

Fred Adegoke

THE MIDNIGHT CRY

Awakening the end time Church, Announcing the coming great visitation

Fred Adegoke



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Introduction

The 'Midnight Cry' is the product of several years of waiting on the Lord, and the dealings of God. It is the first in the series of books meant to convey the call of God to His people to reposition themselves in this 'Evening Time'. It is a call to the body of Christ to return to the ancient landmarks that the fathers have set.

This book is an attempt to blow the trumpet in Zion, and to sound the alarm in the holy mountain of God. It is a midnight Cry as it were to awaken God's people from their slumber and from their sleep. It is a call for God's children to wake up, trim their lamps, walk circumspectly, and understand what the will of the Lord is in this midnight hour, so that – like the children of Issachar – God's people will know what they ought to do. God has promised that at evening time He would give light; and that when the earth is covered with darkness, and the people of the earth covered with gross darkness, His light would come upon us, and His glory would be seen in us.

I enjoin you to carefully and painstakingly walk through the ten chapters of this book. it is a careful examination of the different ramifications of what we need to know, and what we

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need to do to align ourselves with God's purpose in this important season in God's plan for the church.

The common thread that runs through the carefully written ten chapters of this book is the call to brokenness. It is the call to die to self. Indeed, except the grain of corn falls to the ground and dies, it will abide alone; but if it dies, it will produce much grain. Brokenness is the non-negotiable condition needed to usher in the anticipated visitation. Nothing short of it will produce the expected result in these last days. Brokenness precedes revival.

This book sets the path to knowing Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His suffering, that we all may be made to conform unto His death. It is an exhortation for us to understand what it entails to carry about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus Christ, so that the life of Jesus Christ may be made manifest in our body.

God bless you as you read.

Fred Adegoke

1

The Seeking Generation

This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face. – Psalm 24:6

here is a definite move of the Spirit among God's people globally. The Lord is separating a people to Himself: a people who shall ascend to the hill of the Lord, and shall stand in His holy place and worship Him in spirit and in truth.

At the time Jesus was born in Bethlehem—the city of David, many people in Israel were not aware that a King had been born. Although the religious leaders (the Pharisees and the Sadducees) had read about the coming of the Messiah, they were not aware that He had been born in their city. Why? They were too busy with their own programmes and activities. They could not discern that a great work had begun in the earth and that the Messiah had been born.

And she brought forth her first born Son, wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

- Luke 2:7

The entrance of our Lord Jesus Christ into this world was quite simple and unimpressive. He was born in a manger where sheep were kept and fed; for that was the path the Almighty had chosen to bring such a profound work into the earth. The entire process went without any form of sophistication; there was nothing classy or refined in the way Jesus entered the scene. It was so simple one could easily overlook it as an insignificant, inconsequential occurrence. There was no room for Mary His mother in the inn; so, she had to make do with a shed meant to keep sheep and goats. No wonder religious leaders who were ruled purely by their sight and senses could not identify that Jesus had been born.

But thanks be to God, there were some men walking in the spirit in the same Israel – simple shepherds abiding in the field and keeping watch over their flock by night (Luke 2:8). These shepherds epitomize a people in this end time who shall hear and know the joyful sound. They shall walk in the light of the countenance of the Almighty God (Psalms 89:15).

God Is Bringing Forth A New Work

The Lord is quietly but definitely bringing forth a new dimension of His work into the Church today. Just like David had to leave the courts of Saul because it was no longer safe and spiritually beneficial to him, those who would be part of this new divine order would have to part ways with the old



order which has become dysfunctional and antithetical to God's programme for His people.

David left in response to an inward call to a higher life and ministry that he knew could not be achieved in the courts of Saul. David's call was to a life of total death to self. "Except a grain of wheat falls to the ground and DIES, it remains alone..." (John 12:24). This implies that leaving the old comes at a cost. There are privileges, relationships, and other worldly benefits associated with the old that may be an obstacle to pressing further into the higher calling of God.

Thus, David departed and escaped to Cave Adullam, and there he began an entirely new life in the wilderness. He lived in caves and moved from pillar to post, seeking a higher life in the spirit, desiring to make it to the throne only through God's own way (1 Samuel 22:1-2). Similarly, God today is raising men with the same heart as David; men who seek to do only the Father's will and above everything seek the glory of the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

A people shall come forth in this hour who will be like the sons of Zadok. They shall not only minister to the house but shall stand before the Lord and minister to Him-for there is a difference between ministering to the house and ministering to the Lord (Ezekiel 44). These ones shall enter into the sanctuary of the Lord and shall ascend to His holy hill (Ezekiel 44:17).

They shall be clothed with linen garments; no wool shall come upon them while they minister in the gates of the inner court and within. They shall have linen breeches upon their loins: they shall **not** gird themselves with anything that **causes SWEAT.** This means that it shall not be by the might, energy or sweat of man—for the arm of flesh will surely fail. Man's energy causes sweat, but the Lord will deliver us from this realm and bring us into His rest. He will cause us to walk by the leading of the Holy Spirit only. In this realm there will be no need to sweat any longer.

The realm of ministry via sweating is the realm of ministering to the house and having self at the forefront of our lives and ministry. This is the realm where our denominations or ministries have become more important to us than the vision of the Body of Christ. It is the realm where ministers carve little kingdoms and empires around themselves. This is a ministry to the house (self) rather than a ministry to the Lord. The motive of every man will be judged and tried in this last hour.

How the gold (the vision) has become dim! How changed the fine gold! The stones of the sanctuary are scattered at the head of every street. The precious sons of Zion, valuable as fine gold; how they are regarded as clay pots, the work of the hands of the potter! – Lamentation 4:1-2



And it came to pass at that time, while Eli was lying down in his place, and when his eyes had begun to grow so dim that he could not see, and before the lamp of God went out in the tabernacle of the Lord where the ark of God was, and while Samuel was lying down." – 1 Samuel 3:2-3

This is the condition of the Church today, but the Lord in this hour is raising a David and a Samuel. He is preparing them and training them to make a difference. He is raising a band of men and women across the country who yearn for a total restoration of the vision that has now become dim, blurred and adulterated. The Lord shall see the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied in these ones. These ones shall ascend into the hill of the Lord with clean hands and a pure heart. They will neither lift their soul unto vanity nor swear deceitfully. This is the generation of those who will seek Him, who will seek the face of the God of Jacob in these last days (Psalm 24:3-6).

A Time of Restoration

Our consolation as we share this burden laid in our hearts by the Lord with Christians everywhere is that God is in the process of restoring His people in this hour. "I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the crawling locust, the consuming locust, and the chewing locust; My great army which I sent among you" (Joel 2:25).

A people shall be born; a seed shall serve Him; a generation shall seek His face. This great army shall come forth in these last days and shall declare His righteousness. All of creation is right now groaning and waiting for the manifestations of the sons of God (Romans 8:19). The heavens will continue to hold back the physical manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ until this restoration work is completed (Acts 3:21).

This is the Word of the Lord to everyone who cares to listen:

It shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark. But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. – Zechariah. 14:6-7

The light shall not be clear, nor dark: this means that things will be hazy; there will be compromise, the gold will become dim, the difference between the vile and the precious will be blurred. But this is our great consolation in this hour of darkness: In "this evening time", we have this hope that there shall be light; and that there shall be restoration.

Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; BUT the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. – Isaiah 60:1-2



You can be a part of the great light that the Lord is bringing forth in this hour - if you can sincerely turn to the Lord and take your pretenses off. You will need to disengage from every man-made covering; take the veil off your face and come out from every system of men that has put you in bondage. The only true covering that believers have is our Lord Jesus Christ. No man can be your effective covering; your pastor or your denomination cannot be your covering. Only the name of the LORD is your strong tower into which the righteous run and are safe (Proverbs 18:10).

Consider the prayer of the psalmist:

Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth, I will cry to You. When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I, for You have been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. - Psalm 61:1-3

The shepherds or pastors are supposed to teach and feed the people of God and not feed on them. They are supposed to stand in front and lead the people as true shepherds by showing good examples and leading the way. Sadly, many are ruling over and oppressing God's people. "Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me: and that COVER WITH A COVERING, NOT OF MY SPIRIT, they add sin to sin" (Isaiah 30:1).

The hour has come for God's people to be free, and to come out from every captivity that the devil has put them in, so they can serve God in holiness and in truth.

But to you who fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves.

- Malachi 4:2

This is not a call to join a new fellowship or a different ministry. It is a call to return to the Lord: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be" (Genesis 49:10). "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee [alone] shall all flesh come" (Psalm 65:2).

People are not called unto institutions or denominations or organizations of men; but are called unto Christ. Thus, they must look only to Christ, the Author and the Finisher of their faith. Fellowships, churches, and gatherings can only be fruitful and worthwhile when Christ remains the focus. Jesus Christ must remain the fulcrum around which everything else revolves, for other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is JESUS CHRIST (1 Corinthians 3:11).

The Church therefore belongs to Christ; He is the Chief Shepherd and the only Head and Founder of the Church. All other founders and presidents are liars: "

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Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. – John 10:1-2

We must seek God for a mighty breakthrough in our land. The spirit of materialism, insincerity, lukewarmness, and lack of commitment that characterizes the Church must give way to the deep work of the Spirit and a mighty visitation among God's people in the land. We challenge you to go into your closet to seek God's face afresh in fasting and prayers. We are sure that the Lord will confirm this truth in your heart.

God's people are separated today by the thick walls of traditions and denominations built by men. In many cases, true fellowship is no longer possible among God's people because the focus is on our church tenets, traditions, doctrines and not on Christ. Men and women are held firmly and securely in bondage behind denominational walls. They are therefore unable to rise above the masters who kept them within those walls. But Church must march on, and men and women must come to the realization of the truth to be set free. Only the truth can set us free.

A church must arise within the church, a nation within a nation, and a people within a people—a generation must arise that will seek His face. This generation, like Joel's army, will leap over man-made walls and flow in the Spirit according to the divine new order. Their eyes shall be fixed on the Lord

alone. The Levites who carried the ark in the Old Testament were like a nation within a nation, a church within a church. The Lord was their inheritance (their vision was the Lord alone). They were the only ones qualified to carry the ark; they stepped into Jordan River first (Jordan means death) and stayed in the midst of Jordan until the entire nation of Israel passed over on dry land.

These Levites epitomize the overcomer company who shall come forth in this last hour. They are the seed that shall serve Him and be accounted for a generation. Note that the Levites were selfless; they were completely dead to self and had no physical inheritance. The Lord was their portion and their inheritance. They sought no glory for themselves; their desire was to always glorify the Lord and Him alone. *This is the mark of a true ministry, and this is the purpose of our call into Christ.*

Let this be abundantly clear in the minds of all God's people: *a* seed shall rise and truly serve God in spirit and in truth in these last days.

A SEED SHALL SERVE HIM; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. – Psalm 22:30

And as Isaiah said before: unless the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a SEED, we would have become like Sodom, and we would have been made like Gomorrah.

- Romans 9:29

The End of Jacob's Well

n John 4, something very striking transpired between Jesus and a woman of Samaria:

He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. But He needed to go through Samaria. So, He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus, therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink". – John 4:3-6

Jesus' destination was Galilee. Somehow, He found a need to take a detour through Samaria, which ordinarily was not the regular route to Galilee. But there was a purpose in this detour. Sometimes, in our personal lives, it looks like things are delayed; it looks like there is a detour and things are taking longer than usual to come to fulfilment. But God has a purpose and is working out something.

Jesus took a detour on His way to Galilee to pass through Samaria in order to teach us a profound lesson. When He came to Samaria to a city called Sychar at about the sixth hour, He went straight to Jacob's well and sat on it because He was tired and exhausted from the journey (John 4:5-6).

Jesus Sat "On" the Well

This action is quite significant. In essence, Jesus was announcing the end of a realm of ministry that proceeded from that well (realm of human ability). "Jesus answered and said to her, whoever drinks of this water (from the well) will thirst again" (John 4:13). Surely, Jacob's well had been useful; it had served as a channel of blessing to many generations, but not so anymore. Jesus seemed to be saying that this well can no longer meet God's demand; it can no longer serve God's purpose.

The timing was equally significant. He sat on that well at about the sixth hour. Six is the number of man; man was created on the sixth day. Thus, the number six signifies the peak and the fullness of man, but there remains therefore a rest we must all enter into. There is the seventh day which is the Sabbath – the rest – of God. Prophetically, we have come to the end of the sixth day and the Lord is "sitting on that well" which had served for 6,000 years.

He is now ushering us into a new day: the seventh day, God's Sabbath. It is a new day of ministry "For He has spoken in a

certain place of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works"; and again in this place: "They shall not enter My rest." Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience (unbelief) ... There remains therefore a rest for the people of God" (Hebrews 4:4-6,9).

There is a ministry in the land that once served us well but is now fading away. The Lord is indeed taking away the first that He might establish the second. It was a difficult message for this woman of Samaria to take. This was all she knew and had been used to all her life. How could anyone now tell her that there is something more than what she was getting from this well (from our church denominations and religious groups) that she grew up to know as the only source of water? After all – we may say to ourselves – we are the oldest and maybe largest Pentecostal church in town; and we know it all!

What did the Samaritan woman say to Jesus? "Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?" (John 4:12). She went further to challenge Jesus: "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship" (John 4:20). Jesus then responded by declaring one of the greatest statements of truth in the Bible. He spoke prophetically about this seed that shall serve Him in this end-time:

Jesus said to her, woman, believe Me (notice the emphasis; Jesus was very serious about what He was about to say), the hour is coming, when you shall neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father... But the hour is coming, and now is, when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth (a seed shall serve Him); for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit: and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth. – John 4:21-24

These verses describe the nature and character of the work the Lord is bringing forth in this hour. God is seeking a departure from this earthly and shallow worship that we experience in many Christian circles today. He is weary of our man-made worship, tailored after the world and its systems. "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the fountain of the living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:13). A cistern is an artificial reservoir, built of rock or brick, excavated in the rock to hold rainwater.

Now Jacob's well was there. **Jesus therefore, being** wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. – John 4:6

To get respite from His weariness on the journey, Jesus sat on the well. Interestingly, this well would be the subject of discussion between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. It is



prophetically significant that Jesus sat "on" the well – He was signifying or making a public announcement that a chapter or dimension of His ministry was ending.

A well represents a source of life. It is the place where men drink from whenever they get thirsty; a source of ministry the people receive from. But Jesus seemed to be saying that that level of ministry could not lead them to fullness or perfection. So, He sat on the well to signify the closure of that realm of ministry. The well was Jacob's; he, his children, cattle, and generations after him drank from it—but Jesus was saying in effect it was no longer sufficient to quench the thirst of the people.

There remains a rest for the people of God, and we must labor to enter into that rest. The Lord is moving us away from the ministry of Jacob's well where we will surely thirst again. In its place, He is in the process of bringing us to a new level of ministry where we shall thirst no more—because out of our bellies shall flow springs of living water. God wants to bring us into total rest, where we cease to struggle in life and in ministry. No longer would it be by might or by power but by His Spirit alone. The Lord will work in us both to will and to do His good pleasure.

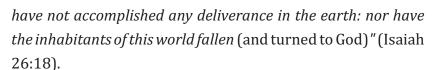
The ministration that came out of Jacob's well for 6,000 years had some value in that it met the needs of people howbeit was limited. The revival and refreshing they got from drinking the water from this well lasted but a short while. Thereafter, the euphoria waned, and the thirst returned; so, they had to go back to the well to drink more water.

However, Jesus is saying to us: a new day is here. He is offering us a new life in Him and He is set to give us living water. Whosoever drinks of this water shall never thirst again, but the water shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life (John 4:14). Are we ready to partake of this living water?

The Modus Operandi for the Church Is Changing

Men have turned away from the path of truth to seek earthly riches in the name of prosperity gospel. The church is full of perverse teachings by men of corrupt minds, leaders destitute of the truth and who suppose that gain is godliness – from such men we must withdraw (1Timothy 6:5). Men are building kingdoms around themselves, entrenching themselves, forgetting that the things which are highly exalted in the sight of men is abomination in the sight of God. "And He said to them," "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15).

Little wonder our relationship with God is superficial and artificial. Our commitment is shallow, and our light has become dim with resultant darkness in the land. We have not been able to make any impact on our surroundings. Our candle is hidden under the bushel as it were. "We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind: we



Some leaders in the church have removed the ancient landmarks of consecration and upholding the integrity in Christian ministry. They seize the flock and milk them dry for personal gains; they feed off the people of God and exploit them in the name of the gospel (Job 24:2). Today, ministers of God reap everyone his corn in the field; they gather the vintage of the wicked (taking offerings from sinners) and cause the naked and poor to lodge without clothing, leaving them without covering in the cold. They are wet with the showers of the mountain and live lavishly. They pluck the fatherless from the breast and cause the innocent in the house to go without clothing. They take away the sheaf from the hungry (Job 24:6-10).

Here is the word of the Lord to such leaders in the church:

Wail, shepherds, and cry! Roll about in the ashes, you leaders of the flock! For the days of your slaughter and your dispersions (of the innocent flock) are fulfilled; you shall FALL like a precious vessel. And the shepherds will have no way to flee, nor the leaders of the flock to escape. – Jeremiah 25:34-35

Let us pray for mercy and repent before it is too late, for judgement will begin right in the household of God. "Whose

voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made (everything that is man-made or made from selfish motives in the church today), that the things which cannot be shaken may remain (those things done by the leading of the Holy Spirit and true worship in the spirit). Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Hebrews 12:26-28).

Jesus Reached out to the Samaritan Woman

A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink". – John 4:7

It is important to know that Jesus reached out to this Samaritan woman first. The step that Jesus took in asking the Samaritan woman for water is exceptional, considering the fact that Jews generally had no dealings with Samaritans. It is unthinkable to find a Jew interacting with a Samaritan in the public, let alone asking for water. But Jesus, by that act, gave us a powerful principle here – we need to build bridges.

We must learn to reach out first and connect with people no matter their background. Jesus broke all human barriers in His ministry. The Bible records that He was a friend of sinners:

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man came eating



and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her children.

- Matthew 11:18-19

The Samaritan woman was touched by Jesus' gesture of asking her for water (John 4:9). This became the opportunity that He needed to open up a profound discussion that eventually transformed her life. The woman of Samaria marveled at Jesus' responses and went further to ask if He was greater than the patriarch Jacob who also drank from the well (John 4:11-14).

Go Call Your Husband

The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw." Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here".

- John 4:15-16

It is quite instructive to note the way the woman instinctively asked Jesus for the water. She didn't understand how it would work but she knew she needed something deeper than what she had always known. The way she opened up and asked the Lord for this water is an indication of her level of need. When she saw the ray of light in what Jesus was offering, it wasn't difficult for her to immediately ask for help. The situation of this Samaritan woman is an indication of the need many people have today.

Many believers are engaged in numerous religious activities like the Samaritan woman, yet problems abound in their family life. The Samaritan woman needed a personal encounter with the Lord beyond the religious activity of drinking from the well. Jesus came for the lost sheep of the house of Israel – those who are sick and need the physician (Matthew 11:28-30).

Jesus aimed for the gut issue by asking the Samaritan woman to go call her husband (John 4:16). At some point in life, everyone must face the gut issues in their lives. Many need to square up with God and open their lives to Him so that He can help and give them total victory. The scriptures states that "He who covers his sins will not prosper; but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy" (Proverbs 28: 13).

The Samaritan woman was surprised at Jesus' response, and that revelation marked the beginning of transformation in her life and in the city of Samaria.

Worship in Spirit and in Truth

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship

Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." – John 4:21-24

These are defining words spoken by our Lord Jesus. The hour is now when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. This takes true worship away from physical and mundane things like religious rites and activities to spiritual realities.

It is a new day. There is a call to walk in the Spirit and not by religious dogmas and traditions. God seeks men and women that will truly worship Him in spirit and in truth; men who will learn to listen to, and be led by, the Spirit (Romans 8:1). Apostle Paul was very clear about this when he said, "We are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Philippians 3:3).

There is no place for the arm of the flesh and the traditions of men in worshiping God in this end time. Paul also listed all his credentials in the flesh, but none of them qualified him to worship the Father in the spirit. Paul desired to "be found in Christ not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ; the righteousness which is from God by faith" (Philippians 3:9).

See a Man Who Told Me All Things I Ever Did

The woman said to Him, I know that Messiah is coming (who is called Christ). When He comes, He will

tell us all things. Jesus said to her, **I who speak to you** am **He** ... The woman left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and said to the men, Come, see a Man, who told me all things that ever I did. Could this be the Christ? – John 4:25-26, 28-29

After an encounter with Jesus, the Samaritan woman left behind her water pot – which signified her pride, tradition, and every other thing that could hinder her – to embrace the message Jesus brought. She then ran into the city to tell everyone what Jesus did in her life. That marked the beginning of a mighty revival in that region. We need to lay aside every encumbrance hindering our walk with the Lord and run this race with perseverance, looking to Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith.

The Samaritan woman, who appeared weak, helpless, timid and ashamed of the state of her family, became God's tool for a mighty revival. The Lord can turn your situation around no matter what you are going through. Even if you think you are a failure or an outcast, as long as you are willing to present your life to God, He can turn your situation around. We need to cry to the Lord, like the Samaritan woman did: "Sir, give me drink."

We must come to Jesus sincerely and with an open heart, withholding nothing, then shall we find help.

Come To Me All You Who Labor

herefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. But He needed to go through Samaria. – John 4:1-4

It is important to understand that Jesus' decision about leaving Judea for Galilee was a sudden but necessary one. It was precipitated on the actions of the Pharisees who sought to poison the air by creating an atmosphere of strife and division between John the Baptist and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus realized that the Pharisees were keeping count of the baptisms His camp and that of John the Baptist had conducted, and created the impression that Jesus was ahead of John in the number of people baptized, thereby turning Jesus and John into rivals before the people. Jesus immediately realized that was not a good situation, so He took the decision to leave that vicinity with His disciples.

The devil inspired the Pharisees to do that so that the work of God would be hindered, but Jesus quickly took steps to nip that in the bud. The trip that Jesus embarked upon from Judea to Galilee through Samaria turned out to be one of the most important trips Jesus ever undertook. He made one of the most important declarations in the Scripture during His encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well on this trip. The journey was triggered by a seeming enemy attack on Jesus.

The devil wanted to use the people in Judea at that time to create animosity between Jesus and John. But for both of them, that was not an issue because they both were working for the same Kingdom as John testified:

John answered them, saying, "I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loosen."—John 1:26-27

The Lord Discerned the Spirit of Dissension

There are two things we must learn from our Lord's handling of this situation. The first was that He discerned very quickly the intent of the Pharisees to create division between Him and John in the eyes of the people. He saw an attempt by the Pharisees to sow the seed of bitterness, and He immediately resisted it. The spirit of discernment is very crucial in our walk



with the Lord in these last days. This is why the Scripture states that as many as are led by the Spirit are the sons of the God.

It is important that we walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. We must understand what the will of the Lord is in every circumstance and be wise in our decisions (Ephesians 5:15-18). Servants of the Lord must not strive or engage in envy. We must walk honestly and not encourage any temptations (Romans 13:13). We are not to do anything in strife or vain glory, but we should be lowly in our minds and esteem others better than ourselves (Philippians 2:3).

The second lesson for us to learn is the fact that Jesus deferred to John by leaving that vicinity with His disciples so as not to allow the enemy to sow any seed of discord in people's heart. This shows the sensitivity of our Lord Jesus. To change the narrative, and diffuse the plan of the enemy, He took physical steps of changing location. Sometimes we have to take physical steps to break the enemy's plot. We have to be willing to let go of our rights and reach out to one another in the spirit of forgiveness so that peace can prevail.

Jesus had to Pass through Samaria

He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. But He needed to go through Samaria. So, He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. – John 4:3-5

When Jesus left Judea and headed for Galilee, He knew by the Spirit that He had to pass through Samaria. Going through Samaria was a humbling process – one that Jesus had to do. This is because in those days, Jews typically had no dealings with the Samaritans, yet Jesus had to overcome that cultural obstacle. Also, Samaria was a watch mountain that Jesus had to go through in order to fulfill God's purpose.

Many of us equally have to go through our own Samaria; we have to give up our biases and prejudices in order to walk in the will of God. Jesus knew that going through Samaria meant breaking a glass ceiling of tradition, trampling on the pride of the Jewish people, and submitting absolutely to the will of the Father. Not only did Jesus succumb to going to Samaria, He also came to a city named 'Sychar,' which means the 'end'.

The city signifies an end to an era; an end to a particular way of seeing and doing things; an end to an old way of life and to a particular kind of ministry. Jesus came to the end of Himself, the end to a chapter in His ministry; He came to the end of the road so that a better road could be opened up to Him. God is bringing us to the end of our knowledge and understanding, our ways of doing things, and abilities, so that He can supply His strength on our behalf.

Jesus Became Weary on His Journey

Now Jacob's well was there, Jesus therefore, **being** wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. – John 4:6

There are a few things we must learn from this action of Jesus. The first is that Jesus became tired and weary from the journey. Could Jesus the Son of God be tired and exhausted? Here, we see what it means for Jesus our Great High Priest to be touched with the feelings of our infirmities (Hebrews 4:15).

Indeed, Jesus was subjected to everything we are subjected to as humans today; He was tempted in every way we are tempted. In this instance, He understood what it meant to be tired and weary, that is, what we feel when we have our backs to the wall after being hit by setbacks.

Even though Jesus was the Son of God, He got to a point in His life where He got weary in His journey. As children of God and fellow pilgrims, things sometimes come to a head in our journey of life that we experience despair, dejection, fatigue, exhaustion, and hunger. We must remember that our Master was tired and exhausted at some point as well. Today, He understands how we feel. He is touched with the feelings of our infirmities; so He is in the best position to see us through if we trust Him and cast all our cares on Him.

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light. – Matthew 11:28-30

Jesus knew what He was saying when uttered these words, He understands what you are passing through and knows exactly where the shoe pinches you the most, because He had been there. Sometimes, our individual life journey can be long and difficult such that we feel like giving up because of the difficulties we encounter. No one around us may understand what we are passing through, but Jesus does, and He is able to see us through (1 Peter 5:7) and give us total victory.

As Soon As Zion Travailed...

now therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. – Daniel 9:25

And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: 'After! this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up; So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the Lord who does all these things.' – Acts 15:15-17

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God... for we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of

the spirit, even ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. – Romans 8:19,22-23

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she with a child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered" – Revelation 12:1-2

"Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Saith the Lord: shall I cause to bring forth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children" – Isaiah 66:8

The Beginning of Sorrows

Just a few years ago, the entire world reeled under the deadly attack of an unseen enemy; virtually every nation of the earth felt the pangs of this evil and devastating enemy. The whole of creation groans and travails in pain, as it were. Nations of the world are greatly troubled on every side. The effects of climate change are biting hard in almost all regions of the earth. Nations are rising against nations, and kingdoms against kingdoms. We see famines, earthquakes, and pestilences (pandemics) all over the place (Matthew 24:7). Yet, according to Matthew 24:8, all these are the beginning of sorrows.

In recent times, nations of the world (Nigeria inclusive) have witnessed wanton, unrestrained, and vicious destruction of lives and property. The Church of God is besieged by assailants; God's people are being delivered up to be afflicted and killed. They are hated of all nations because of the Name of Christ. Many brethren are getting offended, leading to betrayals and acrimony in the Church. Nigeria has had a fair share of these travails.

Furthermore, many false prophets have risen and are deceiving many. All these are the fulfilment of Jesus' predictions on the Mount of Olives:

And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved ... For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. – Matthew 24:12-13, 21-22

Darkness indeed is covering the earth, and gross darkness the people, but God shall make a way for His people. He shall arise upon them, and His glory shall be seen upon the Church (Isaiah 60:2).

A Word Particular to Nigeria

Nigeria, since the mid '80s but especially in the last 15 years have been in and out of tumultuous seasons of great pain and distress. Apart from the past challenges of COVID-19 pandemic and economic hardships, the Nigerian nation was invaded by unrelenting killer herdsmen, bandits, kidnappers, religious extremists, and terrorists.

The sheer magnitude of mayhem unleashed upon the country is totally unprecedented with hundreds of schoolchildren kidnapped at a swoop across various locations. Some of them were raped, tortured, and killed. Life was just not safe in many parts of the country. The nation and its government appeared totally helpless in the face of the army of interlopers. The nation appeared to be drifting towards a failed state. Things were never this bad; the nation had never been this polarized.

In addition to all of these, recent years in Nigeria has been marked by unprecedent inflation in all areas; food prices, transportation cost, fuel prices, and the cost of virtually anything that is needed for human survival has gone off the roof. Exchange rates unbelievably are at their all-time high rates. Yet income for most ordinary Nigerians have remained largely unchanged. The "Japa" syndrome among young people appear to be taking the centre stage. Things have never been this difficult and challenging in the country. Many families and individuals in the country are finding it very hard to make ends meet.

God Has a Purpose in It All

We thank God that there has been improvement in the security situation in many parts of the country, but things are still far from ideal. Economically, the situation is getting worse by the day for many families in Nigeria. These are indeed troublous times; the nations of the world are groaning and travailing in pain. We are wont to ask: Does God have a plan and a purpose for His Church globally in these troubling times? Can we look into the Scriptures and draw strength to face the difficult times that we live in? Let me assure the church: the Lord's promise concerning our nation Nigeria and the nations of the world shall be fulfilled; this nation shall be restored. God has promised that because of the elect in this nation, the days shall be shortened. The Lord surely will make a way for His elect to be saved and delivered.

The true Church of God globally is pregnant with a child, travailing in birth and waiting to be delivered. Amidst this tremendous stress that the nations of the world are presently going through, God wants to renew our strength and realign His people to His own purpose. He wants to bring forth a people who shall be caught up to His throne. God wants to bring forth a new nation, for "As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth..." Creation is troubled and in deep groaning, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.

As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise (Proverbs 27:21). The fining pot is for silver, and

the furnace for gold: but the Lord trieth the hearts (Proverbs 17:3). Silver is purified only by being placed inside the fining pot. Similarly, gold is only purified when subjected to a fiery furnace. God's people shall be tried with fire and only after shall they be in a position to offer true praise to Him. David declared that "...thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress" (Psalm 4:1).

These are trying times, but we shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. The Lord shall prepare us and get us ready to be revealed in these last days – although now for a season, things are difficult, and we are in heaviness through manifold trials and temptations. The wicked, even our enemies, have encamped against us to eat up our flesh. The pressure all around us is palpable and intense, and the pressure of the battle is rising daily against us in our minds and in our physical bodies.

But our hearts shall not fear. The Lord shall lift up our heads above our enemies. In these troubling times He shall hide us in His pavilion and in the secret place of His tabernacle; and He shall set us up upon the rock (Psalm 27). The trial of our faith is much more precious than gold that perishes; though we may be tried with fire, we shall be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of our Lord (I Peter 1:5-7).

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

- James 1:2-4

Challenging and difficult situations will develop around us as the Lord seeks to prepare us to bring forth and manifest His glory. The birth pangs shall increase, just as it becomes increasingly painful for a woman who is about to deliver a baby. But the moment the baby is born, the joy overshadows all the pains of childbirth.

A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world.

- John 16:21

The Sun Clothed Woman

Let us read a fairly long passage which reveals the situation with the Church today:

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And with his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth:

and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" - Revelation 12:1-9

The Church is faced today with a fierce-looking dragon with seven heads, ten horns, and seven crowns upon its head. This dragon is so forceful and powerful that with its tail (its power of deception), it pulls down a third of the stars of God to the earth (from the realm of heaven to the realm of the flesh). This dragon represents the present world order typified by the socio-economic and political systems of the world. This dragon is standing before the Church that is in labor pains, ready to devour her child as soon as it is brought forth.

This child that the Church is about to bring forth is meant to rule the nations with power and authority, but Satan wants to stop this. This is the reason for the conflict. It is an age-long conflict.

And the dragon was enraged with the woman (the Church), and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. – Revelation 12:17

The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool." The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power; in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth. – Psalm 110:1-3

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. – Matthew 11:12

But this dragon shall fail because this woman (the church) in the midst of these troublous times shall bring forth her child, who shall rule all the nations with a rod of iron: and this child shall be caught up unto God, and to His throne (Revelations 12:5). The streets and the wall shall be built again even in troublous times (Daniel 9:25).

The Lord will heal and restore the relationships of His people;

He will protect His people by compassing them about with songs of deliverance (Psalm 32:7). The Lord will bring back the ability of His people to connect and relate with one another in transparency and purity of heart. Streets are for connecting people and places. The Lord will build the streets again; He will re-unite His people. The Lord will bring back true "koinonia" (fellowship) to His house. The pressure of the times will draw the people of God closer together like never before.

There will be a binding together of the hearts of God's people. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:6-7). As we fellowship with one another, the blood of Jesus Christ His Son shall cleanse us from all sin, and sin shall no longer have dominion over us.

The entrance of God's word shall give light to the darkness in and around us, causing it to dissipate. "Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in Him and in you: because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining" (1 John 2:8). Deep shall truly call unto deep, and iron shall sharpen iron (Psalm 42:7; Proverbs 27:17).

We shall walk in the light of His word, opening ourselves to



God and to one another. Nothing shall be hidden. "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, **stand on the sea of** glass, having harps of God" (Revelation 15:2). The sea of glass here indicates a people who are connected with one other, walking in truth and having transparent relationship with one another.

These are a people that have passed through the furnace; their lives have been mingled with fire and they consequently have victory over the beast, and over his image and his mark. Their qualification is their transparent life and relationship. They are seen standing on the sea of glass (transparency), having harps in their hands and singing the praise of our God.

No More Time to Dwell in Our Cities

So, the priests, and the Levites, and some of the people, and the singers, and the porter, and the Nethinims, dwelt in their cities, and all Israel in *their cities.* – Ezra 2:70

The people of God dwelt in their own cities; but there were no connecting streets between the cities. Every man did his own thing. The barrier of partition is strong, dividing God's people and preventing true fellowship. The denominational fortifications built by men for selfish reasons have eradicated true fellowship among God's people, and so the power of God is not made manifest in our midst as it should be. This dividing line between God's people is sharp and palpable, but the Lord is set to break down the walls of division and build streets again to connect the cities (the people of God) in these troublous times.

And when the seventh month had come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered together as one man to Jerusalem.

- Ezra 3:1

This was during a very troubling time in Israel. The children of Israel had just come out of captivity. Many of them had been carried away by Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon into captivity. They were returning with lots of physical and emotional wounds, and they came to Jerusalem from where everyone had been dwelling in their own cities (Ezra 2:1).

True fellowship was missing because every man dwelt in their cities. This was insufficient. This situation had to change for Israel to move ahead and receive total healing and restoration. God's people must come out of their individual cities. We all have to come out to 'Jerusalem as ONE man'.

Our cities could be our career or our businesses; our cities could be our wealth and possessions. They could even be our giftedness and our ministries. We need to lay all this on the altar and be found in Him alone. Some in the church have been



held bondage to the things of this world. The fashion and trends of this world constitute cities that we must come out of.

Each person needs to identify the cities in which they have been held captive and come out of them. We must count as loss the things that are gain to us for the sake of Christ. We must count them as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. We must come out of our different cities and be found in Him and Him alone—not having our own righteousness.

The streets must be built again! God's people must come out of their different cities and come to 'Jerusalem' as 'one man'. The streets will be built again so that the people of God can connect and fellowship in true 'koinonia'. God's people must gather as one man. "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto *Him shall the gathering of the people be"* (Genesis 49:10). It shall be a gathering together to Him, not to any man or denomination or systems of man, but unto the Lord alone shall the gathering of His people be.

"Our God shall come and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people. Gather my saints together to me; those who have made covenant with me by sacrifice" (Psalm 50:3-5). The Lord is moving by His Spirit to gather to Himself His saints from all over the world who have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice. It is time to gather as one man to 'Jerusalem'.

For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together ... And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

- Matthew 24:27-28, 3

We must abandon our comfort zones and reach out to one another. We must open the door of our hearts and physical doors to people who don't look like us or belong to our church/fellowship. The Lord will build the streets again and secure His people. With all lowliness and meekness and with longsuffering, we must bear with one another in love; and endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace – recognizing that "there is only one body, and one spirit, even as we are called in the one hope of our calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all" (Ephesians 4:4-6).

Bringing Many Sons To Glory

ut we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. – Hebrews 2:9-10

Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.

- Isaiah 66:8

Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: **thou** hast enlarged me when I was in distress, have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer. – Psalm 4:1

The seasons of suffering will always precede the seasons of honor and glory. Jesus the Captain of our salvation demonstrated this clearly in His life and ministry. He is the faithful Witness, and the first begotten of the dead (Revelation 1:5) yet He had to undergo falling to earth before He could rise in the glory of fruitfulness and multiplication. "Except a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone. But if it dies, it brings forth much fruit" (John 12:24). This is a great mystery which is not only true for our Lord but also for every member of His Body who in these last days desire to come into the full measure of Christ's stature.

It is only as we enter, carry, and appropriate His cross that we are going to be of any profit to others in ministry. Jesus was that grain of wheat that fell into the ground and was sown in death to bring many sons to glory. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. He was made perfect through **suffering**. He was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death before He was crowned with glory and honor. He paid the price – the ultimate price by tasting death for every man.

By this singular act, Jesus became the Captain of our salvation, paving the way for us – so that through His sufferings many sons will walk in perfection and be brought into glory. Jesus laid down a divine principle here for us to follow. He said "I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him" (John 13:16). It is sufficient for a servant to be like his master, but a servant cannot be greater than his master.

Partakers of His Sufferings

In as much as Paul was able to appropriate this experience, he was able to testify that: "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ for the sake of His body, which is the church" (Colossians 1:24). And again, John the Beloved declared: "He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16). We cannot atone for the sins of the people; only Christ can do this – and He has done so already. But as members of His body and ministers of the Gospel, we can share in His suffering and His rejection, and in that way touch the lives of several others.

We can suffer for the truth when we refuse to compromise the truth; and in our sufferings for the truth, it shines forth in greater dimensions. We can enter and share in the pangs and the pains that Jesus went through at Gethsemane. In this dark hour of the Church when Christ is being betrayed daily, we can stand for the truth without compromising our faith.

Today, the gospel of Christ has been adulterated. Many in the church no longer endure sound doctrine but are driven by their lusts and have heaped onto themselves teachers and preachers having itching ears. Many have turned away their ears from the truth and have turned unto fables. Preachers in the name of prosperity live in opulence, parade exotic and outlandish lifestyles devoid of the life, character and power of Christ. Many there are in the Church, who like Demas, have

for saken Christ and have loved this present world.

No amount of fleshly striving can produce this death experience in us, except we learn to share in His rejection, betrayal, and death; and we learn to recognize His body, identify ourselves with the Body, and minister to the Body according to our God-given ability. We must refuse to associate with anything that will injure another member of the Body. If we do this, we will be partakers of Christ's sufferings and death in this day and hour of His betrayal.

And if children, then heirs—heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us ... For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

- Romans 8:16-19, 22-23

The Fellowship of His Sufferings

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus



my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith; That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. – Philippians 3:7-11

Knowing Him and the power of His resurrection go side by side with knowing the fellowship of His suffering. To be found in Him requires that we suffer the loss of all things, and count everything to be dung. It means we must totally deny ourselves. We must die to self for us to experience the glory of the resurrection life.

The Scripture admonishes us to learn from the brethren and the prophets who have gone before us. We should learn from their sufferings, afflictions, and patience. We should learn from the way they remained steadfast, immovable, and abounding always in the work of the Lord even while they endured all manner of pain and contradictions.

My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. Indeed, we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful. – James 5:10-11

We have read about the afflictions of Job and his patience in walking through the trials that confronted him. The narrative however didn't end in gloom; we read of how God showed him great mercy and turned his situation around. We too must hold fast to Him no matter what, knowing fully well that our God is abundantly able to deliver us.

Jesus was never shy to let His disciples know that suffering is an inevitable part of following Him. He told them, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). On several occasions, He emphasized how much they would need to deny themselves and take up their cross daily – if indeed they wanted to follow Him.

Jesus warned that anyone who attempts to save their life would eventually lose it, but whosoever chooses to lose their life for His sake would save it. He was clear in His teachings that He would suffer many things; that He would be rejected by the elders, chief priests and scribes, and be slain; but that He would be raised unto glory on the third day. He taught His disciples that it does not profit a man to gain the entire world at the expense of his soul. He insisted that whoever is ashamed of Him and His words, He, the Son of man, shall be ashamed of such when He returns in His glory (Luke 9:22-26).



Let this be a settled fact in you, my friend: persecutions and tribulations are part of the gospel package. The apostles, Barnabas and Paul, told the new converts "... We must through many tribulations enter the Kingdom of God (Acts 14:22). We cannot take the sweet side and leave the bitter side. We cannot pick and choose what we want. Jesus told His disciples about forsaking lands, houses and family ties (brothers, sisters, father, mother, wife, and children) for the Kingdom (Mark 10:29). This is hard and painful, but it is what we must do.

Following Christ – the call to authentic discipleship – requires a total denial of self for the sake of the gospel. It was the requirement for those pioneer disciples, and so it is for us today; there cannot be two standards. However, the Lord assured them that whoever suffered loss for the gospel's sake shall receive a hundredfold in this present life and in the age to come.

But he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time (in this world), houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions, and in the world to come eternal life."

- Mark 10:30

God is not unaware of our need to be blessed. He is a God of blessing, and He will continue to shower His blessing upon His people. He will bless and has, in fact, blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). He gives us richly all things to enjoy (1 Timothy 6:17). He

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constantly thinks of us, and His thoughts towards us are always of peace and never of evil, to give us the future we hope for (bring us to an expected end - Jeremiah 29:11).

He will supply all our needs according to His riches in glory, but first we must get our priorities right. Our heavenly Father knows our needs; He knows that we need the same things that the gentiles seek after. However, He expects us to seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness (and this usually comes with a price), and then those things which the gentiles seek after will be added to us and even more (Matthew 6:32-33).

The Beauty of Contradictions

ho through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection ... And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

- Hebrews 11:33-35,39-40

This great passage of Hebrews 11 is the roll-call of great men and women and the great escapades of faith that characterized each one of them. In this passage, we are told of great men of faith who stopped the mouth of lions, quenched the violence of fire, and escaped the edge of the sword. The roll-call includes women who, through faith, received their dead raised back to life.

In this same passage, however, we are also told of others who were tortured, not accepting deliverance so that they may obtain a better resurrection. This action of theirs, we are told, is equally inspired by faith. We are told of others who were weak and had no strength in themselves. But out of their weakness, they found strength. These ones too had faith, even though they were tortured and some of them were killed. In their weak and vulnerable situations, they demonstrated faith, and it was accounted unto them for righteousness. They too obtained a good report through faith.

God Spoke in a Still Small Voice

This passage proves that we cannot put God in a cage. The God we serve is a sovereign God. He, God, is His own interpreter; He is God all by Himself. We cannot pigeon-hole Him. He works and moves in diverse ways to perform His wonders. We cannot create a single story or a single path for Him. This is the beauty of contradictions. God is bigger than our experiences. He may be in our experiences, but we cannot define Him by our experiences.

A good example is the case of Elijah the man of God. After Jezebel had threatened him, Elijah ran away as a frustrated man. After a very long and tiring journey, fleeing from a



woman (this in itself was a contradiction, but God allowed it), he came under a juniper tree where, in utter frustration, he requested that God should take his life. In that state, the angel of the Lord appeared to him and fed him. After Elijah ate a little, the angel asked him to rise and eat again because the journey ahead of him was a very long one.

And the angel of the Lord said to Elijah, go forth, and stand upon the mountain before the Lord. And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice and God was in that still small voice.

- 1 Kings 19:11-13

Although God has moved in the past in a rushing mighty wind (Acts 2:2), and He has spoken in a flame of fire out of the midst of a burning bush before (Exodus 3:2), this time around, He chose not to speak to Elijah in the wind or fire or even in an earthquake – because He is sovereign. He is God. Instead, He spoke to Elijah in a still small voice. God's ways are past finding and cannot be defined with our finite and limited minds. Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways higher than our ways.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him?" For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen. – Romans 11:33-36

In our walk with God and in our quest for fullness, we must realize that our God is sovereign. He has the final word, not us. Our relationship with Him should not be conditional; it should not be based on what we experience or how we feel. Irrespective of our circumstances, we must worship and serve Him. We must come to a place in God where we can declare like Paul:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- Romans 8:35, 37-39

Paul stated that he has learnt to be content in whatever state he found himself. He said, "I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:11-13). He was saying, in essence, that his relationship with God transcends his experience and circumstances. Whether or not he has money in his pocket, Jesus is still Lord. Whether he has or does not have is immaterial, He is still the Lord of his life.

While I am thankful for His blessings upon my life, I do not serve Him because of those blessings. I serve Him because He is the Lord of my life. This is the path to the crucified life. The story of God as Father Christmas who doles out blessings as presented by the church today is wrong. We serve God because He is God and He deserves to be worshiped – not because of the blessing we get from Him. If He then blesses us as we worship him, that is fine. This one-sided belief is the reason the fellowship of many with God is shallow; it is the reason our relationship and walk with Him is fickle and lacks depth. We really do not know Him as we should.

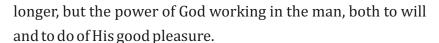
John the Baptist declared with conviction: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

It takes a man who has come to a deep realization of the fact that in our flesh dwells no good thing and that the arm of flesh will fail, to see and experience the glory and the power of God. We must come to the end of ourselves so that Christ can be manifested in us. We must decrease so that He can increase. It is in our weakness that His power will be made perfect in us. We must recognize that we are nothing so that His power can rest upon us.

It takes a crucified life to glory and take pleasure in one's infirmities and weakness, so that the power of Christ may rest upon us and work through us. It takes total humility to come to a place where we take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches and insults, in necessities and deprivations, in persecutions and distresses, for Christ's sake: for it is only when we are weak that we can be made strong. Only God can work this out in the life of a man. And only a spiritually-minded man can do this.

What makes sense to the spiritually-minded person is contradictory to the natural man's mind. What could be more contradictory to the natural man's mind than Paul saying that when he is weak, then he is strong. This looks like a contradiction, but embedded in this statement is a divine principle that can change our lives completely if we understand it.

How can a man take pleasure in infirmities, insults and reproaches, a state of need and deprivation, persecutions, and distresses? No man in his right mind will desire to be associated with these things. It takes the power of God to bring a man to this point. At this point, it is not the man at work any



Paul's Thorn in the Flesh

To help us gain further insights into the paradoxical nature of Paul's ministry, let us read some of his statements from various Bible translations. Nothing can be more contradictory than the words of Apostle Paul in these verses. They reveal the depth and the power of Paul's experience. Herein is the mystery and the beauty of contradiction; herein is the beauty of a life totally sold out to God – a crucified life.

2 Corinthians 12:8-10

Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. Each time He said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness". So now I am glad to boast about my weakness, so that the power of Christ can work through me. That's why I take pleasure in my weakness, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (New Living Translation)

Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would depart from me, and He said to me, my grace is sufficient for you, because the power is perfected in weakness. Therefore, rather I will boast most gladly in my weakness, in order that the power of Christ may

reside in me. Therefore, I delight in weakness, in insults, in calamities, in persecutions and difficulties for Christ's sake. For whenever I am weak, then I am strong. (The Lexham English Bible)

At first I didn't think of it as a gift, and begged God to remove it. Three times I did that, and then He told me, my grace is enough; it's all you need. My strength comes into its own in your weakness. Once I heard that, I was glad to let it happen. I quit focusing on the handicap and began appreciating the gift. It was a case of Christ's strength moving in on my weakness. Now I take limitation in stride, and with good cheer, these limitations that cut me down to size – abuse, accidents, opposition, bad breaks. I just let Christ take over! And so the weaker I get, the stronger I become. (The Message)

For this I thrice besought the Lord that it might depart from me. And He said to me: My grace suffices for thee; for my power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather boast in my weakness, that the power of the Christ may dwell upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weakness, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in straits, for Christ: for when I am weak, then I am powerful. (Darby Bible)

For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said to me, My grace is



sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong. (King James Version)

Though He Slays Me

Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him. He also shall be my salvation, for a hypocrite could not come before Him.

- Job 13:15-16

Job trusted God despite everything he went through. His friends asked him to curse God and die – it was that bad – but he refused to curse God. Instead, he trusted God. He served God in his pain and in all his infirmities. He declared that even if God decided to slay him, he would still serve Him. Except the level of our commitment comes to this level, I am afraid we shall not experience God's full and total deliverance in our personal life and in our land.

Esther made the difference in Israel at a very critical time because she was ready to die for a course she believed in. She gave up everything for the course of her people: "Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and

my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I PERISH, I PERISH" (Esther 4:16).

Esther did what no one had ever done before. What she did had no precedence; no one ever did such a thing; it was not according to the law at the time. No one dared to go in to the king without an invitation – but Esther did. She realized that putting herself in such a vulnerable situation is the key for God's power to be manifested on her behalf. She understood what it meant to be weak so that she could be strong.

She laid down her life, as it were, at the feet of the king. She put herself at the mercy of the king so that the King of kings could arise and fight on her behalf. She said, *if I perish*, *I perish* but did she perish? No, she did not. God rose up to defend her.

The three Hebrew children – Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego – refused to bow down to worship the image which king Nebuchadnezzar made. They said to the King: "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up" (Daniel 3:16-18).

They knew fully well that God could save them, heal them, and deliver them from the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. There was no



doubt in their minds that God is abundantly able to do so, but they also understood the other side of God. They knew that God is sovereign; they knew that they were not serving God just so He could deliver them from trouble. They had settled it in their hearts that the one and only true God deserves to be worshipped with no conditions attached.

They said to themselves, and to the king: "Even if God decides not to deliver us for whatever reason best known to Him, still we will not bow to the graven image of the king." This was the level of commitment that is missing among Christians today.

We have been taught a single story about God (the side of blessings), and we have built our relationship with God around this single story. We do not see the side that requires us to carry our cross and follow Him faithfully no matter what. This is the reason the Church is weak and beggarly. This is the reason the Church is full of noise makers devoid of the power of God. This is the reason the Elijahs of God are nowhere to be found. This is why the Church is not making the impact it ought to have on our land.

But God is raising a Gideon's army in our time. These are men and women who will not seek their own or care about themselves. They will hold their weapons in one hand and lap the water with the other hand. They understand that even though they have to quench their thirst, they will not allow that to override the interest of God in their lives. God's interest is first - no matter what. If we put God first in our lives, He will put us first in His scheme of things. "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him" (2 Chronicles 16:9); those who are sold out to God and are ready to decrease and be nothing so that He, God, can increase in them. He seeks those who are ready to humble themselves under His mighty hand, so that His power can rest on them and be made manifest in their lives.

Death Worketh in Us, But Life in You

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus's sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So death worketh in us, but life in you.

- 2 Corinthians 4:7-12

Paul asserted that even though we have this treasure in earthen vessel, the excellency of the power is of God, and not of us. This vessel housing the excellency of the power – which is our body – must be broken, so that the power can flow out from us. We must bear our cross daily and bear in our body

everything that symbolizes the dying of our Lord Jesus; so that His life might be made manifest in our body. This seed of corn must fall to the ground and die, otherwise it will abide alone. We must surrender our will to Him totally. The cry of our hearts should be "Not my will oh Lord, but Yours alone be done in my life". Death must work in us, so that life can flow into the lives of the people we minister to.

Today, more than ever before, we need more men in the ministry who are truly broken. Too many in the ministry today are proud, fixed in their ways and unable to repent and listen to the Lord. If we must see revival in the Church, this situation must change. *The Lord is close and ready to manifest Himself only to those who are of a broken heart, and of a contrite spirit.* (Psalm 34:18).

We need to sow to ourselves in righteousness, and breakup our fallow grounds. It is time to seek the LORD, so that He may rain righteousness upon us (Hosea 10:12). The Lord is willing to pour water upon the thirsty – the one who is willing to open up and break up their fallow ground. He is willing to pour His spirit upon our seed, and His blessings upon our offspring (Isaiah 44:3).

If my people, who are called by name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

- 2 Chronicles 7:14

It takes a broken man to be truly humble. Our strong will needs to be broken; only God can do that when we submit to Him. We need to set our eyes on Him. When we truly see Him, then we shall see ourselves as He sees us, and we will be able to truly humble ourselves before Him. When Isaiah saw the Lord, he cried out: "Woe is me! For I am undone; I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:5). We need to humble ourselves and pray and seek the Lord's face and turn from our wicked ways. Then the Lord will hear our prayers, forgive our sins, and heal our land.

7

Called Unto Brokenness

n the previous chapter, we addressed aspects of brokenness. Let us look into it in greater details in this chapter.

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. – 1 Corinthians 11:22-26

The Eternal Principle of Brokenness

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night of His betrayal, laid down an eternal principle for His disciples to follow. The lesson Jesus was teaching goes beyond the ordinance of the Lord's supper. It was not just the ordinance; it was a fundamental principle that would guide our lives as disciples and in the service of our Lord.

Jesus was already feeling the throes of death around Him. He knew that His betrayal was imminent and that His death on the cross was only a matter of hours. It was a most difficult moment for Him, knowing that He would be nailed to the cross for the sins of the world. It was a moment of caution for Him, a moment of soberness and heaviness of heart. He was careful to make the best use of the moment; so, He got up and took the bread, gave thanks, and then broke it, saying: "This bread is my body, which is broken for you". His body was broken for us.

Prophecy mentioned this ahead of time "God has delivered me to the ungodly and turned me over to the hands of the wicked. I was at ease, but He has shattered me; He also has taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces; He has set me up for His target" (Job 16:11-12); "I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel" (Psalm 31:12). "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and a contrite heart—these O God, you will not despise" (Psalm 51:17). God's way is the way of brokenness. The sacrifices that will be acceptable to God are sacrifices that are offered from a broken heart. God seeks to work with hearts that are truly broken. He can never ignore or look away from a broken heart. This is God's way.



Jesus said, "This bread is my body which is broken for you". The bread must first be broken before it can be served. Except a corn of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone. But if it dies (broken), it brings forth much fruit (John 12:24). The Church must be broken the same way His body was broken:

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are partakers of that one bread.

- I Corinthians 10:16-17

We are that bread, and that bread must be broken before it can be served. We have many members in one body in Christ, and every one member of one another (Romans 12:5).

The Woman with the Alabaster Flask

And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured it on His head. But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, "Why was this fragrant oil wasted? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they criticized her sharply. But Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me ... Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her. – Mark 14:3-6,9

True worship can only proceed from a heart that is truly broken. The alabaster flask was full of precious ointment. The oil was intact; it was precious but had no value until it was broken. The vessel had to be broken so that the ointment could be a blessing. This humble woman sought to bless our Lord, and to worship Him with the best that she had. But she could not connect with the Lord; she couldn't reach out to Him until the vessel containing the ointment was broken. It was through the broken vessel that she could actually reach the Lord to anoint His head. This was a very significant moment for our Lord. It was a few days to His crucifixion and death on the cross.

Jesus disclosed that this woman came aforehand to anoint His body for burial. This was a very sobering moment indeed for our Lord. In a few days, He was going to be carrying the sin of the entire world on His shoulders and no one cared. No one could truly empathize with Jesus in what He was going through, but this woman from nowhere did. She struck a chord with Jesus. This woman succeeded in touching the Lord in the deepest place of His heart. The message here is deep. This ministration to the Lord came out of a broken heart, from a broken woman.

This woman was despised, derided, and was almost stopped and sent away by the disciples who thought they had a better idea of how to put the gift to use. Jesus, however, told them to let the woman be: "Why trouble her? She hath wrought a good work on me." (Mark 14:6). The impact of what she did to Jesus was so profound that Jesus said, "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this that she has done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her" (Vs 9). What a monumental recognition of the good work that this woman did.

Let us read Luke's account of the same story:

And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meal in the pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and she stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hair of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment. – Luke 7:37-38

From the accounts in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John, not much was said about this woman. However, the account in Luke indicated that she was a humble, weak, and a broken sinner. She came to Jesus completely broken; she came weeping and in tears. Her tears were so much that she could with them wash the feet of Jesus. Not stopping at that, she kissed the feet of Jesus and anointed them with the ointment.

She didn't come beating her chest and flaunting the expensive ointment she brought. She didn't come, claiming that she knew anything. She didn't come quoting scriptures or pretending to be holier than thou. She probably sold everything she had to buy that ointment. She abased herself; she brought herself down and humbled herself. This could have only been possible from a truly broken heart. We rarely see such brokenness in the house of God today. And this is the reason we are not seeing the manifestation of the hand of God as we should in our midst.

This woman could not even look Jesus in the eyes; she couldn't look at Him in the face. She was so broken that she stood at His feet *behind Him weeping* (verse 38). This is in sharp contrast to much of the irreverent attitude we find in the Church today. Worshippers in today's Church are flippant, lackadaisical, and careless in their attitude to God and in the things of God. We tend to worship God on our own terms, and not on His terms. Our comfort is what is paramount to us. No one is ready to weep and mourn in the house of God any longer.

Jesus said unto them, whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? – Mark 8:34-36



A woman's glory is her hair, but this woman was willing to give that glory away if only to worship her Lord. She indeed abased herself, she stooped down to her lowest and used the very hair on her head to wipe the feet of the Lord Jesus. What a depth of brokenness this is! She broke the alabaster box to connect. with Jesus in a very rare way that no one else had done until that time. What a blessing this is, and what a lesson in brokenness this ought to be for us. Unless we are this broken, the rain that we seek cannot come. As we come to Him in true brokenness, the Lord will visit us.

If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

- 2 Chronicles 7:14

The woman with the alabaster flask of ointment connected to Jesus in a way no one else did. She saw what others, including the disciples of Jesus, could not see. She saw and felt the death pangs hanging around Jesus, and felt she needed to do something to anoint and prepare His body for burial. Jesus saw the bigger picture and connected with a woman with a bad reputation; one who at best can be described as an "outcast". No one had anything good to say about her except that she was a sinner.

This is the path of brokenness that our Master taught us. Except a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it abides alone. If we must experience the coming great outpouring of the Spirit, we must tread a path that is hitherto uncharted. We must surrender our ego and give up our pride. We must lay it all on the altar and look only to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

We were told that the alabaster flask of ointment that this woman brought was precious and expensive, so much so that there were some around Jesus who felt that what she did with the oil was a total waste of resources. They in their indignation felt that the ointment could have been sold for 300 pence (equivalent to a laborer's one-year wage) and the money given to the poor (Mark 14:3-5). But Jesus had a different view, "Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial" (Mark 14:6-8).

The Fask of Ointment Must Be Broken

The alabaster flask of ointment had to be broken before it was poured on the head of Jesus. This singular act prepared Jesus for burial and opened the door for the salvation of the world. The principle is clear: our life must be broken if we are to be a blessing to our generation. The Lord will hear our cry if we come to Him in brokenness – not being boastful and beating our chest. "The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart and saves such as have a contrite spirit" (Psalm 34:18). We



must realize that it is neither by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord. It is not by the will of man or by the zeal and energy of man; it is the Lord who shows mercy, and it is purely by His mercies alone.

Again, this lady never bragged that she had anything expensive to give to Jesus. She was broken and lowly in spirit as she approached Jesus. She probably sold everything she had in the world to buy this alabaster box of ointment, but she didn't flaunt it. It was the disciples who noticed that what she had was precious and expensive. But it didn't matter to her. All she wanted was to get to Jesus...to get the attention of our Lord.

Too many times, we come before the Lord and the Lord's people flaunting our gifts, knowledge of scriptures, experience, achievement, and our titles. Whenever we do this, it immediately stands between us and the breakthroughs we want in our lives. What did this woman do? "And she stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with her tears, and did wipe them with the hair of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment" (Luke 7:38).

When she finally gained access to Jesus, in her totally broken state, she could not bring herself to look Jesus in the face let alone start a conversation with Him. She let her actions do all the talking. She spoke with her tears. She wept so profusely that the tears from her eyes were sufficient to wash the feet of the Master. She did this in the open, without caring about what people would think about her. All she wanted was to worship her Lord. She laid on the ground and washed the feet of Jesus with her tears. After washing the feet of Jesus with her tears, she began to wipe them feet with her hair.

The hair of a woman is the ultimate glory of the woman "But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her..." (I Corinthians 11:15). The woman by this symbolism laid everything on the altar. It is only when we empty ourselves completely of our pride and ego that Jesus picks us and fills us up with Himself. We must decrease so that He can increase in us (John 3:30).

Sacrifices of a Broken Spirit

The Lord is near to those who have **a broken heart** and saves such as have **a contrite spirit**.

- Psalm 34:18

The sacrifices of God are **a broken spirit**; **a broken** and a contrite heart — these, O God, You will not despise. – Psalm 51:17

The sacrifices (of worship, giving, and serving) that are acceptable to God must come from a spirit that has been totally shattered and broken. Such a life will never escape God for a moment. The Lord will not despise a broken and contrite spirit. He will not allow the broken reed to break completely but will visit the truly broken and remorseful heart (Isaiah 42:3). The rain will not come to us until we are truly broken before God.

"Thus says the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem: Break up your fallow ground, and do not sow among thorns. Circumcise yourselves to the Lord and take away the foreskins of your hearts".

- Jeremiah 4:3-4a

The foreskins covering our hearts and preventing us from seeing ourselves the way we are must be removed. The foreskin of pride and ego must be removed from our hearts. Our self-opinionated spirit must give way; our biases and prejudices must be torn as under and broken off.

The façade must be taken off the eyes of our minds and hearts so that we can see our true self and genuinely repent before the Lord. **We must see the LORD afresh**. All the clogs and cobwebs in our eyes distorting our vision must be removed. The foreskins must be removed, and we must be circumcised. Our hearts must be circumcised.

This was the experience Isaiah had in the year that King Uzziah died. Isaiah saw the Lord sitting upon a highly exalted throne, and His train filled the temple. When Isaiah caught a glimpse of the glory of God, he became convicted of his own unworthiness and confessed that he was a man of unclean lips and dwelt among a people of unclean lips (Isaiah 6:1,5). The Uzziah in our lives must be die; the scales in our eyes must be detached and removed so that we can see clearly.

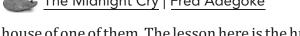
Brokenness Precedes Multiplication

hen one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. – Luke 7:36

Jesus Dined with His Antagonists

It is interesting to note that Jesus was berated by the Pharisees just before He was invited by one of them to have dinner in his house. The Pharisees were bigots; they rejected the baptism of John just because he did not fit their bill. They accused John of being demon-possessed because he was not given to social functions. On the other hand, Jesus freely wined and dined, even with sinners; and so, they labelled Him a gluttonous man, a winebibber, and a friend of publicans and sinners (Luke 7:33-34).

Their assessment of Jesus was insulting and demeaning. The Pharisees have been very consistent in taking this kind of stance against Jesus throughout His ministry. Nonetheless, Jesus accepted the invitation to visit and have dinner in the



house of one of them. The lesson here is the humility that Jesus demonstrated by accepting the invitation to visit the house of one of the Pharisees.

Not only did He accept the invitation to visit, He had a meal with the Pharisee and his family when he visited. This is very intimate. Ordinarily, no one would sit at table with people who are considered enemies; people who continue to make derogatory remarks about one's person. But Jesus broke the barrier of enmity erected by the Pharisees by reaching out to them. It probably wasn't easy for Jesus to do this, but He did it all the same because of the good that would come out of this situation.

Jesus accepted this invitation in spite of the general perception of the people at the time. It was not a hidden invitation; it was in the full glare of everyone, including that of the woman in the city that was a sinner. She saw that Jesus went in and sat at meal in the Pharisee's house. This woman apparently had been following Jesus and watching for the best opportunity to make a move to reach and anoint Him. She saw that opportunity when Jesus entered the house of this Pharisee and sat at meal.

Jesus was sending a message here. He went into the house of those who insulted and derided Him and sat at meal with them. It takes a humble and broken heart to reach out to people who curse and spitefully use us. The lesson here is that we must learn to reach out and connect with others beyond our fold; we must overcome the barriers that the enemy has erected between us. We must fellowship with a sincere and a clean heart. It is only then that we shall see true repentance and genuine revival in the house.

Looking At the Big Picture

Jesus saw beyond the actions of the Pharisees. He saw beyond the words they used to describe Him. He saw the Kingdom of God. Jesus saw the entire plan of God to redeem humanity. He saw the cross that was ahead of Him. His heart was on the ultimate price He was about to pay for humanity, and He knew that someone had to prepare Him for His burial. What was at stake for Jesus was far more than the attitude of the Pharisees towards Him; it was God's plan for redemption that was at stake. For this reason, He was ready to humble Himself and go into the house of the Pharisee to sit at meal with them with nothing in His heart against them.

And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured it on His head... But Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me... She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has

done will also be told as a memorial to her."

- Mark 14:3, 6, 8-9

We must always look at the bigger picture just like Jesus did. We must always refrain from our narrow, selfish, and parochial interests. We must look beyond our denominations, our circle of influence and always see the big picture. Jesus, "for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising every shame (that He suffered from those around Him); and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2). We must reach out to those who do not know as much as we know, and to those who do not have as much as we have. Think of it again: it was a woman from the city, known as a sinner, whom the disciples of Jesus would rather send away and deny access to, that connected to Jesus in the most unusual place and under the most unusual circumstance.

Brokenness as a Lifestyle

Brokenness is not a one-off experience. We need to go beyond the occasional soberness and remorse that we experience during a meeting or a conference. Brokenness ought to be a lifestyle and not a seasonal sensation. Paul attested to this when he said, "I die daily" (I Corinthians 15:31). It is a daily thing; we are to carry our cross daily. "Jesus 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). It takes a broken person to deny self. To deny yourself means you give up your right, you seek no agenda of your own, and you require no

recognition from man for whatever service you render. Denying oneself is an avowed determination on a daily and consistent basis that must prove that *He must increase*, *but I must decrease* in all areas of our lives (John 3:30).

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed — always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. – 2 Corinthians 4:7–10

We cannot see a true manifestation of God's glory and power in our lives until we are truly broken in the hands of our Master. We must bear the mark of the dying of our Lord in our bodies daily, so that His life and power can be manifested in our lives and ministries. Brokenness is the nonnegotiable condition that would usher in the anticipated visitation. Nothing short of this will produce the expected result in these last days. And it is not just talking about brokenness but living it. It is time to walk the talk as far as brokenness is concerned if we want to be part of the coming great visitation.

That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

- Philippians 3:10-11



Knowing the fellowship of His suffering is knowing what it means to be a broken vessel in the Lord's hands. Brokenness is not something learnt in a Bible school; it is not something that can be imparted by the laying on of hands. Brokenness is not automatic; it has to be worked into you through a process.

But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many". - Matthew 20:25-28

Feeding the Multitude: A Lesson in Brokenness

Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way." Then His disciples said to Him, "Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?" Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few little fish." So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave

thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitude.

So, they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left. Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. – Matthew 15:32-38

This same principle of brokenness was clearly enunciated in the feeding of the multitude in the Bible reference cited above. Jesus had compassion on the multitude which had been with Him for three days, fasting without food on a healing and deliverance crusade beside the sea of Galilee. Jesus said, "I will not send them away, lest they faint in the way".

The disciples were confused and perplexed, not knowing what to do to save the situation. But Jesus asked them a simple question: "How many loaves do you have?" They answered that they had seven loaves and a few fishes. Jesus then did something unusual; He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and fishes, gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to His disciples who in turn served the multitude.

There is a profound lesson here. The seven loaves became enough to feed the multitude (well over 4,000 people) after the Lord gave thanks and broke them. This is symbolic of the Body of Christ. We cannot truly feed the multitude with the word of life until we ourselves are broken. We cannot impact the world around us as we should until we are a truly broken

people. "For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread" (1 Corinthians 10:17). We are the loaves of bread; except we become a broken vessel in the Lord's hand (like David in Psalm 31:12), we may not be very useful to the Lord in being a channel of His blessing to our generation.

Yes, we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. This is the main reason the vessel must be broken so that the life of God, which is the treasure, can flow out of us to others. The precious ointment in the alabaster box was of no use until the box was broken. The vessel must be broken so that God's life can flow through us to our world. The seven loaves could not feed the multitude until they were broken. Our will must be broken; our pride must be taken out of the way; we must decrease so that He alone would increase. We must give up our personal agenda for His own agenda. This vessel must be broken so that His glory alone could be seen.

Are you ready to be the Lord's vessel to bear His glory in your generation? Then be prepared to bear in your body the dying of the Lord Jesus, so that His life might be made manifested in your body. Death (brokenness) must work in us, so that His life can flow through us to others (I Corinthians 4:7,10,12). Whatever we suffer as the Lord breaks us is a light affliction that is only for a moment. But they are working in us a far more exceeding weight of glory. In view of this, don't focus on the

things which are seen, because the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal (verses 17-18).

Brokenness Precedes Revival

We cannot know true revival until we are truly broken in the hands of our Lord. We cannot bring forth the much-needed fruit of the Spirit until we truly die to self. We cannot experience the fullness of the rain we have prayed so much for until we are truly broken. Until we get to a point where we truly lay our reputation on the altar and allow the Lord alone to be visible, and not ourselves, we shall continue to move around in circles. It is not about us; it is not about our denominations. It is all about Christ.

Until we get to a point where we count the things that we perceive to be gain to us (the things that appeal to us and fuel our ego) as loss for the sake of Christ, the promise of the latterrain may not be our experiential reality. Like brother Paul, we must count all things as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. We must count the things of this world, including the things we think we know and have achieved as dung, so that we may win Christ and make Him all in all in our lives.

It is at the point of emptying ourselves of everything that we will be found in Him – not in our denominations, ministries, gifts, and programmes; not in our own self-made righteousness as defined by the standards of this world, but in

the righteousness of God which is by faith. Our passion and prayer is to *know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His suffering* (i.e., be a partner in His suffering), *being made conformable unto His death* (Philippians 3:7-10).

Job said something quite instructive: "I was at ease, but He hath broken me asunder: He hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for His mark" (Job 16:12). To be at ease means to be in a place of comfort and indifference. The prophet Amos cried out, "Woe to those who are at ease in Zion!" (Amos 6:1). The Lord must break us asunder and shake us up from our ease and our slumber so that it won't ever be us anymore that is seen but Him and Him alone.

Paul knew this when he said "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 the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14). We must forget our past achievements and successes and count ourselves as not having apprehended (knowing and achieving nothing) but reaching out and pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. May this be our focus.

"The Christian grows rich by his losses. He lives by dying. And becomes full by being emptied." – Charles Spurgeon 9

The Crucified Life

ost of us in the Church today prefer that we simply talk about how wonderful our God is, how wonderful it is to be on our way to heaven, and how nice it is to speak in tongues and enjoy the blessings of the God we serve. Most of us prefer the positive and motivational sermons that encourage us to be positive all the time and to maintain positive confessions about everything. This may have its place, but it becomes totally wrong if this is all we focus on.

We cannot be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might if this is the only thing we know and have as our foundation. Christ died on the cross to give us life and that more abundantly; but this abundant life is not in the material alone. The truth is that He saved us not just so we can have a good life, but to make us become Christ-like in all areas of our life. His goal in our lives is to bring us to the stature of the fullness of Christ.



It is sad that much of Christendom has compromised with worldly values in many respects, promoting personal gain over godliness. Only a few preachers are prepared to talk about the crucified life, the need for self-denial and carrying our cross daily to follow Christ. This may be a difficult message to preach, but we must preach the truth and call the Church back to repentance, for this is the only path to the restoration of the Church and the deliverance of our nation.

Hence, there is an inward spiritual urge to sound this alarm, to blow the trumpet in Zion, and to sound the alarm on the holy mountain. It is a clarion call for the Church to return to the old landmark. The Church has left her first love. We must remember from where we have fallen, and repent, and begin to do the first works; or else, the Lord will come quickly and remove our candlestick totally from its place (Revelation 2:4-5).

We must emphasize here that living a crucified life is not easy. In fact, it will be the most challenging thing one will ever face. The cost will be high, the path will be rough, it will be lonely, but the reward of knowing God in intimate fellowship is a far greater gain than the pain of dying to self; and this is the key that will see us through our Christian journey.

This is the only path; this is the path trod by those who have gone before us. Our Lord himself trod the same path. In an editorial titled "The Saint Must Walk Alone", A.W. Tozer wrote: "It is easy to go with the crowd, but the one who is committed to living the crucified life will always lean hard into the wind of opposition and misunderstanding,".

Too many believers today are satisfied with being thirty-fold Christians (outer court Christians). Some are at the sixty-fold level, but the desire of the Lord is for us to press on to become hundred-fold Christians; to press into the Holy of Holies and become one with Christ. The path to accomplish this is living the crucified life; there is no other way. We must not settle for anything less than the hundred-fold level of walk with God. Paul said, "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 the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as would be perfect, be thus minded" (Philippians 3:13-15).

Living the crucified life means giving oneself wholly to the Lord in absolute humility and obedience: a sacrifice pleasing to the Lord. The word "crucified" takes us back to what Christ did on the cross and the sacrifice He made on our behalf. The key verse here is Galatians 2:20 - "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." The crucified life is unconditional commitment to follow Christ; to be like Him, to think like Him, to act like Him, and to love unconditionally like Him.



The whole essence of spiritual perfection has everything to do with our Lord Jesus Christ - not with our denominations, our doctrines, or our traditions. We are not to look or talk like our pastors or bishops, or even look like each other; rather, we are to look like Christ. We can easily get caught up in the nuances of religion and totally miss the glorious point of looking unto Jesus who alone is the Pioneer and Perfecter of our faith. Whatever slows us down or hinders us in this journey to be like Christ must be removed and discarded.

Dying to Self

Paul the apostle declared, "I die daily" (1 Corinthians 15:31). "...Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh" (2 Corinthians 4:10-11). Living the crucified life is the process by which this earthen vessel is broken and taken out of the way for Christ alone to increase in our lives.

Without bearing in our bodies the dying of our Lord Jesus Christ, the victorious and resurrected life of Christ cannot be made manifest in us. We must die daily. The flesh in us must die; we must give up our ego, pride, and reputation. "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain" (John 12:24).

Living the crucified life is not a journey for the faint at heart. The journey may be rough, sometimes filled with contradictions, dangers and difficulties, and it does not end until we see Christ. For now, we may see through a glass, darkly; but then, we shall see Him face to face if we endure and hold on to Him.

Therefore, we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. – 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Our outward man may seem weak and may be perishing, yet our inward man is strengthened and renewed day by day. Whatever difficulties or affliction we may be going through now is momentary and transient, so we shouldn't be deterred by them. Whatever we may be going through now pales into insignificance when compared to the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory that is being worked out in us.

This is the reason we are not moved by what we see, experience or feel. We look beyond whatever we may see or feel now. We look to Jesus the Author and the Finisher of our faith. We know in our hearts that everything we feel or see is

🖦 The Midnight Cry | Fred Adegoke

temporary and subject to change; they are not real. Christ is our reality. He is our refuge and our fortress, and in Him alone we will trust; under His wings we shall trust.

The fig tree may not blossom and the fruits may not be in the vines; the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields may yield no meat; and the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there may be no herd in the stalls: *Yet, I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my* salvation. For the LORD God shall continue to be my strength. He will make my feet like hinds' feet, and will make me to walk upon my high places

- Habakkuk 3:17-19

We may not know why the fig tree has not blossomed despite our effort but, like Habakkuk, our faith and commitment to the Lord must remain unwavering, if we are to see the restoration and the glory of this latter house in our time.

The Midnight Cry

hen the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom... But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!'

- Matthew 25:1, 5-6

The time of the Lord's visitation is upon us as it was for the virgins at midnight. All ten virgins had lamps; all had the intention of meeting the bridegroom. But the unexpected happened: the bridegroom was delayed. Consequently, all ten virgins began to slumber and eventually fell asleep. Yes, they had started out with great zeal and excitement; they had taken their lamps and separated themselves from everything that was going on around them, and they went out to meet the bridegroom. But they had no idea how long this would take.

They had no idea what challenges they were likely to meet on this path they had chosen, but the overriding desire in their



hearts was to meet the bridegroom and be united with him.

Jesus likened the Kingdom of God to these ten virgins. They represent the generality of the church, and their story is a portrait of God's plan for the church in these last days. Just like the ten virgins, the zeal and the enthusiasm of the church began to wane as the bridegroom delayed. This decline was gradual; they first began to slumber and then they slept off completely. To slumber means to be in a state of drowsiness; it means to be dozing off. One is half asleep, half awake. To slumber is to unwittingly fall into a short nap.

Many things can account for this situation of slumber. It could be tiredness and exhaustion after, or right during, a hard day's work. Sometimes, it could be due to our carelessness. But the enemy quickly takes advantage of the situation and creeps into our lives in a gradual and innocuous manner. By the time we know it, we have lost all control and slept off completely.

But God has a way of ushering in a midnight season which ultimately brings an awakening and a transformation into our lives: "At midnight a cry was made". There is usually a midnight season in a man's life. Midnight is a dark season, but God sends us help right during our midnight season. God gives us an opportunity to hear the midnight cry and to wake up from our sleep. Our midnight season can be our season of transformation. Our midnight season can be an opportunity for us to wake up and trim our lamps so that we can shine better for our Lord.

But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!'

- Matthew 25:5-6

A midnight cry is sounding forth in this midnight season of the church. This midnight cry is alerting us to a new visitation that is just ahead of us. We need to wake up from our slumber; we need to get up and trim our lamps so that we can be part of this coming great visitation. "And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now, our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore, let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts" (Romans 13:11-14).

A Time of Refreshing is Imminent

Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord. – Acts 3:19

We are enjoined by the Lord to repent and be converted because a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord is coming. It is the Lord who is bringing this time of refreshing; it shall come from His presence. The Lord will trigger it and cause it to come to His people.



The time of refreshing will not be stage-managed by man; it will not be orchestrated or driven by any organization or denomination. The Lord alone is the Source of this time of refreshing. It is called a time of refreshing because it is a time when the Lord will visit His people to rejuvenate, renew, renovate, and restore.

The Lord will restore the lost strength of the church. He will invigorate the church and bring back the lost glory to His house. This time of refreshing is coming in the midnight hour; it is coming in the evening time—for in the evening time, there shall be light. The Lord will cause the weary to rest and will bring refreshing to His people He spoke through the prophet Isaiah, "'This is the rest with which you may cause the weary to rest,' and, 'This is the refreshing'". Sadly, many in the days of Isaiah refused to hear (Isaiah 28:12). May we hear this word of the Lord in this our own day. The Lord is returning to "build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down;" He Himself will rebuild its ruins and will set it up again so that the remnants may seek after Him (Acts 15:16-17).

Thus, we must return to the Lord in repentance and true conversion of the heart; and then, this refreshing will come on us. "...In returning and rest, you shall be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (Isaiah 30:15). Why is this repentance necessary? The old landmarks set by fathers in the faith have long been removed (Proverbs 22:28). The denominations today, especially the many Pentecostal churches, have oppressed God's people and have totally abandoned core values of the faith. These are things to repent of.

The Lord says His people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Him the fountain of living waters; and they have hewn for themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water (Jeremiah 2:13). The 24th chapter of Job brings this out very clearly:

Since times are not hidden from the Almighty, why do those who know Him see not His days? Some remove landmarks; they seize flocks violently and feed on them; they drive away the donkey of the fatherless; they take the widow's ox as a pledge. They push the needy off the road; all the poor of the land are forced to hide. Indeed, like wild donkeys in the desert, they go out to their work, searching for food. The wilderness yields food for them and for their children. They gather their fodder in the field and glean in the vineyard of the wicked. They spend the night naked, without clothing, and have no covering in the cold. They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and huddle around the rock for want of shelter. Some snatch the fatherless from the breast and take a pledge from the poor. They cause the poor to go naked, without clothing; and they take away the sheaves from the hungry. – Job 24:1-10



The above enumerates 18 acts of oppression perpetrated against fellow brethren by those who supposedly know Him. They continue with impunity because they do not see His day; like the servant in Matthew 24:48-51 who continues to oppress his fellow servants till his master's arrival catches him unawares. These are things to repent of.

Who Shall Abide in the Day of His Coming?

Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like launderers' soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasant to the Lord, as in the days of old, as in former years. - Malachi 3:1-4

The Lord will visit us; He will come suddenly into our midst. He will come at a time we least expect Him to. The Lord God Almighty will show up with His glory and power in settings that we least expect Him to. And when He shows up, He will sit as a refiner's fire, and He will take His time to do a deep and a lasting work in His people. He will do a work in His people similar to what a purifier of silver does. He will purge His people as gold and silver, that they may offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness. Their offering to the Lord would then be pleasant and acceptable as in the days of old. Indeed, this visitation of the Lord is upon us.

Signs of His Visitation

Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came and, testing Him, asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red'; and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." And He left them and departed.

- Matthew 16:1-4

Jesus asked the Pharisees and the Sadducees "Can you not discern the signs of the times?" This question implies that God gives every generation a sign to indicate what He is about to do. Men and women of spiritual perception should be able to read those signs and understand God's plan for their time. The writer of Hebrews spoke about "...having your senses exercised to discern..." (Hebrews 5:14).



With spiritual maturity comes the ability to discern. As we grow in the Lord, we begin to develop spiritual senses that cause us to know God's purpose and plans so we can fit in and cooperate with them. We will also be able to help other children of God to fit in as well. As we learn to read God's signs, and as our spiritual senses mature, we are able not only to know God's seasons, but to work in proper relationship with them.

A farmer for instance knows that there are specific times of the year when the fields need to be ploughed, and a specific time to start planting. If the farmer is late in the planting, he would miss the harvest for that year. If you do not break your fallow grounds in tandem with the seasons that the Almighty God has established, you are not likely to be a successful farmer. So, it is with the Lord's work. We need to know what God's seasons are so we can line up and cooperate with His plowing, sowing, and reaping times and seasons. In this way, we become effective laborers together with God.

Concerning the church in Thessalonica, Paul wrote "As to the times and seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write to you" (1 Thessalonians 5:1). The Thessalonica church was full of mature believers. Paul had this to say about them: "From you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad, so that we need not to speak anything" (1 Thessalonians 1:8).

What an amazing church! They were actively spreading the gospel and sharing their faith in Christ everywhere. All the evidence of maturity could be seen in them. They already had an idea of God's times and seasons. They were in touch with the spiritual clues around them that indicated what the Lord wanted to do; and were flowing in cooperation with them. This way it was no problem at all for them to discern God's times and seasons.

In 1 Chronicles we read of the sons of Issachar who "...had understanding of the times (seasons) to know what Israel ought to do". May the Lord in His mercies raise among us today mature men and women who are like the sons of Issachar. May the Lord raise men and women who will understand what the Lord is doing, and also recognize His times and seasons, and cooperate with it. This is crucial for the coming visitation.

God's People are His Signs

Here am I and the children whom the Lord has given me! We are for signs and wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, who dwells in Mount Zion. – Isaiah 8:18

This verse shows that the Lord's people are His sign. What the Lord is doing among and through His people is a sign that we can pay attention to in order to gain understanding into what the Lord is doing or about to do.

You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for

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nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

- Matthew 5: 13-16

The Lord seemed to be saying that His people are the compass by which the rest of the world will find direction. His people are the radar through which the rest of the world can find Him. God's people determine the extent of God's visitation in the earth. They are the barometers of God's outpouring and visitation in the earth. The church therefore needs to seek the Lord in repentance and bring forth fruit worthy of repentance so that the Lord can visit the earth in a mighty way. The Lord's people are the gateway to revival.

The church is the vehicle of God's expression in the earth. The heavens will continue to withhold divine visitation until the church is restored and has made herself ready. Only those who were ready went in with him to the marriage (Matthew 25:10), "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21).

The Church needs to break up her fallow grounds so that the imminent visitation can come quickly. We need to sow to

ourselves in righteousness: let go of all hurts and bitterness and forgive one another; relate to one another in love and kindness and build strong relationships among ourselves. We must humble ourselves under the mighty hands of God and begin to seek Him in sincerity and truth, to reap in mercy.

We need to understand that it is all by the mercies of God alone and not by our own strength. But the Lord's great visitation and rain of righteousness must be preceded by us breaking up our fallow ground (Hosea 3:12). The Lord has promised to pour water upon the thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; He will pour His spirit upon our descendants, and His blessing upon our offspring (Isaiah 44:3). Blessed indeed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled (Matthew 5:6).

Leadership Change as a Sign

After the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them — the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. – Joshua 1:1-3

All through scriptures whenever God is ready to visit His people or do a fresh work, there is usually a leadership change.

At this critical point in Israel's journey into the Promised Land, Moses had to be removed and taken out of the way. Mighty as he was, Moses had to die and be taken out of the way before the people of God could arise and take possession of the land of promise. A change of leadership was necessary before the people of God could be ushered into this new day in God.

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. – Isaiah 6:1

It took the removal of the king Uzziah for the prophet Isaiah to be ushered into a new dimension of glory. In the year that king Uzziah died, Isaiah saw and experienced a new visitation of the Lord. Leadership had to change at this point for there to be a new awakening and a new visitation of the Lord in the midst of His people. For there to be a new visitation, the Lord will have to remove the head and shoulder government of Saul.

Saul was from his shoulders and upward taller than anyone else in the whole of Israel. Saul was larger than life; he had the rule over the people and he oppressed them. But the Lord had to take Saul out of the way so that His eternal purpose for Israel can be fulfilled

Now the Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have

provided Myself a king among his sons."

- 1 Samuel 16:1

John the Baptist had to be taken completely out of the scene before the full unfolding of Jesus ministry could take place. The disciples of John came to him complaining that Jesus and His disciples were getting more recognition than they. But John's response was golden: "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore, this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:26-30).

We must decrease so that He can increase. Everything that exalts man must give way so that the divine can come in. The Lord will take away carnal leadership so that He may establish a leadership that is divine.

In the coming months and years there is definitely going to be a change of guards in the leadership of the church. The head and shoulder government of Saul will give way for a Davidic company of leadership. The new leadership will be relatively unknown with virtually no titles, but the hand of the Almighty will be on them. Like David, they are men and women that God has raised and trained in the secret.

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These are men and women who will not require the huge armor of Saul or his huge sword to go against Goliath. They will be men and women with ordinary sling in their hands: they will be simple and humble in their approach. They will not seek to build kingdoms around themselves or to project themselves; yet they will be filled with so much glory and power. The Lord will take away what we know as the old so that He can establish the new.

The Lord will send the rod of His strength out of Zion (this new leadership) to rule amid His enemies. His people will be willing in the day of His power. The Lord will cause saviors (a new generation of leaders) to come up from mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau (the carnal lifestyle of His people): and the kingdom shall be the Lord's (Psalm 110:3; Obadiah 1:21).



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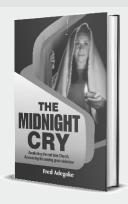






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The 'Midnight Cry' is the product of several years of waiting on the Lord, and the dealings of God. It is the first in the series of books meant to convey the call of God to His people to reposition themselves in this 'Evening Time'. It is a call to the Body of Christ to return to the ancient landmarks that the fathers have set.

This book is an attempt to blow the trumpet in Zion, and to sound the alarm in the holy mountain of God. It is a midnight cry to awaken God's people from their slumber, trim their lamps, walk circumspectly, and understand the will of the Lord in this midnight hour, so that, like the children of Issachar, they will know what they ought to do. God has promised that at evening time He will give light, and that when the earth is covered with darkness, His light and glory will be seen in us.

The common thread that runs through this book is the call to brokenness. It is the call to die to self. Brokenness is the nonnegotiable condition that would usher in the anticipated visitation. Nothing short of this will produce the expected result in these last days. Brokenness precedes revival.



Fred Adegoke was raised and called into God's service very early in life. He has labored consistently and faithfully in the Lord's vineyard, touching many lives within and outside Nigeria through his teachings, counselling and writings. God has used him to provide spiritual leadership at different levels and in different capacities for almost five decades.

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