfaction and full restoration (Psalm 16:11)

My leaving the mansion meant I had left God's presence by my self will and had gone away to pursue my own things, my own way! I had actually abandoned the will of God for my life and was busy pursuing my own will.

It is written in the book of Psalm chapter 91 verse 1:

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty”

But then I had left the Lord's secret place (mansion) and was not under His covering any longer. That was exactly what the prodigal son had done!

The bus I was running after, which I had my things inside, represented outward religion! I was more interested in religious activities and in joining the crowd, than in being separated unto God's presence, which the mansion represented. God was calling me to separate to His presence so that He could put things in order, in my life, but there I was running after dead religious activities and church routines!

The bus also represented my own desires, plans, choices, things I had set up as idols in my heart, and now I was bent on "catching" them as I had planned.

Bag represents heart, and so my bag inside that bus meant my heart had been carried away by religious activities and selfish desires and pursuits. And Jesus said in Matthew 6:21.

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also".

My treasure was in religious activities and materialistic pursuits, and so my heart was there also.

Hence, my going out from the mansion to pursue the bus outside meant that I had left God's presence, His will and control and was on my own, pursuing my own selfish goals and purposes. We are told of David in Acts 13:36 that he served his generation by the will of God. In other words, he rendered service to God according to the will of God. Then I was serving God but not according to His will. That was exactly what happened to those workers in Matthew 7. They did many wonderful works in the name of the Lord but were rejected in the end. Why? Because they served God but not according to His will. What a dangerous thing for any Christian to do.

Let us study that account together from the scripture:

"Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity." (Vs 21-23)

A closer look at the above passage reveals a group of 'great' men and women of God who actually did great miracles in the name of Jesus. Yes, they

prophesied and cast out devils in His name. Who knows, probably they also raised the dead in the name of Jesus. With all these wonderful works, yet the Lord rejected them all – because all were done outside the will of God! This calls for a caution here! The work you are doing now, I mean, the services you render to God, who has called you to it?

Moreover, the way you discharge your duties to God, is it according to His own way? It is not enough to know what to do but how do you do those things unto the Lord? Do you serve God in His way or in your own way? Whatever you do in life outside the will of God cannot yield any lasting fruit. It is a waste of time, resources, life and does not count in eternity.

At last, although I ran as fast as I could, I did not catch that bus. This means that I had lost God's will for me, and could not also catch the things that had lured me out of His presence. What a miserable life this could be.

Some Christians think they can hold God with one hand and the world on the other hand. No, my friend, this is not God's way. Kingdom principle does not operate in that order. Decide for Jesus and follow Him whole heartedly. Remember the words of the Master in Matthew 16:25.

“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it”

We shall talk more about this mansion and this revelation in subsequent chapters. For now, just know that any Christian who leaves and abandons the presence of God (will of God) to follow self-will, is indeed in trouble.

Beware of too much activities

Brethren, at this time in real life, I was like the prodigal son. I was not only confused and dejected but also disorganized and even very frustrated. Nothing was working in my life. My Christian life was in shambles – no focus, no direction, no peace and no joy of the Lord. Everything seemed to have failed and of course everything about and around me failed. I was like a branch cut off from the vine – no nourishment, no life, no inspiration. It became extremely difficult for me to concentrate in God's presence – something was missing – I had been lured away from the Source of life. I was dying, both spiritually and physically.

Although I attended church services, and was even involved in many church activities, yet I had no inner fulfillment. I held different positions in the

church but had little or no time to pitch in the secret place of the Most High! There was no more fire on the altar of my personal communion with God. I was busy doing God's work but knew little the Owner of the work. Hence, I became spiritually malnourished because I was not eating from the table of the Lord. Consequently, my joy was lost and my peace withdrawn despite all my church activities. This is because activities can never take the place of personal communion.

We all know this account in Luke 10:38-42 of how Jesus visited the home of Martha and Mary and what transpired among them. Martha was cumbered about much serving but Mary sat at Jesus feet and heard His word. Martha was really trying to get things done for the Master, rendering service to Him but Mary chose fellowship and communion with Jesus. To render service to God is good certainly but to be in constant communion with Him is even better. After all, it is as you keep a living communion with the Lord that you will receive the direction to take in your service to Him.

The problem with Martha's services (activities) is that she was distracted by them. She was distracted and shifted from the Lord Himself whom she was rendering services unto. Apparently, she did not find fulfillment with them. The more she served, the more she complained. She could not concentrate enough on the Lord to be able to discover that 'one thing is needful'. Her attention was more on her activities (works) than on the Lord! Even though Mary was not engulfed with much services (activities, restlessness), Jesus remarked that she had chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her. For the Lord to point out to Martha that one thing was needful means that He wanted her to draw near to the Lord and learn how to develop an intimate relationship with Him first.

This truth should not be overemphasized. In my own case, too many religious activities drifted me from communion with God. There is need for a balance here. In as much as we want to serve God in any position He has called us, yet we should be careful so that our services do not separate us from Him. It is possible to move ahead with the work of God while you have left behind the God of the work! This is a tragedy. The major difference between Christianity and other religions is that Christianity centers on a person – the person of Jesus Christ – and not on things. Beloved, it is communion with God first, then activities follow, if need be.

So, because I drifted from the Lord, I could not move ahead in life. I remained in this terrible condition for years! The more religious activities I

carried out, the more miserable my condition was. That was my situation until God, in His mercy decided to intervene.

He intervened by bringing me back graciously to the mansion that I had left earlier, for that mansion was His presence! It is only in His presence that we can receive true life. It is only in His presence that His joy can be restored to us fully

FOUR

REVELATION OF MY RETURN TO THE MANSION

All glory be to God who looked on me with much compassion and a deep affection and decided to take me back to the mansion after some years of agony and pains. The scripture said in Psalm 103:13-14:

Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pitied them that fear him for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust

This was how the Lord in His infinite mercy brought me back to the mansion.

Firstly, He brought to my vision a man of God who I know physically. As I was walking aimlessly and hopelessly on a road (I understood it was the same road on which I had pursued the bus), I ran into him and he simply said, “Sister Ngozi, we don’t see you again”. There and then, I understood what he meant and had no excuse to defend myself. When I woke up, it was to me just like the experience of king Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4:34:

“I lifted my eyes to heaven and my understanding returned to me”.

The Holy Spirit told me that the vision simply meant that God was still looking for me in His presence! I was still “outside”, on my own, and God was still longing for me to return back to the mansion of His presence.

It was not that I stopped rendering praises, worship or services to God but you see, intimacy with the Lord means giving myself (yourself) to Him without looking back. It is possible to do everything the Lord asks you to do and give

Him everything He asks you to give but if you keep yourself from Him, it is most likely you will never enter into true intimate relationship with Him.

Well, after the above vision, not much happened in real life to bring me back to God, instead I had continued my life in self-will, religious activities and personal pursuits. Things remained that way until a few months later, when the Lord visited me again. This time; He gave me a revelation of my return to the mansion. Remember I had left the mansion and had been living a self-willed life, outside, like the prodigal son but this time, the direction of my journey changed. I started moving from the outside, back to the glorious mansion of His presence. I was on my return journey, going back home, to my Father's presence.

Back to the glorious mansion

Amidst the crowd that was outside, I saw myself walking back to the mansion. As I approached the gate, the door was already opened as if it has been opened waiting for me. When I entered, I started admiring the magnificent building called the mansion. Then I thought "so this was where I walked away from, the other time".

It was as if certain scales had fallen off my eyes and I could see the real beauty of the mansion. It was indeed splendid. Inside the mansion were corridors (passages) leading to different rooms. In that revelation, the Holy Spirit made me understand that the passages meant different stages of Christian growth and maturity, which every believer must pass through as they keep their gaze on the Lord Jesus Christ and keep following Him on a daily basis.

On the right hand side inside the mansion there were a few people in the room including two people who at that time were not yet believers. (Now, one of those two people is converted and is a pastor in a church). They were having a good time in the inner court (as that room was called in that revelation). There was this atmosphere of peace, everywhere was both calm and peaceful and the people there were all radiating in the glory of God. I so much loved what I saw of them.

Those few people also looked calculated, relaxed and were not restless like me. Unlike me also, they were not intending to step out from the inner court. I then shouted in amazement, "*oh, so you are in the inner court enjoying yourselves and you did not let me know*". The Holy Spirit then ministered to me.

“This is why I brought you here to have the great experience of the inner court”.

Just then, I saw myself heading towards the same inner court, saying in my heart (because of those two people that were not yet believers then).

“The first shall be the last and the last shall be the first”.

God used those two people whom I called unbelievers to show me the last that shall become the first, for they entered the inner court before me, even though I had been a Christian before them! Also I learnt that it is not just how long you have been a Christian that matter to the Lord, but how faithful you are.

Brethren, do not be the first that shall be last and never you wait to be the last because you may not be given the privilege to eventually become the first.

FIVE

FURTHER MEANING OF THE REVELATION

My coming outside the mansion showed that I have been operating under self will and have been outside God’s plans (will) for my life (Revelation 22:15)

Many believers are labouring under man’s plans for their lives. Even some ministers are operating under another man’s open heaven without seeking the Lord to know His own plans for them and to open their own heaven upon their lives. To be candid, labouring outside God’s will for one’s life is disastrous. You should not stop calling on God until His will for your life is revealed to you.

So, returning to the mansion means returning to God’s presence and to His plans for my life. It means returning to God’s control, discipline, direction and Lordship over me.

My meeting the door already opened means that Jesus Christ, Who is the Door (Way) is ever ready with open hands to receive us back to Himself. In John 14:6 Jesus said to one of His disciples:

“I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the father, but by me”.

Jesus Christ does not condemn us but forgives and receives us to Himself when we return to Him in repentance.

The mansion signifies the awesome presence of God as has been said earlier. This description explains it better.

“But you are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the just men made perfect. And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel”. (Hebrews 12:22-24)

This is the place (realm) of God’s intention for His children. It is His will for His own. My leaving the mansion, experiencing despair and the eventual return to the mansion are different phases and stages of our Christian Journey, as also illustrated by the parable of the prodigal son.

The revelation of this journey from outside the mansion (outer court) to the inner court took about twenty minutes but in reality, my physical restoration to God’s presence and will took some years! This process of restoring me to God’s original plans took years because of distractions of life. Hence the scripture admonished us in 1 John 2: 15-16.

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the father is not in Him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the father, but is of the world”.

What then shall we do to make this journey quicker, without much delays? Here are some guidelines gathered from my own experience.

A. Determination

Brethren, we are on a real journey and determination is a great asset as we move on this journey of life. How determined are you to make it to the wealthy place? Are you firmly committed to living a life totally submitted to doing the will of God? Do you really want to spend your life with the Lord in eternity, that is after you have left this world? Is your one leg in the Lord and another in

the world? Anyone on a journey prepares well and of course takes the right direction towards his destination. There is always a target and that is getting to his desired destination.

One obvious thing about a journey is that no matter how rough it seems, the individual on a journey knows where he is heading to and has not accomplished any purpose if he is not yet at his destination. So, ultimately he must get there. This is where determination comes in! On this journey, challenges will come, hard times abound, but the Lord has promised us that He will never leave us nor forsake us. So in it all, He is with us, therefore, we must be determined to reach the ultimate goal.

Moreover, when we know that God is the one taking us on this journey, we must be determined to follow Him wherever and however He leads us. His desire is to lead us, through His Spirit, into the wealthy place (Promised Land) which He has prepared for us. Therefore, we must be determined to follow Him, despite whatever obstacles, until we get there.

I have been through a lot of challenges in life- serious financial lack, loneliness, challenges in marriage (you can know more about this from our book, 'I Fear God'), In all these, I have always told myself, 'Ngozi, you must move on, you have come a long way on this journey and cannot afford to draw back now'. Brethren, I am determined to be what the Lord wants me to be, do all He wants me to do, and finally have my rest in the bosom of the Lord. I also know that I have nothing behind – no fat bank account to rely on, no investment to hope on. I only have Jesus and Him alone. So I know that the only way to take is the way forward. As you step out and continue in faith, God's grace is sufficient to see you through in Jesus name.

B. Lay aside every weight

“Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and Let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1)

Let me share the revelation God gave me to explain this point. I was carrying two fully loaded bags; dragging them along towards the place I was to board a new luxurious bus to a certain destination.

The first luxurious bus drove by and was to carry me, but by the time I tried to drag my two bags along, the driver could not wait for me. He zoomed off. The second bus also drove by to carry me, but also left because I was wasting time dragging my two heavy bags. I only boarded the third bus after I had dropped off those heavy bags. Some people on this journey carry excess loads. Brethren, until these excesses are removed, they cannot enter fully into God's plans for them.

The excess load here refers to burden of iniquities: Psalm 38:4 says,

“For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me”.

So what is the weight pulling you away from God, His will, His plans for your life? Is it bitterness, envy, malice, unforgiveness, hatred, wrath, strife, overcrowded or busy schedules?

It could even be worry, fear, doubt, now, you must lay them aside for you to get to the expected destination at the end. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to uproot them from your heart and grow His fruit in you.

The weight could also be cares of this life. Luxurious bus means end time move of God. So, I could not enter into God's end time plans for me as long as I had those heavy bags. The content of the bags depicted what was in my heart then.

Other things other than the will of God were in my heart. I advise that as you make your journey into the wealthy place, you must learn to travel light. There is nothing that worth holding on to if that thing will cost you your soul in eternity.

“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matthew 16:26)

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we should all learn to cast all our burdens upon Jesus Christ, for He cares for us (1Peter 5:7).

C. Delight in God's presence

In the place of His presence, God shows us the path of life.

“Thou will show me the path of life; in Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Psalm 16:11)

The Lord desires that we crave for Him, that we have a deep hunger for Him. He delights that we be where He is. He does not want us to worship Him from afar, like strangers.

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19).

God desires our communion and fellowship with Him more than our services and activities. There is nothing wrong in serving God but He delights more in our being with Him and being like Him than in our activities and services to Him. He needs us more than our works which are dead without God.

The scripture read in Mark 3:14-15,

“And He ordained twelve that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils”.

The Lord ordained twelve, first, that they should be with Him, learn of Him, become like Him, have a close, intimate relationship with Him and after that He might send them forth to preach and to have power....

I would say that it is dangerous to desire or ask for God's power when one has no relationship with Him. His power can only be contained in His nature and His nature is obtained in His presence.

If God does not accept you, your works and services are in vain. The truth is that when you become like Him and walk with Him, He then directs your steps and leads you into services which you should do to please Him. Then and only then can we please Him with our services.

Brethren, God desires our relationship with Him. He wants us back to Himself. There are so many things that demand our attention daily but none is as important as God in our lives. Other things can wait and be done later, but do not procrastinate your appointment time with the Holy Spirit of God. Keep a regular time with Him and it will amaze you how He goes ahead and gets those other things done for you. That is the meaning of Matthew 6:33 in a nutshell.

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”!

Change your schedule to ensure you have fellowship with God through His Spirit every day. Desire to hear His voice, love Him, talk with Him, He is patient enough to listen to you. Also, you can ask Him questions on any issue of your life, be patient to hear Him and diligent to obey His voice.

Therefore, at any stage of your journey that you get confused, quickly turn to Jesus Christ, for He has the road map with Him.

Therefore, brethren,

“Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart”. (Psalm 37:4).

SIX

THE OUTER AND INNER COURTS

At this juncture, we need to know better what outer and inner courts mean. It is important to note that all believers commence their journey from outside (the outer court) unto the inside (the inner court) Let us consider the description in these two verses of the scripture in Ezekiel 40:45-46

“And He said unto me, this chamber, whose prospect is towards the south, is for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the house. And the chamber whose prospect is toward the north is for the priests, the keeper of the charge of the altar: these are the sons of Zadok among the sons of Levi, which come near to the Lord to minister unto Him”.

I can see two groups of ministers here: the first group are the keepers of the charge of the house – those who see to the activities in the house. The second group are the keepers of the charge of the altar – those who come near to the Lord to minister in God’s presence.

If you are just a minister in charge of the house, you should cry out to the Lord to help you for you should rather be a minister who draws near to the Lord. You should not be content with the outer court experience but should move on to the

deeper life in Jesus in the inner court and subsequently unto intimate relationship with Jesus in the Holy of Holies. When you draw near to Him, He will then teach you how to discharge your duties.

The outer court

When we surrender our lives to the Lord, Jesus Christ and make Him the Lord of our lives, then we begin our journey at the outer court. This is where we ask and receive forgiveness of our sins. As good as this initial experience may be, we should not stop there because the outer court is not a place of perfection. The believers and ministers who remain here are those in error. They commit secret sins and still go to church to render their services as saints. Most of them take up these services as cover – up to their secret faults.

There are much deceit and manipulations here. There is no spiritual standard. It is a place or level of no order. It is filled with ministers and believers who are estranged from God, who no longer hear God, but they want people to believe they are still in faith. They, as James puts it **“deceives his own heart”** (1:26)

Please take time to read this passage and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal your true spiritual position and condition to you.

“And the Levites that are gone away far from Me, when Israel went astray, which went astray away from me after their iniquity. Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having charge at the gates of the house and ministering to the house: they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them. Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity; therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord God, and they shall bear their iniquity. And they shall not come near unto Me, to do the office of a priest unto Me, nor to come near to any of My holy things, in the Most Holy place (Inner Court), but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed. But I will make them keepers of the charge of the house, for all the service thereof, and all that shall be done therein”. (Ezekiel 44:11 – 14)

Many shepherds have gone astray, thereby causing many sheep to go astray also. The Lord said that these shepherds will not come near Him nor minister to Him, but they will be men of the people instead of men of God.

God told me that many believers and even ministers have heaped up their own programmes and module of operations for themselves and have no regard for Him.

“They expect Me to bless them in their own plans and in their own terms which are outside My own will for them. They have gone away from Me. They have detached themselves from Me. How can I bless them in iniquity? I am not found in evil. They are cut off from the Vine. To do anything God’s way is to do My will”, said the Lord

These are ministers of the people – hypocrites, whose hearts are far from God but they profess Him as Lord with their lips. It is a clear hypocrisy when a person’s words and his character (actions) do not tally. When the words of a Christian are direct opposite of his character, it depicts a heart that has drawn back from the Lord. As believers, we should endeavour to keep our words. How would the world see the light in you if you tell them one thing and do another? It is easier to talk the talk but difficult to walk the walk. This ought not to be so.

Moreover, in the outer court, there is no revelation or knowledge of God. People here are full of struggles in their faith, and in their services to God. There is no joy of salvation, no fruit of the work of redemption.

It takes only God to deliver and redeem such religious minds from this level of faith and God is ready to do so, even now!

The ministers at this level are inspired by the people. Like King Saul, people dictate what is assumed to be the will of God. There are lots of compromises and manipulations, all in the bid to record miracles, greatness, fame and even to retain the crowd (people).

Anything goes here. The will of God is out of place here; rather the “will” of the church leaders and the affluence among them is given top priority. To this, Paul wrote in Galatians 1:10;

“For do I now persuade men or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ”.

Many committees are formed, all in the attempt to scheme many manipulative measures to bewitch people. God is not pleased with this at all. There is much deception as all these things are pretended to be done in the name of the Lord.

All such ministers are deceiving themselves and have not known or heard God. We have played church game enough. God is calling us to a banquet, to eat with Him at His table.

The Lord Himself is inviting us into a life of deeper relationship with Him. That is actually the message I have been trying to communicate through this book. Will you answer Him now? Or do you still want to continue with your religious, outward activities? We have no much time left! Make up your mind, seek Him to know Him, and enter into an intimate relationship with Him for the remaining days of your life.

All you need to do is to cry out to God now to deliver you from the stagnant life in the outer court and bring you closer into the inner court and then into the Holy of Holies. Until you get into the Holy of Holies, you will not experience the fullness of intimacy and fulfilment that God has ordained for us.

Brethren, the time has come for the manifestation of the true sons of God. Who are these true sons of God? The answer is in Romans 8:14 and it reads,

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God “

The Inner Court

We have seen the lifestyle that characterize those in the outer court. Let us have a picture of the inner court too.

“And the chamber whose prospect is toward the north is for the priests, the Keepers of the charge of the altar: these are the sons of Zadok among the sons of Levi, which come near to the Lord to minister unto Him. (Ezekiel 40:46)

As we desire and hunger to know Him the more, God, Himself, brings us into the inner court for a closer walk with Him. At this level of relationship with the Lord, God separates us unto Himself and begins the work of purging us from our old self.

From the above passage, we observe that the believers or ministers in the inner court come near to the Lord first. They delight in the presence of God first, then secondly they minister unto Him. You cannot minister meaningfully to the Lord without first coming near and having a relationship with Him.

To buttress the above explanation, God showed me the inner court in a revelation. There were classrooms, and the students who were admitted by the Holy Spirit were there. There were different scheme of work for the different classes. The students were taught different things at different times. Examinations and tests were conducted at intervals. The teacher was there also. Nobody was promoted until he has passed the particular class in which he was. There was a class for Repeaters also.

Repeaters are those believers who have not been growing spiritually. They have not been able to pass the little tests and trials that come their way daily. They have not overcome the sins that easily beset them. They are spiritual dwarfs.

Physically, these people may have been in the church for like ten, twenty, forty, or more years yet without any meaningful, personal encounter with Jesus. Most of them do not even hear the voice of God. They keep marking time at a spot – no growth. The scenery was a school setting indeed.

There, in the inner court, different subjects were taught. Please note that this school is spiritual and is enrolled in the presence of God. Some of the subjects were Computer Science which means the study of the thought in our minds. English Language means the right use of the tongue, as in James Chapter three. Mathematics means having spiritual wisdom and understanding in solving problems.

I was later made to know that this school is not physical but is in the presence of God and is done through the day – to – day leading of the Holy Ghost, as already mentioned. And of course anyone that allows himself to be taught, led and directed by the Spirit of God is automatically in the school of the Holy Spirit. So the inner court is the place that God really trains and prepares us.

The examinations and tests in this school stand for persecutions and trials of our faith which take place everyday of our lives.

In our spiritual records, there is no spiritual promotion until one passes or rather learns a particular thing which the Lord wants him to learn. This could be a change in character or proper use of the tongue. It just has to do with our day – to – day living – our attitude to others especially.

Worthy to note that although the Holy Spirit teaches us all things, He does it thoroughly and not haphazardly. So, He teaches us one lesson at a time and

ensures it gets into us very well before he proceeds to another. Therefore, to grow spiritually, we should be open to the teaching and leading of the Holy Spirit and obey all that He directs us to do.

As we keep walking with Him, He takes us through judgment seat each day. You will see yourself discussing with the Holy Spirit at the end of each day, how you lived your life for that day. In His faithfulness, He will show you the area (s) you have missed it in following God's leading and what next to do. It is indeed a relationship! As you continue in this relationship, you will marvel at the great work of transformation He will do in your life. These are the things we experience in the inner court of God's presence. This is life in the Spirit. It is the realm of God. This is God's plans for us.

“For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world” (I Corinthians 11:31 -32)

It is obvious that many believers have lost the identity of Christ and have worn the mask of the devil, but still confessing Christ! The plan of God is to conform us to His image. He wants us to be like Him and He does that at the inner court Christian experience.

Holy of holies

The Holy of Holies is a place (realm) of close, intimate relationship with God. We should crave to move up from the outer court through the inner court, and passing the veil into the Holy of Holies. This should be our daily heart cry – To know Him. It is at this realm (level) of relationship with God that we experience the fullness of God's will for our lives.

God has given us access into the holiest of all, so we have no excuse not to enter there.

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh, and having an High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised)” (Hebrews 10:19-23)

SEVEN

DO YOU KNOW GOD?

It is really sad to note that many believers worship and serve a God they do not truly know. Most have so much information about Him, but they don't really know Him. We may know so much of the scriptures; memorize and speak them but that does not mean we know God until we begin to spend quality time with Him and have a close, intimate relationship with Him.

It is as we spend quality time with Him – worshipping, studying the word, listening for His voice, praising Him that He gives us power to be sons of God. This is the power we need to enable us do the truth of the word of God.

Jesus told the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well, in John 4:22a,

“Ye worship ye know not what”

Even Paul stood in the midst of Mar's hill and said to the men of Athens:

“Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you” (Acts 17:22 – 23)

So it is with us today. Many believers like to minister unto God, they love to do God's work but they have not really taken time to first of all know Him and have personal relationship with Him. They are yet to have a personal revelation of God.

To this end, Paul prayed for the believers at Ephesus;

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him”. (Ephesians 1:17)

1 Samuel chapter three verse one states

“And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli”.

But verse seven reads:

“Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him”.

Almost every Christian you meet is a worker: But like Samuel many of these believers serve a God they do not have a relationship with and whom they have not yet experienced. What type of workers are we then, for it is only those who know their God that shall be strong, and do exploits (Daniel 11: 32b)

This should serve as an eye opener to those in leadership positions both in the church and ministry. What type of workers do you recruit for God’s work in your church or ministry? Do you appoint people (workers) because of their attractive physical appearance? Or by their riches? Or simply because they could preach the word of God? What type of fruit do your workers bear? Did you seek the Lord enough to know the person He (not you) has chosen for which post? Please consider this once more, it could be that your church workers are working for you (or themselves) and not for God!

The choice is ours

You remember that when I left the mansion in my early revelation, the Master of the house did not call me back. This simply means that God does not force Himself on anyone. He allows us to our own choice and our own will. He wants us to come to Him willingly – with all our heart.

The Holy Spirit of God is gentle. Until you willingly acknowledge and invite Him, He stays ‘inactive’ within you. You must make your relationship with the Lord active and living for you to enjoy His plans for your life.

When the prodigal son in Luke 15 chose his own will and left his father – he left the fullness of joy in his father’s house – nobody stopped him. He wasted several years of his life, resources and really struggled until he got to the limit of his own strength. When he also made the choice to go back to his father, nobody hindered him and of course his father whole – heartedly received him.

The choices we make and decisions we take daily have a major part to play in what becomes of us. We should make choices based on the word of God and guided by the Holy Spirit.

I have often times heard a man of God say,
“Every Kingdom matter is a question of choice”

God allows us to our choice! Therefore, we should ask for grace to make a wise choice. We should choose personal relationship with God first, before any other thing.

Many Christians have made God a “spare tyre”, only to be contacted when necessary; especially when there arises a situation they feel is beyond their control. They do not know God. The truth is that we do not really need any other thing, we need God and only Him!

Many believers only know Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God but are yet to know Him as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. To know God should constitute our daily heart cry unto Him.

It is sad to note that many Christians now pursue their own things in their own ways. Seeking God to know His will on the issues of their lives, pleasing God is completely out of the plans and schedule of events of many such believers. Some hurriedly mutter few words in the name of prayers in the mornings and off they go about their businesses. They do not know God.

Yet, some complain they have a tight schedule and could not spend quality time with the Lord daily. Naturally speaking, we know that if the foundation is not strong enough, whatever that is built on it is bound to collapse. In the same manner, if our lives are not rooted strongly in Jesus Christ, we are most likely to crash.

Spending time with the Lord, first thing in the morning, fellowshiping with His Spirit, studying the word of God, worshipping Him takes a lot of stress off us for the day. As you cast your cares upon the Lord each day, He takes over from you and it is amazing how great accomplishment He does for us. In addition, you receive enough grace to go through the hassle and bustle of the day.

When we don't receive sufficient grace for our daily activities, we may see ourselves exhibiting some negative attitude. Uncontrolled anger, malice, nagging, grudges, impatience, complaining, murmuring are simple evidence that we have not seen the face of the Lord for that day.

The uncommitted attitude of some believers to God and things of God leaves no doubt to say that God has been shifted off from their hearts, other

pursuits have taken over, and they now ‘lord’ themselves. No wonder there are many casualties – many have drawn back from the Lord. Remember that when I left the Master of the house to pursue the bus, I ended up losing both the things that enticed me out of God’s presence as well as God’s plans for my life. I lost everything.

Furthermore, I was taken away from the Master of the “open door” Himself. And how could I have experienced any “open door” without Him? Jesus Christ is the Master of the “open door”, so no door opens for us, and we will hardly experience any “breakthrough” if He is not the one leading us into it.

***“He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth”,
(Revelation 3:7b)***

A notable man of God, Tim Lahaye, wrote this, *“The best advice I have ever heard is that we do not need a life time road map or master plan for our lives. We just need to stay in close fellowship with the Master, who does have a plan for our lives”*.

We are much stressed and engulfed in pursuit of this earthly riches because we are yet to know our God personally as a burden bearer. How ignorant believers are! The book of Hosea 4:6 noted.

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge”

One man of God said that man’s greatest infirmity is ignorance and I quite agree with him.

Brethren, the Lord has prepared a better place and life for us but we are still too busy pursuing the things of this world that do not have eternal relevance.

If the Lord promised you His kingdom, why settle for hell! If He promised gold and silver, why settle for bronze or even wood. Go for the real, stop pursuing shadows and move into the reality that is God Himself.

God has given us His kingdom and now He wants to purge, sanctify and beautify us as the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:27) He wants us to enter into His rest.

“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his” (Hebrews 4: 9-10)

God also wants to build us into Himself. This is God’s eternal plan for us, therefore do not settle for less.

How to know and do God’s will.

The Holy Spirit taught me this lesson when I desired earnestly to know God’s will concerning some issues in my life.

In addition, I pledged my willingness to do them if God told me. He said,

“You cannot do the will of God if you already have your own opinion which you hold on to concerning some issues, especially those issues you are asking God’s will for. You must therefore empty yourself first, of every self-opinion or idea, if you want to know and do the will of God”.

I also learnt that one of the primary ways of ascertaining God’s will on any issue you seek Him for is through the scripture. The bible is there to guide, direct us in life. When you approach the scripture with an open and a willing heart to obey whatever God has asked us to do, then the Lord will open your eyes of understanding and you know what His will for you is. This is done through the power of His Holy Spirit.

You can also know the will of God through the spoken word which comes to us often through inward witnessing. When you walk in intimacy with the Lord, you have this ‘knowing’ within you that this is the mind of God on this issue.

Moreover, God’s will most often comes with peace. You are at peace knowing that you have done what you understood as the will of God. Please note that I do not mean the false peace some people experience when they act contrary to the word of God.

When they rebel against the word of God and harden their hearts against the convictions of the Holy Spirit over an issue, the Lord then releases them to their own heart’s lust and they suddenly have peace, so to say, but that is false peace. There is no peace outside God’s will. You only enjoy His peace when you are in His will.

God's will on many issues can be entirely different from our own opinions, yet we are to choose His will, for that is the way of real life. Also, the safest place to be is inside the will of God.

What to do

Ask and allow the Holy Spirit to expose every self-opinion in you on any issue you seek the will of God. Also ask Him to help and expel them from you. Thereafter, you will see more clearly to know and do the will of God.

EIGHT

JOIN THE LORD'S ARMY

Worthy to note is the truth that the Lord is picking and building His own army for this end time battle. We are not also ignorant that the devil is raising his own army too. That is why you see that the closer we are getting to the last of the last days, the more evil is on the increase. Nevertheless, if you are in the army of the Lord, you should not be afraid of these evil because

“Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (I John 4:4)

Yes, a battle is raging –battle between light and darkness (See Isaiah 60:1-2) So in whose army do you belong? Where do you stand? The lifestyle you live and what constitute your top priority are pointers to where you actually belong. Remember, there is no neutral ground. Is either you serve in the army of God (army of light) or in the army of the devil (army of darkness.)

Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said,

“Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me” (Exodus 32:26).

And Joshua said unto all the people.

“Choose you this day whom ye will serve But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15)

Though Moses and Joshua made the above calls respectively to the physical Israelites then, but this same call is even more vital for us now, as spiritual Israelites. Why? Because there is a serious separation going on right now in the church.

God is on a silent mission by His Spirit. He is gathering – in His own to Himself, to beautify, prepare and send them for the end time purpose. This simply means that God is gathering, purging, overhauling and putting us in order! You should not be left out in this present move of the Lord. My prayer is that the Spirit of God will not pass you by in Jesus name.

God is equipping the saints. He is raising His people from diverse tongues, tribes, nations. He calls them to empower them for the end – time battle. These are the end-time army of the Lord –the Joshua generation that will enter into the Promised Land. They are those that hear and obey the voice of the Lord.

In this move, those who have end –time assignments to do shall remain and be fortified by God. Then those who do not have end- time assignments, though they are children of God, shall be withdrawn. That means, God will retire them early and take them home to heaven – because they have no end time assignment!

So why do we live a life of compromise as though the whole thing about our faith ends here! God is preparing us for a higher purpose – which is to serve in His end time army, and thereafter be rewarded in heaven.

“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier? (II Timothy 2:3-4)

Every believer should be a soldier of the Lord. Therefore, as you move on this journey do not get lost in transit. Endeavour not to intermingle with the affairs of this life. The Lord Jesus Christ told us to occupy till He comes; but we are too relaxed on this earth even in the face of the raging battle.

Most believers seem to live their lives without having eternity in view. Some have forgotten the vision of heaven. This leaves no doubt why iniquity is on the increase even in the church.

Now, if you have been on the wrong side of the battle, that is, in the army of darkness, then retrace your step and ask the Lord to enroll you in the end – time army of the Lord. For why should we fight on the wrong side after all, the scripture read in Colossians 1:13;

“Who (God) hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear son”

Since God has rescued us from the power of darkness, why do we still harbour the works of darkness in our lives? Identify with Jesus today, enter into a close, intimate relationship with Him. Pledge your entire allegiance to Him, no more double game – one leg in the Lord and the other in the world.

One of the best decisions you could make now is to be on the side of God. Remember, nobody will take that decision for you. Decide well NOW.

No short cut

You should not be deceived, brethren, the journey we are on, is not the easy going one. It is not full of roses at all. The road is not smooth; rather it is rough and narrow.

“Nevertheless, no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed there unto” (1 Thessalonians 3:3)

“And that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22)

In 2 Timothy 3:12, the scripture read;

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution”

However, the good news is that, that way is the way of eternal life”

In this day of instant everything, we need to understand that there are no short cuts to maturity, whether physical or spiritual. For instance, it is not possible to have a day old baby talking, eating solid food or running. It is a gradual process. It takes a process to mature spiritually. It is not instant.

You have to go through the different levels of spiritual growth with Jesus Christ as the pilot of your life. So depend on Him as you take your journey to the Promised Land. It is a journey of faith.

The Lord Himself has given conditions to anyone who wants to follow Him.

“And he said to them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up His cross daily, and follow Me” (Luke 9:23)

In a nutshell, if you truly want to be a disciple of Jesus, you must give up all rights to yourself, lose sight of yourself and your own interests and opinions. Also you must live the life of Jesus daily. You must live, do things according to the kingdom lifestyle and not according to the world system. Then you live your daily life with your eyes on the Master.

There is no short cut to Christ life, you should allow the Holy Spirit take you through the process of pruning, ‘panel-beating’, over hauling, purging and cleansing.

There are no seven or ten steps to instant spiritual growth. It is not obtained overnight. In our walk with the Lord, He takes us through all the stages He deems necessary for us to grow in Him. It certainly will take patience on our part, if we really desire to grow in Him.

We do not all pass through the same process because God sees and deals with us as individuals. Some people’s spiritual growth is faster than others. I think this depends largely on the type of heart each person has. For instance, the person with good heart is more teachable and receptive to God’s word and voice, than one with a stony or thorny heart.

Well, whatever be the process of spiritual growth, you should be calm, patient, endure it all and follow the Lord at the pace and way He leads you,

There are different schemes of God’s programme for every believer. I encourage you to seek the Lord to know His own programme for your life. My prayer for you is that God will reveal His programme and purpose for your life, lead you to know it and take you along the path of your own journey in Jesus name, Amen. Therefore, we should busy ourselves desiring to know His will, to know Him.

Perhaps, the Lord has already revealed His purpose for your life to you, that is good. Then you should endeavour to live your life daily trusting the Holy Spirit for the fulfillment of that purpose.

Have you ever taken a second thought and asked, “Is God pleased with me? Am I pleasing God?”

Brethren, God and His programme in this end time should be of top priority to us. He is building a Joshua army – those who will run with the specific word of instruction given to them. This is the generation that shall enter into God’s wealthy place. You must not be left out by whatever reason.

If you want to join this army, then make out time when you would separate to His presence each day. It is there, in the Secret Place of the Most High that your training and preparation begin.

NINE

THE NEED TO SEPARATE TO GOD

In the midst of the present crises and confusion in the world, there is a great need for us to separate to God in fellowship. Obviously, there is no peace in the world, the world cannot afford any peace for anyone. The only one who has peace to offer is Jesus Christ. He said

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14: 27)

Therefore, if your mind is stayed on the world and your schedule is filled mainly with secular activities, you will have no peace. For you to experience the peace of God that passes all human understanding, you must learn to begin to spend quality time with the Lord daily.

You should not be in a hurry to rush out of your house in the morning just to keep appointment with a human being, when you have not first kept appointment with God, the one in whose hands is your life.

For the greater part of our life, we have been heeding man's report, following man-made procedures and methods to obtain results, yet without any remedy. Now, therefore, let us all heed God's call and know what He has in stock for us.

“If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater (1 john 5:9)

Yes, God made a call, He has been calling us, He has called us, and the call is still on, even now.

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light”. (Matthew 11:28 – 30)

I do not mean to say that you should withdraw yourself to a desert or lock yourself up permanently in a room. The truth is that if God says you should do just that, then He has a purpose for it and you have to do exactly what He says. God is the one who knows His purpose for your life and also the work to be done in you to fulfil that purpose. We only need to yield to Him and do whatever He asks us to do. The Lord is calling us to Him, so He can help us.

Brethren, only God can help us with any need in our lives, be it Spiritual or Physical. Man cannot help us. Methods, procedures, science, medical science, human wisdom lack the power to eradicate, control or solve all the challenges of life.

To be candid to you, we are all helpless without God. It is only pride that will make us pretend that we do not need help. If we remain in this pretentious attitude, we are likely going to remain in our predicaments.

Our Master and Lord Jesus Christ said in John 15:5

“For without me ye can do nothing”

Note assuredly that the fact that you have this earthly riches is not an indication that you have life, that is not what real life is. True, real life is in Jesus, there is no other place. However, God gives us true riches which when we put them in their proper place could be used to render service to Him.

The wisest thing to do now is to respond to the call of God with all our hearts. We should also carry all our heavy laden to Him and receive His rest.

Trials, temptations, distractions, pressures of life do come to us but often times, these issues are addressed when we are alone with God. Also, when we are truly connected with Him in the spirit, He suddenly drops the answer into our heart.

As often times as possible, we need to forget all our piled-up programmes and separate to God, who will work out better and proper programmes for us. And now is the time! He needs us at the already prepared table, filled with His goodness.

“And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces; and the glory of the Lord appeared unto them. And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shall give the congregation and their beasts drink”. (Numbers 20:6-8).

The above passage reveals God’s answer, His solution to Moses and Aaron when there was no water for the children of Israel in the desert of Zin. It was a very difficult situation for them to handle, therefore they turned to God.

It’s amazing to know that when we separate ourselves to God, He speaks and gives us directions on the issues bothering our hearts. Then why don’t we separate to Him, as often as possible, so we can fellowship with Him, know Him and also receive clear directions concerning our lives? Why do we struggle and are full of anxiety?

By the way, what does your anxiety do? Tim Lahaye wrote,

“It does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, but it empties today of its strength and grace. It does not make you escape from the evil, rather it makes you unable to cope with it if it comes”.

That is why my Lord and Master Jesus Christ told us in John 14:1,

“Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me”.

The scripture read in Philippians 4:6

“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God”.

In other words, we should worry about nothing but pray about everything. Why? Because God cares for us.

Understand God’s tools

We should know that problems and afflictions are bound to come, for these are part of the tools God uses to produce spiritual maturity in us. Nevertheless, our attitude towards these “uncomfortable situations” will determine how long or short they remain with us. The early we understand that God wants to use them to work out good in and for us, the better for us.

The Israelites ended a journey which took the twelve men who went to search the land of Canaan forty days in forty years because of their rebellious acts to the will of God. Wrong attitudes towards affliction prolong our journey! The things we call problems and afflictions may be mere instruments of purging in the hands of God.

Purging means cutting off some of the branches from a tree, so that it will grow better and stronger. So, in the same way, some of these afflictions may be used by God to shape us, like a stone in the quarry, into God’s desired purpose for our lives.

“I am the true vine, and my father is the Husbandman, Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit” (John 15:1 – 2)

For a believer to be used by God, he has to be purged, broken, tested, proven and approved by the Master who will fill him up with His life and then use him. God uses only broken vessels.

Let us have it in mind that there are circumstances that God has destined for us to go through; and also there are some we get into by ourselves out of ignorance or desperation. But whichever be the case, God as the Master Weaver, is ready to weave all things together for our own good (Romans 8:28) Therefore,

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers (sisters), whenever you face trials of many kinds (James 1:2)

Don't give up

Sometime ago, I thought of giving up my faith as a believer in Christ. I was so discouraged because of pressures of life that I decided to backslid.

We should not give up whatever be the pain, suffering or afflictions. If Jesus Christ had given up at Golgotha, none of us would have been saved.

I really thank God for His grace which works in us to keep us from evil. Truly, God's grace is His power (ability) which enables us to stay away from evil and keeps us moving even in the face of problems and discouragements.

Then God answered my backslid heart:

“Daughter, you have come a long way to draw back now. The journey you have gone so far is more than the remaining one. You are very close to your promised land”

His words brought life back into me and I was really encouraged. Nowadays, some Christians give up even at the very point that God is about to answer their prayers. Perhaps, God has planned to bring answers to your prayers tomorrow, but you have decided to give up today. Hold on to the promises of God for your life and walk with Him on a daily basis. God will always keep His word. He is not a man that He will lie. Wait on Him patiently with joy, He will show Himself strong on your behalf.

You may also need to change your prayer from “God bless all that I will do today”. “God, give me this, give me that” , to “God, lead me into your plans and purposes for my life today”, “Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me, and know my thought” We should be more concerned with the prosperity of our soul than material prosperity.

Note that we are not the ones to tell God what He should bless, God blesses what He begins. Rather we are to ask Him to lead us into what He has already planned for us. Nevertheless, you should not be discouraged for God has not given up on you.

Anytime a believer drifts from God's presence, this account becomes real of him:

“We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: We stumble at noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men.

We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for salvation, but it is far off from us” (Isaiah 59:10 – 11)

Brethren, let us hear what the Spirit of God is saying to the body of Christ. Let us all return to our maker, who is ready to receive us to Himself. He wants to start a fresh and intimate relationship with us.

Therefore, learn to separate yourself to Him, and do not be disappointed when He will first scatter and disorganize your programmes. Yes, He usually sets aside our own plans and scatters them, so that His own superior plans for our lives can begin! However, He will lead you beside the still waters and eventually beautify you as His befitting bride. He will make everything beautiful at the end. Praise God.

TEN

INVITATION TO THE TABLE OF THE LORD

“Then said He unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, come, for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must need go and see it. I pray have me excused.

And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them. I pray thee have me excused.

And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and showed his Lord these things. Then the Master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed and the halt and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou has commanded, and yet there is room.

And the Lord said unto the servant, go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in that my house may be filled”
(Luke 14:16 – 23)

God has prepared a great feast for us. Everybody, anyone is invited to the great feast of the Lord. David caught the revelation of this great feast when he confessed in Psalm 23:5,

“Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies”

You may be wondering at this point, where is this great feast of the Lord laid? Well this great feast is laid on the table of the Lord. The table of the Lord is the presence of God. It is a place of fellowship and communion with God. It is the place of our personal altar with the Lord. It is as we eat at this table that God perfects our lives and then leads us to the wealthy place. Only those who eat at this table get to the wealthy place!

God has prepared everything and kept them ready even before He created us. So all things are ready! Yes! All things are indeed ready at His table! What remains is for us to draw near to the Lord's table and then we partake of the great feast of fat things of the Lord (Isaiah 25)

“According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue”, (2 Peter 1:3)

We do not get enriched out of frustration or excessive struggles, it is simply by God's grace. Do you know why some believers pursue miracles, signs and wonders, breakthrough profusely? It is because they do not realize that a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses (Luke 12:15)

Most Christians are yet to know that everything we need on this earth is with God, or rather, all we need is God. The more of our time we spend at His table, seeking Him, the less of our struggles in pursuit of wealth.

As believers, our greatest pursuit in life should not be things – material riches, but A Person - Jesus Christ. Pursue Jesus to win Him.

The truth is that, the more we struggle on our own to acquire wealth and riches, the farther these things get from us. Therefore, we sorrow, lament and weep for not getting them, whereas they are all with God!

The true riches of God is far more than the material riches we struggle to acquire in this world. After all, the scripture says:

“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men”. (Romans 14:17)

Yes, wealth and riches are good, after all God gives us the power to get them, but remember the love of money is the root of all evil (I Timothy 6:10). Your heart should not be on them.

There is a saying in the Eastern part of the country where I come from that wealth makes a man's heart strong. This should not be true of believers. God is our strength.

“My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever” (Psalm 73:26)

However, God knows that the efforts and struggles of man cannot help him, decided to prepare all things, made them ready and sent out invitation titled, “Come and eat for all things are ready”.

That is the mystery of Luke 14:17!

Excuses won't help us

In the first passage of this chapter, (Luke 14:16 – 24) the invitees all refused to honour the invitation to come to the King's table. It may interest you to know that these invitees represent the children of the Kingdom. God has prepared mansions in heaven for His children but here we are running after the riches in the world which never last. This world and all that is in it will soon pass away. That is why God has prepared eternal home for us in heaven.

Now, the King of Kings is asking us to draw closer to Him so He could begin to teach us how to inherit His kingdom. He wants us to come to Him so as to be cleansed from all filthiness, sanctified and eventually go to heaven.

In the same manner, those guests began to make excuses and refused the King's invitation that is how we make excuses today for keeping our daily communion with the Lord. The truth is that they had no excuses, but they just came up with some, just to refuse the Lord's offer.

As a matter of fact, one would expect that before a person buys either a land or oxen, the buyer would have seen or proved them before payment is made. One got married and so could not answer God's call. So has the gift of God become greater or more valuable to us than the Giver? So there was virtually no excuse at all.

The problem is not that God is slow or does not answer prayers again. God is neither slow nor adamant to prayers. He answers even more than we ask.

“Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Ephesians 3:20 – 21)

Even now, God is working out all things for our good. The problem is simply this: We have got our priorities all wrong. We seek other things first when the scripture said that we should seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all other things shall be added unto us. (Matthew 6:33)

We have remained adamant to God’s invitation, either by ignorance, rebellion or self – will. We have refused to answer His call. We have turned down His invitation and continued with our own ways of doing things.

We keep giving God excuses why we are unable to keep our time with Him daily. We run to Him only when there is an emergency! Brethren, you may not be able to establish an intimate relationship with Him with this uncommitted attitude. Perhaps that is why there is much frustration and emptiness even among the believers. We should go to God daily.

Brethren, there is One who owns the heavens and the earth. He dictates the pace of events and rules in the kingdom of men. He reigns in Majesty. No one can instruct or direct Him.

“Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The king of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us (Psalm 2:1 – 3)

It is a vain thing to try to live your life outside God’s will for you, No one succeeds outside the confines of God’s will for his life.

You may point at some material possessions you have now and conclude, “well, God is pleased with me, after all I am blessed”. It may not really be so. The fact that you have material riches is not enough evidence that God has approved you.

There is an ultimate destination, a better promise and a higher attainment God has for you. And you are not likely to attain that height of glory if you do not have a walk and a deeper relationship with the king of glory Himself who has your destiny with Him.

God's call

The Lord is calling us for a walk of intimacy with Him. God and you in a relationship walking together, step-by –step! This is what He wants to do for us as we come to His table.

“Incline your ear, and come unto Me, hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you” (Isaiah 55:3)

At the table of the Lord, that is, in God's presence, or better still in the place or realm of stillness and quietness, He feeds us with both His written and spoken word. He shows us visions and revelations of the mysteries of the kingdom. He gives us deeper understanding of heavenly things.

As the Holy Spirit begins to instruct us, every word of the Bible begins to make more meaning to us because the Spirit of God is now our teacher (John 14:26)

Good enough, God gave some teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, but you should not stop at the level of being taught by man only. Seek to develop a personal, intimate relationship with the Living God through His Spirit.

Remember that any time you spend with God is time spent building for eternity. Use your time wisely. When you begin to spend quality time with God, He reveals Himself both in and to you. You know Him! No one knows God except in whom He reveals Himself. He wants us to know Him by revelation!

Note that when you have a personal encounter and revelation of God and experience Him yourself, He makes more meaning to you and you know Him more than when you are just told about Him.

Hence, as we eat at the Lord's Table, that is, as we separate to His presence, God will reveal Himself to us and cause us to know Him, both by revelation and by series of other dealings.

As we begin to relate with God in this manner, you will discover that even in the midst of pains, you are joyful! Yes, in the midst of increasing endtime hopelessness and confusion, you see yourself radiating with glory and life of God. God, Himself becomes both your peace and joy. Halleluyah. This is the

call of God that you have received. Are you ready to answer this call today? Then start eating at His table daily.

Learn to be still before God

We should learn to be calm even in the face of challenges of life. As we proceed on our journey into the wealthy place, we are bound to face difficult circumstances. But just like the Psalmist said in Psalm 23:4,

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me”.

In the face of problems, Moses told the impatient, rebellious, murmuring Israelites to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. In the same vein, some believers murmur, complain, doubt the word of God when they are in a difficult situation. Then, they start running up and down looking for solutions to their problems.

In Exodus 14:13, the scripture read.

“Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show to you today: For the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them no more forever”

In the book of First Samuel Chapter three, you would observe that as long as Samuel kept running up and down in confusion, God did not speak. God only spoke to him when he lay down, was still and became quiet before the Lord.

“For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, In returning and rest shall ye be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength”.(Isaiah 30:15)

In the same way, God wants us to be still and quiet in His presence and He will speak to us. He will feed us at His table when we are quiet enough to ‘eat’.

Brethren, let us therefore stop running from pillar to post in search of miracles. Stop looking unto ‘great’ men or women of God for solutions to your problems. Look unto Jesus Christ, and if He directs you to any man of God, then you can go. However, you should not stop there, seek to know God personally.

Nowadays, many people think you are going too far when you use phrases like ‘God said this to me’, ‘I am waiting for the Lord’s permission’. Although some believers have actually abused and misused the phrases, but the

truth remains that God still speaks to His children. The problem is, how many hear Him! It is only those who keep quiet in His presence that can hear His voice.

Remember, God has a still, small voice, hence we can only hear Him when we are close, still and quiet before Him.

Many Christians seem to derive more pleasure and satisfaction in doing other things, and in carrying out diverse religious activities in the bid to please God, than in sitting still in the presence of God and having a sweet communion with Him.

Now, let me point out here that I do not mean that you should not attend to your job, business or any other work you have got to do. The emphasis here is to keep regular, daily contact with the Almighty God. Start your day with Him and allow Him lead you throughout each day.

It is when we dwell in His secret place (presence) that we shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Then, His spirit leads us through afflictions and problems. That is the breakthrough we pursue. God, Himself will lead you and both of you will break through problems together.

In that case, you have little or nothing to do than to obey and submit to Him. He then shows you the path of life as you do so. That is all. Therefore, stop being too busy for God. There is a realm of sweetness to attain. Desire it.

Transformation is a necessity

In the book of Isaiah 5:1-7, the Lord lamented the deplorable spiritual condition of His people in whom He had deposited and given all it would take to bring them to a high level of spiritual power and authority. Instead of going up they were going down, instead of increasing in righteousness, they were thriving in evil after all the goodness and mercy of the Lord they had enjoyed.

Brethren, note that it is dangerous to eat from the Lord's table and yet record no transformation (change) in your character. If your character is still the same or even worse after you became a born again Christian, then you should quickly examine yourself and see if you are still in faith.

You should cry out to the Lord to search your heart and help uproot the tares and vices that the devil has sown there. Also, ask the Lord to replace the vices with fruit of the Holy Spirit. The scripture recorded in Matthew 3:8,

“Bring forth therefore fruit meet for repentance”.

Your having a relationship with the Lord should reflect in your character: utterances, thoughts and actions. How is your attitude towards others? Do others see Jesus in you? Are you truly the salt of the earth and the light of the world? Whose image do you bear? The more you eat and feast at God’s table, the more you become like Jesus.

The truth is that even when we do not know it, our character preaches more than a thousand messages we preach by words. The ultimate purpose of God for us is that we should become like Christ in character and in everything (Ephesians 4:13-15). We must live the word we preach, otherwise we are simply hypocrites.

James chapter one verse twenty – two says:

“Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves”.

It is then and only then can we say,

“For thou, O God hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net, thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads, we went, through fire and through water, but thou broughtest us out into a WEALTHY PLACE” (Psalm 66:10 – 12)

Salvation by compulsion

“And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in that my house may be filled” (Luke 14:23)

God wants to restore us to His original plans for us. He does not want us to miss out of any of His good intentions for us. And because He will not watch us be destroyed, He has instructed that His children be compelled to come to Him at this time of the end.

Sometimes, I think the Lord shakes us off our comfort zone for us to realize what He is doing in our lives, just like the mother eagle does to her young (Deuteronomy 32:11)

The table is set, the feast is ready, but the invitees are yet to come. And because God wants to save them, He brings them in using stricter measures.

At this end time. God will compel people to Himself, in order to save them from destruction. But then, it will be wise not to wait till God brings you in by force that is “invitation by force”. Yes, sometimes God allows such agents as sickness, accident, great afflictions, unfulfillment, lack of peace, and other unpleasant conditions to come to us just for Him to draw us closer to Himself.

Why should we wait to be sick before we realize that we need God? Should we wait for only time of emergency to call upon Him? Will you wait for these agents to visit before you answer His gentle, yet persistent call?

What reasons do you have to give to your Maker for not honouring His invitation? His invitation is a privilege. His call is your life – both your life, your family and others lives are tied to it! Answer Him willingly today.

ELEVEN

ARE YOU A MINISTER? HEAR THIS

In the midst of confusion and unfulfilment, I confessed to God about my hopeless condition and He specifically gave me this word. For some time, I kept it to myself, partly because I did not want anyone to know about my spiritual emptiness and partly because I had to first seek the Lord to help my hopelessness.

Later, the Lord instructed me to share it with other ministers who are equally hopeless and have laboured in unfulfilment for several years in their different ministries. The Lord said:

“Lo, I have called you a minister in My presence. There, in My presence I will fill you with My life so that through you I will give life to others.

Whatever that is on the inside of you, whether good or bad (evil) is what others receive as you minister to them.

You wonder why you are not making impact in people’s lives; it is because you are still harbouring some strange character in you. So you have not yet got

anything good to give them. I, the Lord will feed you first. I will teach you what to tell others.

When you minister to people, they receive what is on the inside of you, instead of receiving My life. This is because you cannot give what you do not have. Without you telling them what secret faults you have inside of you, as you talk, the spirit is transferred unto them.

So, that is why I, the Lord have brought you into the inner court, to purge, prune, weed your life and tear down the wall of self in you so that My virtue (life) which I will plant in you can flow unhindered through you to others”.

Permit me to say that you, as a pastor, bishop, minister, may be the one sitting on the blessings and spiritual progress of your congregation because of the life you live, especially in the secret.

To escape the wrath and judgment of God, you have to run quickly back to God, start afresh with Him, if need be, and He will beautify you first before you become a channel of life and blessings to your congregation and to the body of Christ in general. God bless you.

Visions of abominations in our midst

The Lord gave me a series of vision to show me why He is now calling His children persistently to come directly to Him, to draw closer Him in a more intimate relationship.

Evil and abominations are happening in our various churches and fellowships, which will soon lead many to desolation (destruction). Only those who dwell in the secret place of the Most High can know these things for only He can open our eyes to see them. As you are making your journey into the wealthy place, you as a believer, a minister or a church goer should be very careful.

It is worthy to note that before you join any church or fellowship, you should first seek the Lord to lead you to a true place to worship.

This is shocking but very revealing. God showed me what He showed Ezekiel, in Ezekiel Chapter 8!

In a vision, one Sunday morning, the Lord took me in the spirit and we visited different centers of worship and what He allowed me to see really shocked me.

In these meetings, the true spirit controlling each church was revealed. And I was shocked to see that the Holy Spirit of God was not the one in charge, other spirits were!

- On one of the pulpits, I saw serpents instead of a human being ministering to people.
- In another place, it was a mermaid spirit in form of a woman that was on the altar.
- In some other places, they were practicing occultism in the church!
- On one of the right hand fingers of one minister that we visited, there was a ring which was diabolic. As soon as the minister touched people on their foreheads with that ring, he distributed infirmities. So people were falling, thinking they fell under “the Anointing”, but unknown to them, they received different sicknesses!
- another meeting, a dog was jumping from one side of the altar to the other even though it was a man who stood ministering.

The surprising thing was that the different congregations we visited were blind to all these things. Members of these fellowship thought that they were receiving from the Holy Spirit, not knowing that they were indeed under the influence of satanic spirits.

Few of the ministers we visited were truthful but they were lean and weak. I asked the Lord why they were like that, He answered me.

“They are sincere but do not have enough of Me. As long as they continue ministering without being in constant communion with Me, they will get weaker and weaker and soon fall away”.

I cried and screamed for these congregations to see the danger they were exposed to, but none heard me. It really pained me but I was comforted when the Lord said,

“I will save the remnant; I will seek them and save them”.

Brethren, many spirits have gone out into the church, to defile the bride of Christ.

My prayer is that God will open your own eyes of understanding too, and give you the Spirit of discernment, to know the truth and the evil.

God is still calling and waiting for us even today at His table, well laid. Come and eat your fill. Come with a large heart of acceptance and you will be surprised how God will beautify your life, your loved ones, those around you. And then He will perfect all that concern you. Praise God.

CONCLUSION

What to do – the practical step to take

At the end of this reading, if your heart is made willing and you want to answer the Lord's invitation to His great feast at His table, say this simple prayer or you pray as the Lord leads you.

“Lord Jesus, I thank You for saving me. I now realize that I have missed Your way, but now I am back to submit to You. I yield completely to Your will and ask that You feed me at Your table. Reveal Yourself in me and give me Your grace to follow Your path of life as You teach me in Your school, in Jesus name”. Amen.

If you have sincerely prayed the above prayer, you are now enrolled into the Lord's school. To be in the Lord's school simply means to come under total leadership of His Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit is the one guiding, leading and directing your words, actions, thoughts and life generally, then you are in Holy Ghost School. After saying the above prayer, do not stop there, choose a specific time when you and God will be meeting in His presence daily and also dedicate the time to Him.

This time is called a covenant time with the Lord and should be regular. Some people are afraid to keep a covenant time with the Lord daily. They say, ‘I meet with the Lord at any convenient time, but no specific time’. The danger with this practice is that those people end up not finding time to meet with the Lord because other activities have come in between.

Hence, to avoid this uncommitted attitude to the Lord, choose keeping a covenant time with Him – when you separate to meet with Him at a particular

time every day. Some call this time quiet time, appointment with Jesus, Mount Zion hour, keeping the Lord's feast. Whatever name you choose for it, I encourage you to choose a particular time for your meeting with the Lord daily.

At that time, you separate to the place of meeting, which could be your room, study, office or any quiet place. It is better to meet Him at the same place daily. You separate to Him every day at a specific time and not just at your convenient time.

Spiritual activities like singing and praising the Lord, worship, warfare or intercessions are all good and we are refreshed when the Holy Spirit leads us to do them.

Covenant time is a time to be still (quiet) before the presence of the Lord, eating from His word, (studying the Bible or any book on discipleship) or sometimes you just sit still to hear Him speak to you. You keep meditating on His word – both written and spoken and keep yielding to His Spirit.

When you enter your closet at that time, thank Him for the invitation to His table, then say a brief prayer like this: *“Lord, I have come to eat from Your table, come and feed me. Speak to me, for your servant hears”*.

At this time, the Holy Spirit comes to teach you by Himself. He reveals the truth and life in the word to you and helps you experience that life. He comes to beautify your life, your family and your loved ones. The testimonies that follow are over whelming.

Brethren, you are now in God's school. There is no particular place or building that is Holy Ghost school, but it is God and you in a walk (relationship) on a daily basis. As you do this daily, the Lord will begin to speak to you, lead you and direct you in the way you should go. By so doing, He will lead you into your promised land, where He will fulfill all His plans for you in this life in preparation for the life with Him in eternity. In this way, He would surely lead you into the wealthy place!

How the Lord brought me into his school

In my earlier revelation, the Lord took me back to the mansion I left out of self will and showed me the inner court. And as I started moving towards the inner court, I woke up.

After that revelation, physically, God directed my steps to His servant, Lambert Okafor (LAFAMCALL End Time Ministries). As we discussed, he suddenly asked me to share my recent experiences with him.

That was how I shared the revelation of the mansion and even claimed that God wanted to use me in a great way. I got the greatest shock of my life when he rebuked me and bluntly told me that I had not even known God, as I ought to, and that should be my first desire, before talking of God using me in a great way.

He then told me about HOLY GHOST SCHOOL that is having a close walk with the Lord. It is a discipleship programme through which one learns to walk closely with the Lord, hear Him and obey His voice. He told me that I needed to have a close, intimate, conversational relationship with the Lord first, before talking of being used by God.

There and then while he prayed for me something great began to happen to me. The presence of God enveloped me and I began to experience the Lord's teaching on the spot.

First, the Lord opened my eyes and showed me His School in Spirit. There is a real school of the Holy Spirit indeed! Next, He showed me the different classrooms. He also showed me students that failed their exams and the class for repeaters. He then told me that in His school there is no mass promotion. Everyone must pass his class before he is promoted.

This encounter with the Lord lasted for about an hour and that marked the beginning of greater things that the Lord has for me. That was how I went back to my house that day with tears of joy.

At home, I cried and repented before God, asked Him to forgive me for all these years I had wasted in rebellion. I started my "quiet time", making out quality time to spend together with the Lord, eating at His table.

Brethren, I must confess that this is the best experience any believer can have – having a close, intimate, talking relationship with God. His Holy Spirit teaches, guides and directs me on how to go about my life endeavours. Even when I miss His guidance, He doesn't give up on me. He still finds a way of keeping me on track with Him. Indeed, it is a great privilege to be in such a relationship with the Almighty God.

You know, God loves to save us and our family. So in His mercy, He has also brought my family members into His school. Everyone keeps their quiet time with Him, our second daughter even started at the age of four.

This is God's plan to draw us closer to Him and make our lives beautiful. I remain grateful to Him for this beautiful plan to restore our lives.

I would like to encourage you to enter into an intimate relationship with the Lord today. Do not procrastinate it.

There is no other way to know God than to start spending more quality time with Him every day. Draw near to God's table daily with an open heart to learn and hear from the Holy Spirit. When you do this, then you become a student of Holy Ghost School.

Dear reader, start eating at God's table at once, at a particular time every day. You too will soon begin to experience amazing things from the Lord Jesus. God bless you.

BACK PAGE

Ngozi has been a born again Christian for many years, during which time she has served God at various positions within the Pentecostal Church circles and fellowships.

But despite her Church work and religious activities, Ngozi's life remained largely empty and unfulfilled.

She had fasted, prayed, and sought counsel from various men and women of God; all to no avail. That was her situation until a day came when God by His special mercy, decided to visit her in a unique way! God then revealed to her why life had been empty. She had been operating outside God's presence, the Lord told her.

That was how God began a fresh journey for her; journey to the wealthy place! Today, Ngozi is full of life and joy of the Lord and God has touched her to share her experiences with us in this book. Her story will encourage you to

pursue and to follow Him, until He also brings you into the wealthy place of His spiritual REST.

At the time of these thing; Ngozi was a Vice President at the Sister's Fellowship International (SFI), Onipanu, Lagos Chapter. She is presently into full time work in God's life Ministry. A Ministry committed to making disciples of all nations. She is also devoted to impacting women with Godly wisdom to build their homes for Christ. She is married with Children.